

Information sent on behalf of Action Fraud (NFIB)

Lonely Hearts Romance Fraudster Alert

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The NFIB have become aware of techniques used by romance fraudsters against people using dating sites. Not only will they steal your heart they will steal your money and your identification.

When you think you've met the perfect partner through an online dating website or app, but the other person is using a fake profile to form a relationship with you. They're using the site to gain your trust and ask you for money or enough personal information to steal your identity.

A dating fraudster, previously involved in deceiving people that wanted a friendship explained how they would create fake accounts with social media platforms so that their details matched and could be searched. By appearing to be a real person their fake persona could be corroborated by prospective partners searching their background and believe them to be genuine. The fraudster said:

"People like to live in fairy tales to say it won't happen to me. I make sure all my conversations are bespoke. I will show insecurity myself about trusting people and this helps allude to them that I'm genuine."

The fraudster will also utilise as many accessible online research tools to explore people's information for their own personal gain or sell onwards. The fraudster elaborated and explained:

"I use various online directories to find out about the person. Once I have enough, I use it to milk everything I can using their details or sell them on to other fraudsters via the dark web"

When asked how people could check if a person is real. The romance fraudster offered advice for others searching for a relationship. They told us that after you see a picture of them:

"Ask for them to send you another photo of themselves posing with their thumbs up or waving. It's like a form of 2 factor authentication and makes it hard to do if it's not an original picture"

What you need to do

- Avoid sharing too many personal details when on online dating profiles. Revealing your full name, date of birth, or full home address may lead to your identity being stolen.
- Never respond to any requests to send money, or have money transferred into your account by someone you don't know and trust. These types of requests should always raise a red flag. If something feels wrong then it is usually right to question it.
- Pick a reputable dating website or app, and use the built-in messaging service. Fraudsters want to quickly switch to social media or texting so there's no evidence of them asking you for money.

Message sent by

Action Fraud (Action Fraud, Administrator, National)

This message was sent to Nik Carter, please direct any feedback through Nik or register your own account on <https://www.actionfraudalert.co.uk>.

Message number : 257556