



Romance Fraud

7-minute Learning briefing



Key Learning Points

REMEMBER: Romance fraudsters use words to trick and control people and disguise their requests with stories that seem reasonable. They build trust and they deceive victims to gain money by fabricating bad luck or dramatic stories that can make people feel pressurised to support them.

It can be hard for someone who has been tricked by a romance scam to see that they are being hurt. The scammer makes the victim believe that everything is perfect. The scammer uses tricks to make the victim feel many emotions. When the victim finds out the truth, it can be very hard for them. They may feel very different than they did before.

1. Romance fraud happens when you think you've met the perfect partner through an online dating website or app, but the person is using a fake profile to form a relationship with a victim and then asks for money or personal information to steal your identity

2. How it happens: Romance fraudsters are masters of manipulation and will go to great lengths to create a false reality in which the victim feels that they are making reasonable and rational decisions.

3. Denial: Family and friends of romance fraud victims may find it challenging to disrupt the false reality created by the fraudster and enable the victim to see the situation for what it really is – fraud.

4. The Set up

People who trick others in fake relationships use words to control and trick them. They make their victims see things differently, like in bad relationships. The victim thinks they are making good choices, but they don't know they are being tricked. It's hard for them to see what's happening, even if others can see it.

5. Isolation - methods that romance fraudsters use to cut off their victims from external sources of support

Fraudsters try to cut off their victims from people who can help them. This makes it easier to trick the victim. Fraudsters can do this by:

- Making the victim feel guilty for asking for advice
- Getting angry when the victim asks for advice
- Saying the victim is hurting the relationship by asking questions

This is similar to how domestic abusers act. So, romance fraud can feel like domestic abuse.

6. Always

- Be wary of revealing personal information about yourself online.
- Remember that anyone can pretend to be anyone they want to be online.
- Be wary if you are encouraged to keep things from your family and friends.
- **STOP:** Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.
- **CHALLENGE:** Could it be fake? It's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.
- **PROTECT:** Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud.
- **REMEMBER:** If you meet someone on a dating site, keep chatting with them on that site. Don't switch to other messaging apps.

7. Help and support available

If you believe that you have been a victim of a romance fraud, please remember that you are not to blame, are not alone, and you should not feel ashamed. Support and help is out there.

Victim Support helps anyone affected by crime. Get in touch anytime for independent, free, and confidential advice:

- Call the support-line on **08 08 16 89 111**
- Text Relay: use the [Relay UK app](#) or [contact us in BSL](#)
- Start a [live chat](#)

In an emergency you should always call 999.

You can talk to Victim Support whether or not you've reported the crime to the police.

They can support you without the involvement of the criminal justice system.