

BEWARE: MISSING PET POSTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

I'm sure by now most people with a social media account have seen the posts asking you to share a post of a missing/injured pet. They usually appear on buy and sell sites and community type groups. This will include a picture of a very sad looking, possibly injured (and of course, incredibly cute) pet. The poster might say that they have found them, taken them to the vet, and are now trying to locate the owners. They plea that as many people as possible share the post, hoping to reunite the pet with its owner. As an animal lover with a big heart, you may not think twice about sharing it.

Who would think that sharing a post like this would put your friends and family at risk of being scammed and losing money?

Unfortunately, it does. Once you have shared the post, you probably forget about it. You've done your bit. The post will probably be shared by hundreds, even thousands, of people, just like you, who just want to see this beloved pet back home.



However, there was never a missing pet. This post has been created by a fraudster using photos they found on the internet.

The fraudster is then able to change the post to anything they want to, so by the time many of your friends see it, they don't see a post about a missing pet. They see a post about a property to rent, a prize draw, a cryptocurrency investment opportunity, or maybe an advert for some sort of government grant you may be entitled to. I'm sure you can guess what is coming next – Yes, they are all scams. Your friends, who are usually quite savvy and good at spotting an online scam, might be more inclined to trust the post as it has been shared by you. For example, they may pay a deposit for what seems like a really good deal on a rental property which isn't really available for rent at all.

Scammers know that missing/injured pets are going to tug at people's heartstrings. Unfortunately, they are exploiting this and overshadowing genuine missing pet posts where the power of social media has proven to be a fantastic thing. Because of this common scam, we advise against sharing posts like these from people you don't know.