



BAILIWICK OF GUERNSEY LAW ENFORCEMENT

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SCAM ALERT: Be wary of romance fraud!

Romance fraud is very common and targets those who are seeking companionship but which can have devastating consequences on victims.

As is often seen the fraudster will post a fake online profile or engage freely on social media platforms using mostly fictional details, they will go to extreme lengths to gain and develop the victim's trust. During this 'grooming period', the fraudster will be continually assessing the victim's financial situation. Once the fraudster ascertains that the victim is a good financial prospect they then elaborate further with emotive stories of hardship including but not limited to; they are trapped in a foreign country and have no means to buy a ticket home, they have large medical bills and/or a close relative is in need of urgent medical care. The fraudster will then ask for financial assistance and will promise to repay the amount and on other occasions they may ask the victim to transfer money into other person's accounts.

The victim becomes embroiled in an emotional connection with the fraudster and almost always struggles to believe that they are subject of a fraud.

If you suspect you or a loved one might be subject to a romance scammer there are steps you can take to protect them or yourself:

- A reverse image search is a very simple and effective way to check the legitimacy of any images sent to you by a potential scammer. Google provides a very useful tool for doing this - Simply follow the link below, click on the camera icon and upload the image. Scammers often use the same image for multiple social media profiles, which could be shown on the search. Visit: <https://images.google.com/>
- Avoid handing out personal information, email, phone numbers and especially personal bank details. Scammers can use this information to steal your identity.
- DO NOT send or receive money from someone you have only met online.
- Keep family/friends informed. They may be able to spot something suspicious and can help provide emotional support in difficult situations.

The Action Fraud website provides further information on romance fraud as well as various other forms of scam. It also offers a step by step guide on how to report an incident and gives you the option of passing your details onto Victim Support, who offer free practical and emotional support.

- <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/a-z-of-fraud/dating-fraud>

Alternatively, if you believe you are the victim of fraud, you can contact Guernsey Police on 725111.