BRITISH **RETAIL** CONSORTIUM
for successful and responsible retailing

DO NOT BE A VICTIM OF SUPPLIER FRAUD

For the Attention of European Suppliers to UK Retailers

The British Retail Consortium would like wholesalers in Europe to be on the alert for fraud which continues to cost suppliers considerable sums of money. The fraud involves criminals impersonating legitimate UK retailers to place orders for goods with European-based suppliers which are never paid for.

HOW THE FRAUD WORKS

The European supplier is contacted from someone claiming to be from a legitimate, well-known UK based retailer, to order goods on a credit basis. Contact is usually by email and frequently only a mobile contact telephone number is provided.

The email address adopted by the criminals is often very similar to the legitimate company's address, with only minor discrepancies. The retailer's official logo is also copied.

The e-mail often contains the name of a senior employee within the legitimate UK company and bank details, to convince the supplier the order is genuine.

The delivery is made to a UK address. The location is often changed at the last minute to a premises being rented by the fraudsters, which has no connection to the legitimate UK company.

Once the delivery has been made, the supplier sends an invoice to the legitimate UK retailer for payment. Only then does it become apparent that they have no knowledge of the order and that a fraud has occurred.

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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HOW TO AVOID BECOMING A VICTIM OF SUPPLIER FRAUD

You should consider reviewing your anti-fraud measures to ensure that you do not become a victim of this kind of fraud. Examples of the action you can take to protect yourself are below.

HOW TO CHECK YOU HAVE A GENUINE ORDER

Order process and agreements

- **Legitimate businesses will adhere to robust, well-established procedures. If you have supplied the UK retailer previously, is the order process different to that used before?**
- **Have you approached the UK retailer before about doing business? What was the outcome? What discussions have taken place prior to the latest order? Most large retailers do not order goods without a period of negotiation and a formal agreement.**
- **Is the correspondence or purchase order document poorly presented, written in poor English or contain blurred company logos? If so, it may not be genuine.**

Phone and email checks

- **If you have suspicions, contact the UK retailer using details from their official website to confirm the order - do not use the contact details provided by the person who has approached you.**
- **Contact the company using a landline telephone number or email address, not a mobile number. Do not rely on any UK mobile number provided (beginning 00447...).**
- **Check the email address being used for correspondence very carefully. Are there minor differences such as '.org' instead of '.com'? A legitimate business would not normally use email addresses such as hotmail, gmail or yahoo.**

Delivery address

- **Investigate the delivery address. Never send goods if the address is different to any distribution sites listed by the UK retailer.**
- **Has the delivery address been changed once the order has been placed or after the goods have been dispatched? If so, investigate this urgently.**
- **Consider looking at the delivery location on Google Street View to see whether it looks like a legitimate business address.**

Other prevention measures

- **Enquire whether you can establish a single point of contact within each of the UK retailers with whom you do regular business, and ensure all communications are through this person.**
- **Train the staff dealing with orders in your business about how to conduct stringent checks and identify the warning signs of potential fraud.**