Central Bank of Ireland Issues Warning on Unauthorised Entity – Beonwise

06 January 2023 **Warning Notice**

It has come to the Central Bank of Ireland's ('Central Bank') attention that a fraudulent entity, **Beonwise**, operating the website https://beonwise.com (Not Active), has been operating as an investment firm / investment business firm in the State in the absence of an appropriate authorisation. In this instance, the fraudulent entity claimed to act on behalf of the Central Bank, illicitly using the name of the Central Bank in order to deceive consumers.

A list of unauthorised firms published to date is available on the Central Bank website.

It is a criminal offence for an unauthorised entity (firm / person) to provide financial services in Ireland that would require an authorisation under the relevant legislation, which the Central Bank is the responsible body for enforcing. Consumers should be aware that, if they deal with an entity, which is not authorised, they are not eligible for compensation from any available Compensation Scheme.

Fraudsters are increasingly using legitimate firms' details to add an air of legitimacy to their fraud. The fraudsters will 'borrow' some or all of the legitimate information of an authorised / legitimate firm for the purpose of this fraud. They may quote authorisation numbers / company registration numbers and links to seemingly legitimate websites and even provide the real address of an authorised / legitimate firm. Consumers are advised to check our register to verify a firm's details and to call the firm back directly using its advertised phone number. Always access the register from our website, rather than through links in emails or on a firm's / person's website.

There are some further steps that individuals should take before dealing with firms / persons which purport to offer financial services:

- Always double-check the URL and contact details of a firm / person in case it is a 'clone firm / person' pretending to be an authorised firm / person, such as your bank or a genuine investment firm.

- Check the list of unauthorised firms. If the firm / person is not on our list, do not assume it is legitimate – it may not have been reported to the Central Bank yet.
- Check that the product being offered to you is present on the website of the legitimate firm.
- If you are considering buying a financial product or dealing with a firm, through a website or social media, or if you receive an unsolicited phone call, email, text message or pop-up box out of the blue, take the SAFE test.

- For further information, please visit the Avoiding Scams and Unauthorised Activity section of the Central Bank's website.

Please remember:

- the Central Bank will never contact you asking for money, your personal data or your PPS number; and

- if you are offered something that seems too good to be true, it is most likely a scam.

Any person wishing to contact the Central Bank with information regarding such firms / persons may telephone (01) 224 4000. This line is also available to the public to check if a firm is authorised.

Notes to editors

This notice is published under Section 53 of the Central Bank (Supervision and Enforcement) Act 2013.