

# Police warn of potential for social media users to fall victim to “sextortion” scams

Police are warning about the potential for social media users to fall victim to “sextortion” scams, with one in particular being prevalent at the moment.

The scam is typically, but not exclusively, aimed at men between the ages of 18 and 44, who are targeted by Organised Crime Groups – usually based overseas – who seek to extort money from them by luring them to perform explicit sexual acts over social media.



Police Scotland

If they do so, the victim is threatened that if they do not pay a certain sum of money, the footage will be posted online or sent to friends and family.

Detective Constable Oliver Healy from Gayfield CID said: "This is a serious crime which can have catastrophic consequences for some of the victims. It is vital that victims are reassured that police will treat each report as serious and confidential, and that they will be supported, as it is likely given the nature of the crime that they will be experiencing heightened feelings of shame, self-blame, fear and anxiety.

"We would ask people to consider what they share and who they share it with. They should, ideally, only share pictures online that they are happy with their friends, family and others seeing. Switching communication from one platform to another is a tactic used during these scams to gain as much information about a victim as possible.

"The simplest way to avoid falling victim is to refrain from accepting friend requests from people you don't know. Frequently victims are lured into a false sense of security when they observe offenders have the same mutual friends. This again forms part of the tactics utilised by these Organised Crime Groups.

"If you find yourself being blackmailed or extorted in this way, contact us on 101 or 999 in an emergency. You will be given support and your report will be taken in utmost confidence."

Further information on keeping safe online can be found [here](#).