



Keep yourself safe from

Romance and Friendship Scams

Criminals can use dating and social media sites to manipulate you and steal money. Using the identity and images of someone else, they trick victims into believing they've met their perfect match.

Once a relationship is established, fraudsters use emotional manipulation to request money, often for fake medical emergencies, legal assistance or flights. They could even convince people to invest money in a 'great opportunity'.

If someone you met online is requesting money, ask yourself:

- Have I been given various excuses as to why we can't talk in person or via a video call? If yes, could they deliberately be hiding something?
- Have I been told that they've had a medical, business or financial emergency which is why they can't meet me?
- Are they asking me not to tell anyone about our relationship? Are they asking me to lie to family, friends or my bank about why I'm sending them money?
- Has our relationship escalated quicker than expected?
- If I refuse to send money, have they told me this means I'm not serious about them or don't love them?

If the answer is yes to any of these...

You might not be talking to who you think you are. Take some time to think about whether the person you're talking to could be a scammer.

Heyy 😍



I feel like i've known you forever, and I already can't imagine my life without you 💕



Are you sure? We only spoke this morning...

Top tips for avoiding romance and friendship scams:

- Never send money to someone you've not met in person.
- Do a reverse image search of the photos on their profile - you may find the images link back to a different individual. Google has a [useful resource](#) on how to do this.
- Victims of romance fraud are commonly told by the person they're speaking to that they can't meet in person due to working abroad or being in the military. If you've met online and this is the case, proceed with caution.
- Research them online. Do they show up in an internet search in several reliable places (not just social media sites) with information that matches up to what you're being told?
- Speak to a trusted friend or family member about your relationship. They may be able to help you identify red flags.

Remember: these scams can be very complex and can affect anyone. Don't be embarrassed to talk to someone (a friend, your bank or [Citizens Advice](#)) if someone you've not met in person is asking you for money.

Find out more by reading our article on [Romance Fraud](#) or by visiting the [Take Five](#) or [Crimestoppers](#) websites.

If you're ever unsure about a payment you've been asked to make, or already made, get in touch with us on your app or by calling 159. We're here to help you. You might also want to speak to Victim Support, an independent charity that can provide support to victims of crime and traumatic events. Their [helpline](#) is open 24/7.