



Flatmate scams

The Set-Up

An email or letter is received showing an interest in a room. An arrangement for a rent deposit in the form of a cheque to be made.

The Hook

They will then contact and ask for a partial refund (their overpayment minus the deposit)

The Sting

You will never see your money again.

How flatmate scams work

Flatmate-finding websites are a popular way of advertising a spare room. But beware. There's always a chance that when you place an advert for a flatmate you'll get a scammer responding to your ad.

They're not interested in being your new flatmate; their only interest is in scamming you out of your money.

The scammer will contact you saying that they are interested in the room you have available. They will then send an overpayment for the first month's rent and bond in the form of a cheque.

The scammer will then ask for a partial refund (their overpayment minus the bond). After you've refunded the money, you'll find the original cheque has bounced.

Variations on flatmate scams

Scammer advertising

Or it may be that the scammer is the one advertising a room available. They will request money up front for a bond or first few weeks rent before you have even looked at the room.

Don't respond – it's scam. Any genuine person would expect you to visit the property first.

Protect yourself from flatmate scams

- Be wary of people wanting to rent a room without seeing it first. Even if they claim it's because they are currently overseas. Would you ever rent a room without looking at it?
- Report any attempted fraud or suspicious emails to the website the scammer is using. Many flatmate-seeking websites have a facility for this.
- Don't respond – even as a joke: it confirms your email address, and could make you a repeat target for fraudsters.
- Don't be pressured into making decisions.
- Never send personal, credit card or online account details through an email.

Help protect others from flatmate scams

If you have fallen from this type of scam, please share your story here. We will treat your report in the strictest confidence and remove your personal details before posting your story on our site.

[Report your scam story to us.](#)