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Message sent by

Action Fraud (Action Fraud, Administrator, National)

The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) and Action Fraud have recently noticed that Fraudsters have been setting up fake adverts on social media (including Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp) and job browsing websites to dupe people into believing they are recruiting for prospective models.

Once victims show interest in the job, the fraudsters contact potential victims on the false promise of a modelling career and subsequently advise the victims to come in for a test shoot.

The fraud can then potentially be carried out in two ways;

Firstly, the fraudsters can pressurise the victims in sending an upfront fee to book a slot for the test shoot. Once they have received the upfront fee, the victim will never hear from the fraudsters again.

The second possible method is that the fraudsters will take the advance fee that the victim sends for a photo shoot and arrange a photo shoot with the victim. After the photo shoot, the fraudsters will contact the victim after a few days and convince them that their shoot was successful and offer them a job as a model. The victim will then be asked to sign a contract and pay another upfront fee, usually to secure the modelling contract.

Fraudsters are also creating fake adverts for supposed modelling opportunities for children which do not exist. Fraudsters will inform parents or guardians that a potential career in modelling awaits their child. This tactic convinces the parent or guardian to sign up their child and send an advance fee.

The suspects will also convince the victim that in order to become a model, they will need to have a portfolio. The fraudsters will recommend a number of packages and stress that if a package is not paid for in advance, the process of becoming a model cannot continue.

Over a two year period (September 2015 – August 2017), an average of 28 reports of advance fee modelling frauds have been received per month by the NFIB. In August 2017, 49 Action Fraud reports of this fraud type were received and may continue to rise. The total loss in August 2017 alone was over £71,000.

Tips for staying safe:

- Carry out your own research prior to paying any type of advance or upfront fee.
- Be wary if you are asked to pay for a portfolio, as many legitimate agencies will cover that cost.

- Don't give your bank account details or sensitive information to anyone without carrying out your own research on the relevant agency.
- If you have been affected by this, or any other type of fraud, report it to Action Fraud by visiting www.actionfraud.police.uk or by calling 0300 123 2040.



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