

CNNW Regional Safeguarding report September 2026

Summary of “Later Daters” safeguarding guidance

This document provides safeguarding guidance for older adults (“later daters”) engaging in online dating, as well as for professionals, families, and carers supporting them. Its purpose is to raise awareness of the growing risks associated with online relationships while reducing stigma and encouraging open, supportive conversations.

The document highlights that **life experience does not eliminate vulnerability**. Even confident, intelligent older adults can be targeted by perpetrators using online platforms. It outlines the increasing prevalence of romance scams, financial exploitation, emotional manipulation, and coercive control affecting older people.

Key sections explain the **common tactics used by perpetrators**, including rapid relationship progression, “love bombing”, fabricated crises, gradual financial requests, and encouragement of secrecy. These behaviours are presented to help readers recognise patterns early.

Clear **protective advice** is provided, stressing the importance of never sending money or sharing financial details, limiting personal information, verifying identity, meeting only in public places, and avoiding shared finances or dependency. Readers are encouraged to trust their instincts, recognise red flags, and keep records of concerning behaviours.

A strong theme throughout the document is **challenging shame and victim-blaming**. It emphasises that anyone can be targeted, responsibility always lies with the perpetrator, and speaking out helps protect others. The emotional impact of exploitation is acknowledged, with reassurance offered to those affected.

Finally, the document signposts **support and reporting routes**, including law enforcement, banks, Age UK and Victim Support, encouraging individuals to seek help early and locally.

A few reminders...

Data Protection A gentle reminder to be careful when you reply to club emails. Please make sure you only reply to the sender not all the recipients (a data breach). One club member has had some nasty emails from a hacker as a result.

Vulnerability Be careful to be gentle and kind to one another even if you are annoyed with them. None of us know what is going on in peoples lives that may make them vulnerable to unkindness.

When dealing with concerns about possible abuse / harm remember the 4 R s

Recognise your concerns which you may come across in your programme work. Don't ignore your concerns.

Respond if volunteering for another organisation follow their protocols- if unsure ask ! If SIGBI only then talk to regional safeguarding officer. 🚒

Record Write everything down – keep everything factual. Keep in a confidential place. Avoid sending emails with confidential emails. Use secure emails and use initials.

Refer to relevant agency. Only discuss issues on a “ need to know” basis. Refer straight away if an emergency.

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