



UK victims lost £2.4 million every day to investment fraud in 2025 - equivalent to £1,675 a minute, City of London Police reveal

Victims of investment fraud lost an average of £1,675 every minute last year, new figures from the City of London Police, the National Lead Force for Fraud, have revealed.

Criminals stole £879.8 million through investment fraud last year - an average of £2.4 million a day.

In 2025, 34,673 people reported investment fraud to Report Fraud, the national service that replaced Action Fraud in December 2025. This marks a 31 per cent rise on the previous year, with officers warning that fraudsters are taking advantage of economic uncertainty, volatile markets, and increasingly convincing online platforms to lure in victims.

The rise in reporting is not only linked to an increase in investment fraud, but also due to the point at which victims realise what has happened. Reports began climbing steadily from March and spiked in July and September when many people review their investments, move money into new products or check their returns ahead of the new financial year.

For thousands of victims, it was only at that point that the truth became clear: the investment they were sold never existed. Losses averaged £25,612 per person, often representing pension savings or long-term- investments.

Detective Inspector Duncan Wynn, Head of Central Fraud Unit at Thames Valley Police said:

“Investment fraudsters are highly skilled at appearing legitimate and will often use pressure, false urgency and promises of high returns to manipulate victims. If an

opportunity sounds too good to be true, or you are being rushed into a decision, stop, take a step back and seek independent advice before parting with any money

Investment fraud does not just affect the vulnerable – anyone can be targeted at the right moment. Criminals tailor their approach to an individual's circumstances, often striking during periods of financial pressure, life change, or heightened emotion. Understanding how fraudsters manipulate behaviour is key to disrupting their tactics and preventing further victims"

Detective Superintendent Oliver Little, from the Lead Force Operations Room at the City of London Police, said:

"Investment fraud continues to have a devastating impact on victims, many of whom lose lifechanging amounts of money. Criminals are using -professional looking websites, persuasive sales tactics, - and even cloned branding from real financial firms to appear legitimate.

"We're urging the public to take their time, carry out proper checks and get independent financial advice before parting with any money."

Investment fraud last year ranged from bogus online trading platforms to fake bond schemes, cryptocurrency opportunities and glossy social media adverts that featured well-known public figures. Fraud reports have highlighted how criminals now deploy -AI manipulated- videos, deepfake endorsements and cloned websites to draw victims in, echoing patterns seen across the wider fraud landscape.

Another growing problem is so called "recovery fraud," where criminals return to previous victims while posing as law enforcement, lawyers,- or specialist recovery firms. They promise to retrieve stolen money but instead charge upfront fees and disappear. Detectives describe this as one of the most cynical developments in the fraud world, as criminals effectively monetise a victim's desperation a second time.

Although victims were recorded in every police force area in the UK, the data suggests the picture may be even broader; more than a quarter of people reporting investment fraud did not disclose their location, limiting the ability to map the full spread of cases. Older adults, particularly those over 60, remained the most likely to

come forward, in part because they are more likely to have significant savings or pension pots invested.

In parallel with these trends, officers have also observed a rise in so called- “finfluencers” across social media - predominantly young male personalities who boast about making “easy money” on high-risk trading platforms, particularly those linked to forex and -rapid turnover- investments.

Their content often glamorises quick wins, luxury lifestyles and aggressive self-improvement- narratives, themes recently explored in Louis Theroux’s documentary on the online ‘manosphere.’ While not all these personalities are involved in criminal activity, their posts can create a false sense of legitimacy around speculative trading and make inexperienced followers more vulnerable to opportunistic scammers who mimic the same language, style and promises.

As part of wider fraud prevention- work, the City of London Police is urging the public to take simple steps to protect themselves.

- Before making any investment, use the FCA’s [firm checker tool](#), to confirm whether a firm or individual is authorised. The tool can be accessed via the FCA website and is one of the most effective ways to avoid cloned firms and bogus advisers.
- We encourage anyone considering an investment to be cautious of unsolicited messages, adverts promising unusually high returns, or requests to keep the offer “confidential.”
- The City of London Police is reminding the public that any suspicious activity should be reported to Report Fraud as soon as possible at www.reportfraud.police.uk or by calling 0300 123 2040. In Scotland, victims of fraud and cybercrime should report to Police Scotland on 101.
- You can also contact the Financial Conduct Authority’s consumer helpline on 0800 111 6768 or report suspicious businesses or individuals by using the reporting form on their website.