

## Action Fraud 'ignored dossier detailing Bitcoin scam'

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action fraud investigation

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A Canadian known by the pseudonym Crypto Girl and Stephen Johnson lost thousands of pounds in investments

A bitcoin trader accused of stealing nearly half a million pounds from investors reportedly continues to trade cryptocurrency from his home in Shropshire as [Action Fraud](#) ignores a dossier detailing his alleged crimes.

More than 30 people have reported the trader to the national centre, which handles fraud complaints for the police, after losing their savings in a complex bitcoin scam. Despite being passed a detailed report with

names, contact details and evidence of the online transactions Action Fraud has failed to act since the cases were first reported in May.

It is the latest in a series of failings exposed at the fraud centre. An undercover investigation by *The Times* this week [revealed staff mocked victims as “morons”](#) and were trained to mislead them into thinking their cases were being investigated. Police chiefs in England said that they were “deeply concerned” with the findings and it has emerged that Police Scotland recently pulled out of the service.

The bitcoin trader, who *The Times* has chosen not to name, contacted people online last year offering tutorials on how to buy and trade [bitcoin](#) cryptocurrency for a fee. Within a few months he had established a group and encouraged up to 130 people to invest their bitcoin funds into “trading bots”, which automatically monitor the volatile market to make optimum trades.

“He appeared genuine and lots people vouched for him. He came across as trustworthy, often mentioning his family — someone who just wanted to help others make money through bitcoin,” Stephen Johnson, an oil rig worker from Stockton-on-Tees, Co Durham, said.

The trader allegedly promised his investors returns of at least 30 per cent profit or more and in the first month some saw their investments increase by 41 per cent. He repeatedly reassured them that he would return the funds in full any time they wished, according to the investors.

“The initial results were great and I was confident to put in 1.5 bitcoin, roughly £3,000. The next payout was due on 31st March but the day came and went and we heard nothing,” Mr Johnson, 63, said.

The trader, who had been communicating with the investor group daily on the encrypted app Telegram and Facebook, broke off communication and seemed to erase his online presence. According to the investors the total owed by the trader is 58.45 bitcoin, valued at about £485,000.

Left frustrated and out of pocket, a group of the investors, many of whom had put in their life savings, hired a private investigator to help to uncover their funds. The investigator compiled a 445 page investigation report with extensive details of the complex case, including the trader's online aliases, real-life ID and transaction records linking the alleged victims.

After reporting the scam to various police forces in Britain and overseas, 31 of the investors reported their cases to Action Fraud in May and handed over the investigation report. After receiving an initial automated response the group of investors have heard little back, despite making repeated requests for an update.

Kenneth Ruud, a Norwegian investor, invested his pension savings in the trading bot and now feels abandoned by the police in the UK. "Action Fraud haven't given me any response at all, it's like no one cares. I believe [the trader] knew this and therefore continued to steal people's money.

"It is really shocking for me that the UK police do not even bother to open any of our files, not even one, if they did, they would have seen all our cases are linked and the massive size of the fraud."

A Canadian investor, who has asked not to be named but is known online under the pseudonym Crypto Girl, lost £55,000. "We were promised a response from Action Fraud in 28 days but are still waiting. I reported this on May 9 and my file still says 'created'," she said. "I feel that I, and the people in my group, have been a victim twice. Once by [the trader] and again by the City of London Police and Action Fraud, which turns out is just a call centre."

A spokeswoman for Action Fraud said: "Each and every report has a value to Action Fraud. Action Fraud receives 50,000 reports of fraud a month. In an ideal world every case would be investigated. Unfortunately this is just not possible, so our resources are focused on the reports most likely to present an investigative opportunity and

those that present the most threat and harm to the victim, or [victims](#), concerned. No report is dismissed at the call centre.”

Concentrix said it takes the allegations “extremely seriously” and that mocking victims is not tolerated. It said its staff are meant to follow training set by the police and it would never support them sharing misleading information.

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**Source:** <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/action-fraud-ignored-dossier-detailing-bitcoin-scam-n7s92d25l>