

Gran is conned by internet 'lover'

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Woman who sent £180 to man she 'met' on dating website left heartbroken by Nigerian fraudster Andrew Robinson.

A LOVELORN grandmother has been left £180 out of pocket after falling for a scam which is plaguing internet dating sites.

Kristina Broom, 53, borrowed money and took out a loan after a man she "met" on a dating website asked her for cash.

The mother-of-five and grandmother of 12, who has been married three times, was taken in by a string of lies by a man who called himself "Sam", who told her a sob story about the death of his wife, and claimed to work in London fixing computers.

Mrs Broom, who suffers from arthritis and cares for her young grandson, said she now realised that there were hundreds of "scammers" preying on people looking for love.

"It's been difficult to find happiness. Not a lot of men want to be with someone of my age who looks after an 11-year-old boy. I got so swept away in everything he was saying that I was blinded to what was really happening.

"He told me he loved me and we used to speak on the phone every morning and then we would email each other all day. He was so romantic and said all the right things." When "Sam" told her he had to go to Africa on business, she then got an email asking for cash for his airfare home.

"He told me there had been some problems and that he desperately needed this money. I came up with all sorts of suggestions before sending him it, but he said he had tried them all."

After sending money via Western Union she became suspicious and did some research, discovering that scams were common and often operated from Nigeria.

"I typed his email name in the internet and it came up as being Nigerian. I found out that there are thousands of men sat in cyber cafes fooling women, and even men, to try and get money. It's devastating in its consequences. These people are messing with emotions." Mrs Broom, of Darnley, near Alverthorpe in Wakefield, stopped contact with "Sam" and alerted the website, which removed his profile.

She said: "This man, who I thought I knew and had grown to care for, didn't exist. He was just a figment of someone's imagination.

"These people target lonely men and women who are looking for someone to love. Besides

losing money, people are losing their hearts and losing hope in the decency of ordinary people."

Her advice to internet dating site users is simple: "Learn how to spot a scammer by reading the advice and scam stories on the Web. And don't send anyone any money. I have learned a great deal."

Similar scams also target those who use contact magazines in their search for a date. In December last year Colin Johnson, 64, from Featherstone in West Yorkshire, was duped into handing over £4,000 to a woman called Lydia who said she was a nurse in Ghana, Africa. She contacted him after he placed an ad in Matchmaker magazine. After several letters, phone calls and an exchange of photos, she announced she wanted to visit Mr Johnson but could not afford the £429 air fare.

A few days later she called asking for £1,500, saying it was needed to convince immigration officials she was not destitute.

The requests for money didn't end there, Mr Johnson told the Yorkshire Post. A man posing as a her lawyer called saying he needed more money as Lydia had been arrested and needed help.

In total he paid out £4,263, including fees to Western Union, but never got to meet the elusive Lydia.

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