

F/T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Richard Leonard MSP
Convener
Public Audit Committee
Scottish Parliament

12 December 2024

National Fraud Initiative in Scotland 2024

Thank you for your letter of the 15 November regarding your scrutiny of the National Fraud Initiative in Scotland 2024. I welcome the Committee's interest in how the exercise can be improved.

In 2018, one of my predecessors, responding to post-legislative scrutiny of the National Fraud Initiative (NFI), ensured officials developed the joint action plan with Audit Scotland, the UK Government and the Scottish Government to enhance the NFI over time, [an update of this plan](#) was provided to the Committee in May 2022. I consider that joint working is essential to ensure continued improvement on the NFI.

Your letter requests us to consider the scope to strengthen the NFI in Scotland and highlights one of the options set out by Audit Scotland which is to consider mandating NFI participation by additional public bodies.

The Public Sector Fraud Authority in its code of [data matching practice](#) and Audit Scotland's [corresponding code](#), has set criteria on adding new data sets to the NFI when proposed activities can provide a clear value for money benefit, as demonstrated through pilots facilitated by Audit Scotland. I am very open to my officials assisting and facilitating NFI improvement work and to consider legislation when clear benefits are demonstrated and where mandating participation is considered necessary. I must however be led by Audit Scotland on when data sets meet those conditions.

We share the objective of the NFI as a key tool in fraud and error detection for the public sector. I have therefore asked my officials to meet with Audit Scotland to discuss participation and where mandating via legislation could be beneficial. I have also asked that the work of the Committee is factored into a review and update of the joint action plan to ensure the Scottish Government can be satisfied that the NFI continues to deliver upon its ambitions.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

I will provide you with an update on the outcomes of this discussion and agreed next steps in early 2025.

I hope this is helpful,

Yours sincerely



SHONA ROBISON

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™
We invest in people Silver

