



ROMANCE SCAMS

Who is really behind the keyboard?

Keep your guard up and look out for potential scammers who will try to lower your defences by appealing to your romantic and compassionate side. They can prey on you on popular, legitimate dating sites as well as on fake ones.

On a real dating site, a scammer might send you a few messages and a good-looking photo of themselves, or of someone they claim to be. Once you are charmed, they will **start asking you to send money**. They may claim to have a very sick family member or

a desperate situation with which they need your help. Once you **give them money, they often disappear**.

A fraudster can also create a fake dating site where you **pay for each message you send and receive**. To keep you writing back and paying,

the scammer may hook you in with vague emails about their love and desire for you.

In many cases, the scammer may even arrange to meet up with you in person to make their **fraud seem more credible**.

Tips to protect yourself:

- Never send money or give financial details on a dating site.
- Trust your instincts, ask questions and carefully read the terms and conditions before signing up.
- Know which services are free, which ones cost money and what it takes to cancel your account.
- Make sure you only use legitimate and reputable dating sites. Always check website addresses carefully, as scammers often mimic real web addresses.
- Remember that it's very unlikely that someone will declare their undying love to anyone after only a few letters, emails, phone calls or pictures.

If you suspect a scam, always report it.

Go to pages 34 and 36 for more information.