

Kent Fraud Alert System



Urgent Scam Alert Romance and Relationship Fraud

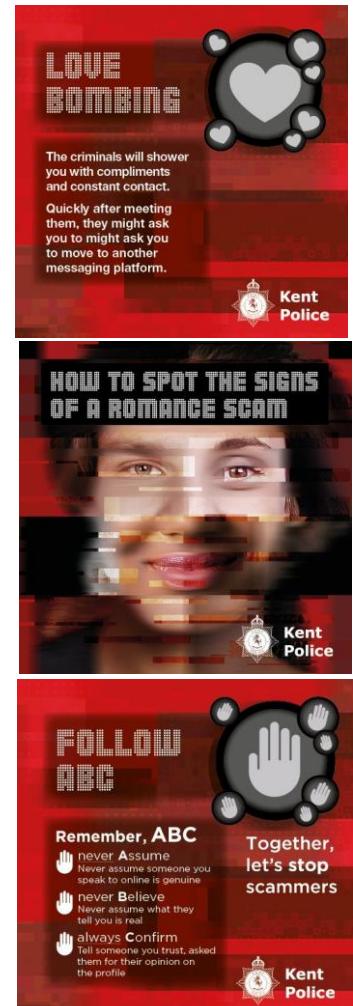
Criminals are currently using sophisticated tactics, including AI generated “deepfake” video calls and fake investment opportunities, to target individuals looking for connection online.

Four signs you are being targeted

- **The Love Bomb** – They shower you with intense affection, declare love within days and use phrases like, “I’ve never felt this way before” and “You’re the only one that understand me.” They will also ask you to keep the relationship quiet and not to tell family or friends, as they “will not understand.”
- **The Platform Shift** – They immediately pressure you to move the conversation from a dating site to encrypted apps like WhatsApp, Telegram or Signal to avoid security monitoring.
- **The Perpetual Crisis** – They claim to be working overseas (e.g. military, oil rigs, medical or a CEO) and repeatedly cancel plans to meet due to a sudden emergency.
- **The financial Hook** – Once trust is built, they ask for money for medical bills, travel costs or a guaranteed crypto investment etc.

How to protect yourself

- **Reverse Image Search** – use google images or TinEye to check if their profile photo is stolen from someone else.
- **Verify With Task** – Ask them to perform a specific action during a video call (e.g. touch your nose with your ring finger) to bypass AI deepfakes.
- **Never Send Money** – A genuine person will Never ask you for money, gift cards, crypto if you have not met in person.
- **Stay On The App** – Keep all conversations on the dating platform where you met.
- **Speak To a Trusted Person** – Tell someone you trust, ask them for their opinion on the profile.



“If this applies to you, then stop all contact immediately and block them on all platforms”

If you have been a victim of any type of scam, then contact your Bank immediately, which you can do by calling 159 and reporting to Report Fraud at [Reporting cyber crime and fraud or phishing attempts - Report Fraud](#) or call 0300 123 2040.



**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
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Cold calling Doorstep Sellers

We have received reports of cold callers selling cleaning materials etc. with some sort of background "hard luck story."

They will knock on a door, offering cleaning items which they know are cheap and of extremely poor quality, the householder also knows this but that is part of the scam. Many people will purchase items and pay them out of their good nature as they have felt sorry for them or just to get rid of them.

On occasions, people have been asked to pay via card with the seller using a portable card machine. Previously, one victim thought she was paying £20 but in fact, paid £2000, mistaking the final last two zero's as being pence.

Our advice is never to deal with cold callers. Cold calling is a favourite method of rogue traders whose only aim is to get as much money from their victims as possible. Even if you avoid dealing with rogue traders, those who could call will usually be persuasive and often catch you when you least expect it and your guard is down. It is difficult to make the right buying decision on your doorstep.

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Find out more by visiting our website at [Advice about fraud | Kent Police](#) and also from the Home Office at [Stop! Think Fraud - How to stay safe from scams](#)



Preventing fraud

Together,
let's stop
scammers.



Remember, ABC:

 never Assume

 never Believe

 always Confirm



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Rogue Trader Alert

We have received reports of doorstep criminals active in Maidstone, Ashford, Hythe, Gillingham and Dartford.

Never respond to cold callers! You will pay an excessive cost for unnecessary and poor-quality work.

Please warn your vulnerable friends and family to be alert.

You can:

- Ask the visitor to return another time when someone can be with you
- Get three written quotes
- Ask family and friends for recommendations
- Agree payment arrangements and start and finish dates in writing beforehand and never pay in full until you are completely satisfied with the work.

If you need work carried out on your home or garden use a safe, local trader from KCC Trading Standards Checked: [Trading Standards Checked](#)

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Report Fraud launches

Recently, the City of London Police, the national lead force for fraud, announced the full public launch of Report Fraud, which has now officially replaced Action Fraud.

A new media and advertising campaign went live on Monday 19 January to help raise awareness of the brand-new service for reporting cybercrime and fraud.

The advertising campaign is being run across radio and social channels, featuring the service's clear new visual identity and message, 'Every Report Counts.'

Please see their campaign hero film here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CpZRbpNxCOM>



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For further information, you can read more on their press release here: [Report Fraud launches | City of London Police](#)

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URGENT FRAUD ALERT - How to spot online shopping scams

Here are some tips around a report we regularly receive, online shopping scams and how you can avoid becoming a victim.

Seven ways to spot and avoid a shopping scam

Sometimes, a rogue retailer can be hard to spot, especially as freely available AI tools can be misused to create convincing images and product descriptions. If you are tempted by an offer you have seen online, you should follow these steps before you part with any money:

- Assess how reasonable the offer is. Prices that sound too good to be true usually are.
- Check for signs of a newly created website. Use a domain checker, such as [WHOIS Search, Domain Name, Website, and IP Tools - Who.is](#), to see when the website was created. If it is recent, then you should consider avoiding it.
- Use [TinEye - Reverse Image Search and Recognition](#) or image search on Google to see if images in adverts and on websites have been used anywhere else on the internet.
- Watch out for poor spelling, bad grammar and phrases that do not sound right.
- See if the website lists a physical address. Businesses should have this, as well as a phone number or email address to contact them.
- Check if the company's website lists a shipping and returns policy. If it is legitimate, it should have this.
- Look at reviews across several sources to get a sense of the experience of other shoppers.

Your rights when returning a product overseas

When shopping online, you still have UK rights regardless of where the item is located. Under the [Consumer Rights Act 2015 - Which?](#), you have a right to a refund if an item is not as described, is not of a satisfactory quality or is not fit for purpose.

This also includes a 14 day cooling off period - [What's a cooling-off period and how do I use it to cancel an order? - Which?](#) for online orders, so you have a minimum of 14 days after receiving your items to decide whether you want to keep your order or not.

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However, if you buy an item that ends up being shipped from overseas, it might be difficult to apply these rights. Therefore, it's always best to pay via credit card so you have extra protection under [Section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act - Which?](#). If you pay via debit card or by credit card and the goods were less than £100, you can make a charge back claim [How do I use chargeback? - Which?](#). If you paid via PayPal, you have Buyer's Protection, which allows you to request a refund.

On social media, adverts can be reported to the platform by selecting the three dots in the top right-hand corner of the post and pressing 'report.' Suspicious websites can be reported to the [Report a scam website - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)

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