

Romance and Relationship Scams

Young people are building relationships online. But not everyone is who they claim to be.

Romance scammers use compliments and emotional stories to trick teens into sending money, gift cards, or personal details. These scams are emotionally manipulative and financially damaging - leaving young victims hurt, embarrassed, and vulnerable.

How it starts:

The scammers start by:

- Pretend to be friendly or romantic
- Use AI-generated or stolen photos
- Ask lots of personal questions to build trust
- Say they love or care about your child quickly
- Try to move the conversation off social platforms
- Avoid meeting or video calls

Then comes the ask - money for a "bill", travel, or a "family emergency".

Signs Your Child Might Be Targeted

- Sudden emotional connection with someone online
- Secretive phone or message behaviour
- Mention of money, gift cards, or favours for someone online
- Refusal to share details about an online "friend"
- Increased distress, anxiety or withdrawal

Talk Early. Talk Often.

Let your child know:

- They can always come to you if they're unsure
- It's okay to question "kind" messages
- Never to send money or help someone online without checking

If It's Already Happened

Take immediate steps

1. Stop all communication with the person
2. Contact the bank or payment provider
3. Change any shared passwords or details
4. Report the scam at [actionfraud.police.uk](https://www.actionfraud.police.uk) or call 0300 123 2040
5. Offer emotional support. These scams feel real and personal.

Help your child bounce back. Your calm support makes all the difference.