

Are they really your perfect match?

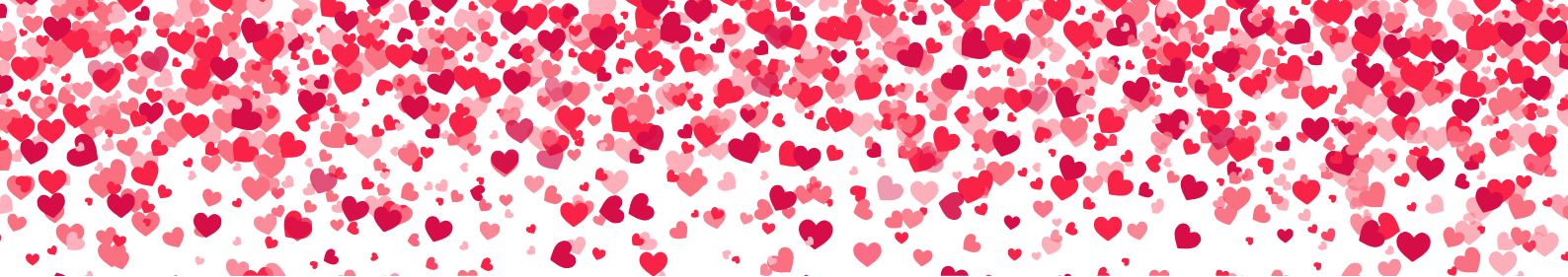
Romance Scams

Know the facts and how to avoid becoming a victim



To find out more contact Trading Standards on **01635 519930** or
email tsadvice@westberks.gov.uk.

You can also call Citizens Advice Consumer Service on **03454 040506**

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- In 2023, the National Fraud Investigation Bureau (NFIB), run by the City of London Police received 8,792 reports of romance fraud in the UK.
 - Losses reported by victims to NFIB in 2023 totaled over £94.7million. The average loss per person was £10,774.
 - The top five platforms victims report speaking to scammers on are; Facebook, Plenty of Fish, Instagram, Tinder and Match.com.
 - In 2023 the Public Protection Partnership Trading Standards service supported a victim who lost £900,000 to a romance scammer.
 - The scammer will often state they are overseas, on business, in the military or working on an oil rig.
 - The relationship gets very serious, very quickly and the scammer may profess their love at an early stage.
 - The scammer will take advantage of the emotional attachment that has been struck up and invent a reason to ask the individual for financial help. This could be for an operation or medical expenses, or to get a passport and plane tickets to visit you.
 - Secrecy is important, the scammer will tell the individual to keep them a secret and may try and turn the person against their family.
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- Check the person is genuine by searching for their name in a search engine such as Google www.google.co.uk.
 - Include 'catfish', 'romance fraud' and 'dating scam' in the search.
 - Do a reverse search of the person's image to see if it is genuine. The images of the individual will often have been used on multiple occasions.
 - Never send money or give bank or personal details to anyone you have met online.
 - Don't rush into anything, ask lots of questions, get to know the person.
 - Scammers will often repeat themselves, so they make themselves suspicious, try to listen out for and notice those suspicions.
 - Speak to a friend or family member to see what they think and be very wary of anyone you meet online asking you to keep them a secret.
 - If you become a victim of a romance scam, don't be embarrassed, report it to Action Fraud on www.actionfraud.police.uk or on 0300 1232040.

To learn more about Romance/Dating scams go to <https://www.getsafeonline.org/social-net-working/online-dating>, contact Trading Standards on **01635 519930** or email tsadvice@westberks.gov.uk. You can also call Citizens Advice Consumer Service on **03454 040506**.