


**Disclaimer**—dating profiles on this page are based on typical scam profiles. Images used in this newsletter are from pixabay.com (free for commercial use). Spelling errors in ads have been deliberately left in to highlight what people should be looking out for in a scam.


With **Valentine's Day** fast approaching, you may have decided to find a date online. Do you know how to date online safely? Fraudsters set up fake profiles to scam money from you . NEVER send money to someone you've not met, or agree to receive money into your account #Tell2 #TakeFive @NottsFraudCops



John, 53  
Location—cannot disclose  
Sergeant Major—US Navy and proud citizen  
Soon retiring  
Want to spent my retrirment age travelling with a sole mate, who would really understand me

**Nottinghamshire Victim Care** have been supporting victims of scams and fraudulent activities for many years. Scammers often target personal vulnerabilities, such as loneliness, isolation and the need for company. They also employ a range of tactics such as distracting you by causing you to click on bogus web sites. For example, I just been told that my Amazon (or any other account) has been hacked to being sold fake concert tickets or promised to have your student fees paid for (as you can get a better exchange rate).

Our aim for this issue of the Newsletter is to provide tips for anyone looking to start a new relationship on line. We also want to reassure people that if things go wrong, it is fine to ask for help and that support is available— as you will see from the case study on page two. It is often the case with any given situation that we may not immediately spot that something is wrong until later, as we are so entangled in the situation that we really do not know what to do next.



Gertrude,  
26  
5 miles  
away  
German humanitirrian aid  
worker on a study exchange  
programm in England  
Looking for a sole mate, do  
not want to be dispaired

**Many #RomanceScams begin on social media. Scammers look for vulnerabilities in profiles to help identify their targets. Keep info such as relationship status, DOB, telephone number and email address PRIVATE or at least FRIENDS ONLY**

**#RomanceScam Beware of: Excuses why the person can't video call / speak on the phone. With technology around the world, there shouldn't be an excuse why someone can't video call / speak on the phone** ❤️📞 #Fauxmance #Take5 #Tell2

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**Our caseworker Jane has been supporting Olivia** (*not her real name*), a university educated widow in her early sixties. She has a loving family but did not tell them at the beginning about the scam as she was worried they would find it hard to understand. Olivia really appreciated that she was listened to without prejudice by Jane and felt that Jane could relate to her as well as provide practical advice.

**Olivia's situation is not unusual.** She became lonely after her husband passed away and wanted to find new friends. She started to chat to Fred on one of the dating sites, and quickly got entangled in a complex scheme including an alleged call from a police officer abroad informing her that Fred was detained there as he tried to leave without paying his contractual obligations. As Fred kept her up to date with his business travel worries (or so she thought) she truly believed this.

As part of the new banking protocol, her bank questioned her directly as to why she was sending a large sum of currency abroad, to which she made excuses but eventually Olivia spoke to the bank's Fraud team who stopped at least one large transaction.

#TakeFive

#Tell2

looking for a happy ending, I was still grieving and needed someone in my life, it's hard to explain. So I, at his request, transferred money through something he uses all the time in his business, Bitcoins."

Eventually, Fred stopped communicating with Olivia and she used Reverse Imaging. She discovered that the photos Fred sent her claiming to be of him were of another person. At that point, she made the decision to report the scam to Action Fraud and was contacted by our team as a result.

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Olivia has been slowly getting her life back, even though she continues to have concerns about trust and has suffered major financial loss. She is rebuilding her relationships with her children (and not keeping situation hidden from them) and working with her bank and the loan companies.

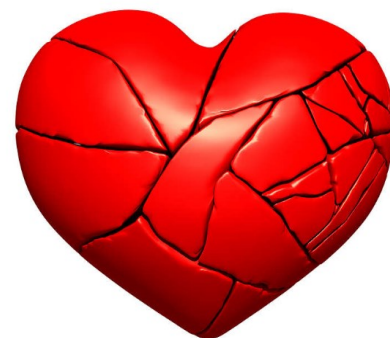
When our caseworker first spoke to Olivia, she said she "didn't really know where to start". She said she wanted support but didn't know if she would get it as it was her fault. She also said that the reason why she kept in touch with the fraudster was that she thought she would get her money back.

Jane explored feelings of guilt, shame and feeling stupid and how the situation had been affecting her on a daily basis and she had lost sleep over it. Since our last meeting, with Olivia and with our support, Olivia has explained the situation to all of her children, who are supportive (even helping her out financially).

Olivia has been appreciative of our support and said she said that "Jane showed real compassion and understanding of her situation and made her see that there will be light at the end of the tunnel even though she still feels upset". She was especially glad to talk to Jane before Christmas as she felt really bad as she was unable to buy her family presents.

Olivia now feels empowered to attend planned meetings with the bank and reach out to her family to support her during these meetings and continues to talk to Jane when she needs further reassurance.

**Olivia would like to let anyone know that they should not struggle on their own if they feel that they have found themselves in a similar situation – do not be afraid to ask for help.**



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### Online Dating Tips from Action Fraud:

When online dating, beware of particular behaviours and language a dating scammer might use:

- \* The relationship with someone you've met online is solely based on e-mails, text messages and phone calls and doesn't seem to develop into meeting up.
- \* This person's profile picture and the ones they send you make them look like a supermodel.

- \* They ask you lots of questions about yourself but don't tell you much about themselves.
- \* They quickly start calling you by a pet name or use endearing terms such as 'darling'.

### Message from our partners at the local Trading Standards Team:

Be in the know like Jo! When looking for love online, watch out for people trying to commit a crime.

- \* Question them and ask for facts that you can verify.
- \* You can always do a bit of sleuthing if it all sounds too good to be true.
- \* Never send or receive money or give away your bank details to someone you have only just met online, no matter how much you trust them.



### Nottinghamshire Police Fraud Tips:

- \* Do your research when dating online.
- \* Do a reverse image search of their photos on Google or TinEye.
- \* Use reputable dating sites and their messaging service.
- \* Speak openly about your dating with friends & family. Keep safe! Your private life should stay private until you have met .

### More Scam Awareness Resources:

[www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk](http://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk)

[www.nottsvictimcare.org.uk](http://www.nottsvictimcare.org.uk)

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@NottsVictimCare

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