

The Fraud & Scam Bulletin

OCTOBER 2025

Your monthly update direct from West Mercia Police on the latest
scams and frauds



STOP!
THINK FRAUD
WESTMERCIA POLICE

ROMANCE FRAUD

Yes, this is a topic we have covered many times, but since 3rd October is recognised as “**WORLD ROMANCE SCAM PROTECTION DAY**”, it is only appropriate that we send out this message again.

Whilst many may think that Romance Scams only occur on Dating Sites, criminals may also make use of social media and messaging sites to meet up with and defraud their victims.

Did you know?

- Reports of Online Romance Fraud/Scams continue to rise year on year.
- Yet Online Romance Scams are one of the most under-reported cybercrimes in the world.
- Figures for losses through Romance Fraud and investment frauds tied to romance scams, also known as Pig Butchering, had reported total losses to over £103million annually in the UK.
- Only an estimated 7% (possibly lower) of victims report the fraud to the proper authorities.
- Romance Scams are emotional, psychological, and financial ABUSE.
- Everyone is a target. No matter what age, education, or gender

How to help people you know are online dating

- Help your friends and family to ensure they have adequate privacy settings on their social media accounts to ensure strangers do not have access to their personal information.
- Stay in regular contact with your friends and family who are online dating to help spot any changes in behaviour or things that do not seem right.
- Fraudsters set up fake profiles with convincing job titles such as Engineers, Medics, Military Personnel, Airline Pilots and similar, also using relevant images taken from social media profiles.
- Make friends and family aware of the signs of Romance Fraud so that they are conscious of the tactics criminals use to carry out these frauds and reiterate that you should never transfer money to someone that you have never met in person. Also never make payments to strangers with Gift Cards or Bitcoin accounts.
- Try not to use blaming language but rather a “no blame, no shame approach”. They have been targeted and exploited by professionals who know exactly how to manipulate their targets.
- Encourage people to report to Action Fraud and the police if they have become a victim of Romance Fraud and not to be embarrassed about doing so.

Please feel free to share these messages with any vulnerable friends, relatives or neighbours.

If you have fallen for fraud

Report it to **Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040** or via actionfraud.police.uk

Scam Text messages can be forwarded to 7726 to help phone providers take prompt action and block numbers that generate spam on their networks.

You can also report fraudulent mobile calls by texting **7726** with the word “**Call**” followed by the **fraudster’s phone number**.

Scam calls received on WhatsApp can be blocked by opening the chat with the suspect phone number and tap on “Block”.

Forward **Fake Emails** received to report@phishing.gov.uk

If you think your bank account or personal banking details have been used fraudulently, then use the short phone number - **159** - to contact the Fraud Prevention Department of most major UK banks.

