

# Police warn of increasing number of 'sextortion' scam victims

Over the past few weeks police have received an increasing number of reports of social media users falling victim to "sextortion" scams.

These typically involve a victim being enticed and encouraged to send nude or explicit photos or videos of themselves to someone who has befriended them online, then being blackmailed into sending money to prevent them being distributed to people they know or elsewhere on the internet.



Detective Inspector Laura Dickson from Lothian and Scottish Borders CID said: "Police Scotland is again experiencing an increase in this type of online crime.

"The reality with these types of incidents are that you will never be communicating with the same person that you may be seeing as a profile picture, or as they have described themselves to you during the initial online meeting.

“They will purposely pose as someone different in order to attract your attention. Their goal is to win your trust and confidence, convince you they are genuine, and persuade you to send compromising images of yourself to them.

“ Their overall objective is to extort money from you by threatening to post these compromising images of you online to friends and family through social media platforms.

“I would appeal to everyone who uses social media to take a few minutes and consider who you believe you are talking to during these exchanges. Exchanges which frequently arise from random friend requests through the likes of Facebook, Instagram and dating sites.

“Please also be mindful that once you send any images or videos, they are out there forever, with little chance of us fully recovering them.

“If you find yourself in circumstances where you believe you been blackmailed or extorted in this way, please contact us on 101 or 999 in an emergency.

Further information on keeping safe online can be found here: