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Online romance fraud is on the increase – 19th March, 2021

Level 4

There was a 20 per cent rise in romance fraud last year. Loneliness and isolation during the coronavirus pandemic increased this number. This cyber-fraud coincided with a rise in the number of people looking for a partner online. There was a big rise in scams related to dating apps. UK Finance said: "Romance scams can leave customers out of love and out of pocket....Scammers can be very convincing by forming an emotional attachment with their victims."

Cyber criminals took advantage of dating apps during lockdowns. People lost a total of \$26 million in bank transfer fraud. The average loss per victim was around \$11,000. A UK bank said older people are most vulnerable. A fraud expert said: "Any online platform...could be targeted by romance fraudsters, so it's important to remain vigilant." She urged people to be careful if an online love interest asks for money.

Level 5

People looking for love on the Internet need to be cautious. There was a 20 per cent spike in romance fraud last year. UK Finance reported that increased cyber-fraud coincided with a rise in the number of people looking for a partner online. Feelings of loneliness and isolation during the coronavirus pandemic increased this number. There was a big rise in the number of scams related to dating apps. UK Finance said: "Romance scams can leave customers out of love and out of pocket....Scammers can be very convincing by forming an emotional attachment with their victims."

The Online Dating Association reported that 2.3 million British citizens used dating apps during lockdown. Cyber criminals took advantage of them. A total of \$26 million was lost in bank transfer fraud. The average loss per victim was around \$11,000. A UK bank said people aged 55 to 64 are the most vulnerable. A fraud expert said: "Any online platform that allows you to connect with and talk to other people could be targeted by romance fraudsters, so it's important to remain vigilant." She urged people to be careful if an online love interest asks for money for things like medical care.

Level 6

Authorities are urging those looking for love on the Internet to be cautious. There was a 20 per cent spike in online romance fraud last year. The organisation UK Finance reported that cyber fraud increased considerably and coincided with a rise in the number of people looking for a partner online. This has been exacerbated by feelings of loneliness and isolation during the coronavirus pandemic. There was a sharp rise in the number of scams related to dating sites and around Valentine's Day. UK Finance said: "Romance scams can leave customers out of love and out of pocket." It warned: "Romance scammers can be very convincing by forming an emotional attachment with their victims."

The Online Dating Association in the UK reported that around 2.3 million British citizens used dating apps during lockdown. Cyber criminals have taken advantage of this to scam people. A total of \$26 million is believed to have been lost in bank transfer fraud. The average loss per victim is around \$11,000. According to data from a UK bank, people aged 55 to 64 are the most vulnerable to romance fraud. Pauline Smith, a fraud expert, said: "Any online platform that allows you to connect with and talk to other people could be targeted by romance fraudsters, so it's important to remain vigilant." She urged extreme caution if an online love interest requests money for things like medical care.