

What is a romance scam?



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A romance scam is when someone grows to love and trust someone they have met on:

- an online dating site
- social media
- a dating app

The profile the person is using is **fake**.

Fake means it is not true.

The dating profile is being used by a **scammer**.

A **scammer** is a person who gets you to trust them, then tricks you to get your money or personal information.



How dating and romance scams work



Scammers may take several months to build up a relationship with you.

It might feel like it is an amazing romance.

The scammer may pretend to book travel to visit you, but they never arrive.



When the scammer has tricked you into trusting them they will ask you for money, gifts, or your bank or credit card details.



Romance scammers sometimes pretend to be a soldier in the army.

This gives them:

- an excuse why they cannot meet you in real life
- a way to try and get you to feel worried about them and feel sorry for them



If you are dating someone who says they are in the army you can offer to give them a call, organise a video chat or send them a letter.



They should have a number, internet connection and mailing address.



If the person does not want to do this, this shows they should not be trusted.

Know the signs of a romance scammer



- after a short time they want to use instant messaging, texts or email instead of chatting on the dating website where you met
- they look like a supermodel in the pictures they send
- they 'fall in love' with you too quickly - they express strong feelings for you in a very short space of time
- they ask you lots of personal questions but do not tell you much about themselves

- they send you gifts
- they ask you to send them money

They will pretend they need money from you:

- for a personal emergency
- or to travel to visit you

Asking for money before they have met you is a big warning sign that the person is a romance scammer.

How to check if a dating profile is fake



- check the profile picture looks real

Photos should not look like they had been taken by a professional photographer.



The person should not look like a model.

Look for ordinary photos.

Check if they have more than one photo on the profile.



- use the website tineye.com to check if profile pictures are real

This website checks if there are matches to the photo anywhere else on the internet.



- check that the profile on the dating website is the same as what the person has told you

For example, make sure the profile picture looks the same as their description of themselves.



- check the language the person is using - is their English very poor?



- trust how you feel

If it feels too good to be true, it probably is.

Do not share personal details



If you are talking to someone you have contacted online, do not share your personal information.

This includes information that could be used get your money including credit card and bank details like:

- which bank you are with
- your pet's name
- or your mother's maiden name



In your profile do not include:

- your last name
- email address
- home address
- phone number
- place of work
- or any other information that could help someone find out who you are and **steal your identity**

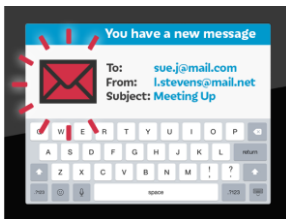
Steal your identity means that someone would pretend to be you so they could steal your money.

Watch out for someone who wants to rush things



A scammer will usually contact you first.

They will sometimes make a fake profile that sounds like the ideal partner you have described in your own dating profile.



After a short time of chatting to you on the dating site, they will tell you they have very strong feelings for you and ask to chat with you privately.

Do not give them money



Never send money to anyone you meet through an online dating website.

Romance scammers can appear desperate if you do not want to send them money straight away.

They may start to email or call you more and make you feel scared.

If you send money, the scammer will keep asking you to send more.



Never click on a link in an email - it could be a way to try to get money from you.

If anyone asks you for money, report this to the dating website.

Report fake profiles on dating sites and apps



Fake profiles will often use the details of trusted people like military personnel, aid workers, medical professionals or professionals working abroad.

Check if someone you are talking to disappears from the site and then comes back on, using a different name.



If you think a profile is fake, check the website for details on how to report.

Usually there will be links or buttons on profiles to block or report people.

Tell someone what is happening



Tell people you trust that you are talking to someone online.

Let someone know if you are asked for money.

Report an online dating scammer



If you have been scammed for money from someone you met online, tell the website straight away.

You can also report it to:

- [Police Scotland](#)
- [Action Fraud](#)

For more information about reporting a scam go to [which.co.uk](https://www.which.co.uk)