

Kent Fraud Alert System



Monday 10 January 2022

Victims of romance fraud in Kent lost almost £3 million last year

TO STOP FRAUD™

Criminals pocketed £2.9 million last year after tugging on the heartstrings of innocent people in Kent.

A total of 248 dating and romance related scams in the county were recorded by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) between November 2020 and October 2021. Most of the victims were aged between 40 and 70 and over half were women.

Kent Police is supporting a national two-week awareness campaign, which launched today (10 January 2022) and is led by the City of London Police to help online daters and their families spot the signs of romance fraud.

It is thought that online daters who strike up a rapport with people between Christmas and Valentine's Day may be more at risk, as March saw a peak in reports recorded by the NFIB across the country last year including Kent.

Trust your instincts

Criminals will spend weeks gaining their victims' trust before asking for money for a variety of emotive reasons. The actual number of romance scams are thought to be considerably higher than the number of recorded crimes as victims often feel too hurt and embarrassed to come forward.

Fraudsters use a range of stories to get victims to transfer them money without it raising suspicion. The stories are often believable, to a certain extent, and something that the victim would find hard to say no to, especially because of their emotional attachment.

Examples of stories include funding travel to visit the victim, money to pay for emergency medical expenses, lucrative investment opportunities and pretending to be military personnel or working overseas.

Kent victim

Recently in North Kent, a woman struck up a relationship with someone who contacted her via social media. That conversation continued via text after exchanging mobile numbers and the scammer told the woman that he was from the UK but was travelling overseas to take medication to his mother. He also said his father needed treatment following a fall and eventually convinced the woman to send him money before realising he wasn't genuine.

Preventing fraud

Together,
let's stop
scammers.



Remember, ABC:



never Assume



never Believe



always Confirm

Get the latest
scam advice:



@KentPoliceECU



**Kent
Police**

Contacting Kent Police

Report a non-urgent crime online www.kent.police.uk/report

Talk to us on LiveChat – available 24/7 www.kent.police.uk/contact

In an emergency, if crime is in progress or life is in danger call **999**

If deaf or speech impaired, text 'police' and your message to **60066**

www.kent.police.uk



Kent Fraud Alert System



TO STOP FRAUD™

The victim initially had reservations but doubted them due to the meaningful relationship that had developed between the two of them. She reported the incident to Action Fraud, which was referred to Kent Police, and in this instance she was able to get her money back after reporting it to her bank.

Detective Inspector Helen Smithers from Kent Police's Serious Economic Crime Unit said: 'Victims are being conned out of their savings and left heartbroken because of these criminals and we want to do everything we can to prevent innocent people from being exploited.'

'We know how this type of offending can affect people and there is absolutely nothing to be embarrassed about. Why should fraudsters get away with committing such heart-breaking crimes. They will try every trick in the book to get people to part with their money, innocent people who think they are in a loving relationship and we want to find the criminals responsible for that.'

'We urge people to protect themselves online and to look out for their friends and family, especially those most vulnerable in our society.'

'Anyone who thinks they are being targeted or has been a victim of dating fraud should report it immediately. This information will continue to help us to identify and track down these heartless offenders and bring them to justice.'

Report it

To report fraud contact Action Fraud via their website, or by calling 0300 123 2040. You can also contact Kent Police by visiting www.kent.police.uk or by calling 101 if you do not have access to the internet. In the event of an emergency, or if a crime is in progress, always call 999. Incidents can also be reported to the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555111 or by completing their online [form](#).

Spot the signs

- They want to communicate with you through instant messaging and texts, rather than through the dating website or chat room where you met.
- They ask you lots of questions about yourself, but don't tell you much about themselves.
- They don't answer basic questions about where they live and work.



**Kent
Police**

Contacting Kent Police

Report a non-urgent crime online www.kent.police.uk/report
Talk to us on LiveChat – available 24/7 www.kent.police.uk/contact
In an emergency, if crime is in progress or life is in danger call **999**
If deaf or speech impaired, text 'police' and your message to **60066**

www.kent.police.uk   

Preventing fraud

Together,
let's stop
scammers.



Remember, ABC:

 never Assume

 never Believe

 always Confirm

Get the latest
scam advice: 

@KentPoliceECU

Kent Fraud Alert System



- Don't be convinced by profile pictures as they may have been taken from somewhere else on the internet.

TO STOP FRAUD™

Fraudsters will use different scenarios, such as:

- Claiming to be military personnel based overseas who require funds for flights home or early discharge from the forces.
- Requiring money to pay for medical-related issues such as emergency surgery for themselves or a family member.
- They have arranged to visit you but need money to pay travel costs.



**Kent
Police**

Contacting Kent Police

Report a non-urgent crime online www.kent.police.uk/report
Talk to us on LiveChat – available 24/7 www.kent.police.uk/contact
In an emergency, if crime is in progress or life is in danger call **999**
If deaf or speech impaired, text 'police' and your message to **60066**

www.kent.police.uk   