# Former actor Philip Foster sentenced for orchestrating £13.6 million fraud



Philip Foster, a former actor known for his role as Christian Wright in the mid-1990s soap opera "Brookside," has been sentenced to eight and a half years in prison following his conviction for orchestrating a £13.6 million fraud that defrauded thousands of aspiring child models and their parents. The sentencing took place in Sheffield Crown Court as part of a broader investigation by National Trading Standards (NTS) that revealed the extensive nature of this fraudulent operation.

The fraud spanned over eight years, during which more than 6,000 victims, primarily young people and their families, were misled under the illusion of securing modelling opportunities. Foster operated from his residence in Spain, employing a network of associates based in various cities across the UK, including London, Manchester, Leeds, Bristol, Coventry, and Nottingham. His accomplices, eight of whom were also sentenced on the same day, helped run a series of fraudulent modelling agencies and photography studios.

Foster’s modus operandi included launching social media campaigns to attract models, who were then invited to what was presented as a 'free' test shoot. However, these sessions served as a front to extract payments for portfolios. Victims were given glossy brochures and falsely assured of their potential, culminating in pressure to purchase expensive photographs as a prerequisite for securing modelling work. In many cases, families found themselves in financial ruin, having spent large sums of money based on the fraudulent promises made by Foster and his associates, who created the illusion of operating legitimate modelling businesses.

The financial impact on victims was significant, with many resorting to credit deals arranged by the scammers or taking out costly payday loans to fund these investments. Yet, rather than receiving professional portfolios, victims were provided with subpar digital images that were unlikely to lead to any modelling engagements.

Foster’s fraudulent activities allowed him to lead a lavish lifestyle in Marbella, where he spent the proceeds of his deception on luxury goods, including high-end watches and cars. The sham modelling agencies were often dissolved shortly after their launch and would be rebranded to avoid detection, with funds being laundered through UK bank accounts before being transferred abroad or carried as cash by accomplices.

In addition to Foster's sentence, various accomplices received prison terms and suspended sentences for their roles in the conspiracy. Michael Foster, aged 27, and Paul Evans, 39, were both sentenced to three and a half years for conspiracy to defraud and money laundering, respectively. Other co-conspirators received suspended sentences ranging from 10 to 24 months.

The investigation, which involved a thorough forensic analysis of financial activities and the collection of thousands of consumer complaints, was a collaborative effort by multiple teams within National Trading Standards, supported by local councils, to bring the fraud to light.

Lord Bichard, Chair of the National Trading Standards, described Foster's deceitful actions as having caused lasting emotional distress and serious financial consequences for a multitude of victims. The authorities stressed the importance of vigilance when searching for legitimate modelling opportunities, noting that genuine agencies do not require upfront payments.

The case highlights the need for ongoing efforts to protect individuals from fraudulent schemes that exploit vulnerable hopes and dreams, particularly in highly competitive fields such as modelling.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/national-trading-standards> - This URL supports the role of National Trading Standards in investigating and combating fraudulent activities, as mentioned in the article.
* <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/scams/check-if-a-model-agency-is-legitimate/> - This URL provides guidance on how to identify legitimate modelling agencies, which is relevant to the warning about fraudulent modelling schemes in the article.
* <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/> - This URL is related to Action Fraud, a UK service for reporting and dealing with fraud, which is relevant to the context of the large-scale fraud described in the article.
* <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/council-plan/crime-and-safety/sheffield-crown-court> - This URL provides information about Sheffield Crown Court, where Philip Foster was sentenced, as mentioned in the article.
* <https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/types-of-credit-and-debt> - This URL explains different types of credit and debt, relevant to the financial impact on victims who resorted to credit deals and payday loans as a result of the fraud.
* <https://www.fca.org.uk/consumers/credit-debt> - This URL from the Financial Conduct Authority provides information on managing debt and credit, which is relevant to the financial struggles faced by the victims of the fraud.