

## RESPONSE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER OF DEVON, CORNWALL AND THE ISLES OF SCILLY TO THE HMICFRS REPORT FRAUD: TIME TO CHOOSE – AN INSPECTION OF THE POLICE RESPONSE TO FRAUD

### Chief Constable's comments

The Chief Constable welcomes the findings and recommendations of the HMICFRS. Whilst Devon and Cornwall was not inspected the recommendations are readily accepted and we will continue to work with others to deliver improvement.

Recommendations	D&C Response
By 30 September 2019, chief constables should publish their force's policy for responding to and investigating allegations of fraud (in relation to both calls for and National Fraud Intelligence Bureau disseminations for enforcement).	Our policy of responding to, and investigation of allegation of fraud is already published as D24 - Crime Reporting, Management and Investigation Standards. This is supplemented where necessary by policies which assist in defining more specialist fraudulent activity, such as D22 – Corruption in the Public Sector  Senior Fraud Investigator, Fraud Unit Manager.
By 31 March 2020, the National Police Chiefs' Council Coordinator for Economic Crime and chief constables should ensure that forces have processes in place to accurately and efficiently report fraud outcomes to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau.	Processes are already in place to report outcomes as required to the NFIB.  Senior Fraud Investigator, Fraud Unit Manager.

### Police & Crime Commissioner's comments

I welcome this timely report which recognises the considerable challenge posed by this growing area of crime. Fraud is a crime that has grown exponentially over the last decade. It is no secret that the Government and police service nationally has been slow to respond to the growing threat at a time when more opportunities have opened up for fraudsters to commit this type of crime.

HMICFRS acknowledges that it is partly due to a lack of a national strategy to tackle fraud that has meant individual Forces have taken their own operational approaches. For example, Devon and Cornwall has undertaken some excellent work with financial institutions to prevent crime. For example, working with banks to train their staff to alert the police when they suspect a customer may be withdrawing money from their account whilst under duress of a fraudster.

Fraud is too complex and widespread an issue for individual Forces to effectively manage by themselves. Therefore I support HMICFRS's call for a national strategy to be created backed up the appropriate governance arrangements to ensure Forces and law enforcement bodies can work most effectively together to tackle this problem.

The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners is holding a national seminar on the topic of fraud in May 2019 that will look at what opportunities there are for PCCs to support improvements collectively. I look forward to contributing to these important discussions.

Action Fraud is the national reporting line for victims of fraud. However, when meeting with businesses and speaking with the general public it is apparent to me that there is a widespread lack of awareness of the Action Fraud service. Those that have used it often state the service it provides is not good enough. For this reason, I have included a specific action in my Police and Crime Plan to review the service we receive locally from Action Fraud and look to improve awareness of, and reporting to Action Fraud.

I am also working with the business community to encourage more reporting of crime to ensure we get a fuller picture of the scale of the problem and action can be best targeted. I am also happy to support National Trading Standards' 'Friends Against Scams' campaign which encourages the public to look out for their colleagues and family who may be victims of scams.

Too many people become victims of fraudsters often losing substantial sums of money. When victims become known to the police we must make sure we do all we can to support them and ensure they receive the appropriate help and advice Therefore I welcome the HMICFRS's recommendations aimed at improving the care the police service provides to victims of fraud.



**Alison Hernandez**  
**Police and Crime Commissioner**  
**Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly**