

Fraudsters may try to convince you that they want to become friends or are romantically interested. They often create fake online profiles designed to lure you in. They may use a fake name or take on the identity of someone real who looks trustworthy. They might pretend to be someone in the military, a charity worker or a professional working abroad.

These fraudsters can spend a long time building trust or it can all happen rather quickly. They'll invent a reason to ask for your help using the emotional attachment they've built with you and say that they'll repay you.



For example, they might say they need help with travel costs or hospital bills.

Or they may prey on your sympathies by telling you a family member or someone else they're responsible for is ill and needs money for medical treatment.

## How to protect yourself from romance and friendship scams

- ✓ **Never send** money to someone you haven't met in person.
- ✓ **Always consider** the possibility that the approach may be a scam, particularly if the warning signs above appear. Try to remove the emotion from your decision making, no matter how caring or persistent the 'prospective partner' is.
- ✓ **Be wary of requests for money.** Never send money or give credit card details, online account details, or copies of important personal documents to anyone you've met online.
- ✓ **Always check** if the person you're talking to is who they say they are. Perform a reverse image search on a web search engine. This can show that the photos have been taken from somewhere, or someone, else.



**Remember: If something sounds too good to be true, it's probably a scam.**



**TO STOP FRAUD™**

### Take Five to Stop Fraud

Criminals are experts at impersonating people, organisations and the police. They spend hours researching you for their scams, hoping you'll let your guard down for just a moment. [Visit the Take Five website for more information.](#)

It could protect you and your money.