

Cheshire East Trading Standards Investigations
Andy Burrows

Romance Fraud

Get To Know The Person Not The Profile

Working for a *brighter future*  together



What is Romance/Dating Fraud

- Romance or Dating Fraud is the engineering of a supposed friendship or relationship for fraudulent, financial gain.
- The contact is made on a dating website or through social media, with the other person using a fake profile.
- Once trust is gained, the fraudster will introduce a hardship they are experiencing and ask the individual to help out financially.
- The fraudster will extract as much money as they can over a period of time.



The Extent of the Problem

- Between August 2019 and August 2020, Action Fraud received more than 400 reports a month from victims of romance fraud in the UK.
- Losses reported by the victims during this time totalled £66,335,239.
- This worked out at just over £10,000 per victim.
- During June, July and August 2020 reports to Action Fraud increased to 600 month, indicating more people began speaking to fraudsters during the national lockdown.



Top stories

[How to stop becoming a victim of romance fraud](#)

Avon and Somerset Police - 22 hours ago

[Peterborough woman's warning after losing £100000 in 'Romance Fraud' scam](#)

Peterborough Telegraph - 22 hours ago



[People are encouraged to protect themselves from online romance fraud](#)

Wiltshire Gazette and Herald - 2 days ago



[View all](#)

14th October 2020

The Impact

- With romance fraud, the victim has the 'double hit', the loss of money and the loss of a relationship.
- Some victims have reported the loss of the relationship being more upsetting than the financial loss.
- As a result of the crime victims have reported having a loss of confidence, breakdown in family relationships, trust issues, exacerbating health conditions and furthering loneliness and social isolation.
- Denial is one of the more serious effects, leaving the victim open to becoming a repeat victim.

side



Warning Signs

- Action Fraud state the top 5 platforms victims reported speaking to fraudsters on were; Facebook, Plenty of Fish, Instagram, Tinder and Match.com.
- The fraudster will often state they are overseas, on business, in the military or working on an oil rig, for example.
- The relationship gets very serious, very quickly and the fraudster may profess their love at an early stage.
- They will take advantage of the emotional attachment that has been struck up and invent a reason to ask the individual for financial help. This could be for an operation or medical expenses, or to get a passport and plane tickets in order to visit.
- Secrecy is important, the fraudster will tell the individual to keep them a secret and may try and turn the person against their family.

Advice for keeping safe and how to report the crime

- Check the person is genuine by searching for their name in a search engine and include 'catfish', 'romance fraud' and 'dating scam' in the search.
- Do a reverse search of the image to see if it is genuine. The images of the individual will often be used on multiple occasions.
- Never send money or give bank or personal details to anyone you have met online.
- Don't rush in to anything, ask lots of questions, get to know the person. Fraudsters will often repeat themselves, so they make themselves suspicious and you should listen to those suspicions.
- Speak to a friend or family member to see what they think and be very wary or anyone you meet online asking you to keep them a secret.
- If you become a victim of romance fraud, don't be embarrassed and report it to Action Fraud on www.actionfraud.police.uk or on 0300 1232040.
- Learn more about the Romance/Dating Fraud - <https://www.getsafeonline.org/social-networking/online-dating/>