



## Spotlight report A review of Fraud: Time to Choose

### Response from Simon Foster, West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner

Having consulted with my Chief Constable, I can confirm that all recommendations in the Inspectorate's review have been acted upon within the timescales stipulated in the review.

The independent inspectorate's report shines a light on the issue of Fraud in the UK. Fraud affects everyone, from individuals to businesses, organisations and Governments. We will all either have experience of or know people who have been affected by fraud. In fact, fraud costs the UK economy £193 billion each year and an estimated 3.8 million fraud offences are committed annually. Yet Action Fraud, the national reporting centre, only recorded just shy of 750,000. The fraudsters are inflicting misery on millions. That has to end. We need to get tough on prevention and on the criminals preying on the vulnerable.

The report exposes a number of key things. Fundamentally, the Investigators found that not enough had changed since their 2018 inspection and that victims are ultimately being failed by the system across the country. A key conclusion within the review, is that greater investment is needed into anti-fraud capabilities. This investment needs to match the scale of the problem. At the moment, it does not. Subsequent government announcements since the Investigators conducted their revisit, such as the Beating Crime Plan, fall considerably short of the mark.

Policing also needs to focus on and make this area a priority. I support the recommendations made to forces in this report. Firstly, fraud victims need to be given appropriate advice and support when they report a case of fraud and secondly that all forces follow guidance regarding calls for service.

Recommendation 2 in the review states that "by 31 March 2022, the National Police Chiefs' Council Coordinator for Economic Crime with the National Crime Agency, National Economic Crime Centre and City of London Police should set up an effective national tasking and co-ordination process for fraud." To ensure standardisation of victim experience and pursue processes across all 43 forces, this is a welcome recommendation.

However, I have deep concerns regarding the prospect of forces being tasked by other forces and there being no governance process in place so that PCCs can feed back on the services and support they are receiving from either the City of London Police, the NCA or the National Economic Crime Centre. There needs to be reciprocity to the implementation of this approach.

There is an overlap between the work of the City of London Police and the National Crime Agency which causes confusion about which body is responsible for what. It is also a concern that the City of London Police and National Crime Agency are meant to be leading a national collaboration to tackle fraud, yet there is still no formal collaboration agreement in place between them and policing more widely, nor any set of expectations for forces role in this, nor what forces should expect of the City of London and NCA.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Foster', with a large, stylized initial 'S'.

**Simon Foster**

**West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner**