

The Oasis Centre - Cornwall

Registered Charity Number 1139355, founded to serve the communities in the parishes of St Columb Major, St Mawgan-in-Pydar, St Eval and St Ervan



Looking Out for Jobs

Number 30 in a series of notes on important issues.

Most people, at one time or another, find themselves looking for a job. Their search may be short-lived as they seek and find their ideal ‘job for life’ or it may become an ever-changing process as they identify and take on a succession of roles throughout their working lives. Job seeking can involve scanning advertisements in newspapers and periodicals, recruitment agencies, contacts through friends and family and, increasingly, Internet searches. Job seekers can be vulnerable to fraud. Criminals know that.

Action Fraud (0300 123 2040 or www.actionfraud.police.uk) tell us that fraudsters are setting up fake advertisements on social media and job search websites for victims looking for lucrative modelling careers. They advise their victims to book and attend a ‘test shoot’ – for a fee. This fee, if paid, can then disappear along with the criminals. Alternatively, a photo shoot will actually be arranged, the victim will attend and, surprise, surprise, will be told that he or she has passed with flying colours. A fantastic job as a model is on offer and all that is needed is their signature on a contract and (of course) another, perhaps bigger, up-front fee. That goes in a puff of wind and so do the fraudsters.

These fake advertisements can include modelling opportunities for children and the fraudsters will tell parents or guardians of the wonderful career in modelling that awaits their child. They are told they need to have a ‘portfolio’ for which the fraudsters recommend various packages. Of course, if a package is not paid for in advance, progress towards that glittering future cannot continue. An average of twenty-eight reports of these frauds were received per month in the two years to August 2017 and the total loss in that month was over £71,000.

It is not just prospective models who are the targets of this scam. Others looking for jobs, in this country and overseas, have been targeted by fraudsters trying to obtain personal and banking details or deposits to secure ‘accommodation’. These bogus recruitment businesses ask them to complete application forms, which of course request personal information and banking details, and to supply copies of identity documents. In some instances the applicants are invited for interview (in person or over the phone) to make the process look as legitimate as possible.

The advice from Action Fraud, as always, is to research any such offer and those making it as thoroughly as possible. Do not use the contact details given without making separate checks to see if they are authentic and that the business actually exists. Any request for an up-front fee should be treated with particular caution. Incidentally, many legitimate modelling agencies will cover the cost of a ‘portfolio’.

Jeremy Simmonds, Chair, The Oasis Centre - Cornwall