

Home Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

3 May 2023

Dear Chair,

Publication of the Government's Fraud Strategy

Today we publish our Fraud Strategy. This ambitious plan covers the work that we, as government, will undertake alongside law enforcement, regulators, industry and charities to better protect the public from fraud and catch those that commit it.

You will know, from the evidence you have heard and the research you have done as a committee, that fraud is the biggest crime category in the UK. It causes untold misery and harm on millions of people a year. We have heard testimonies from committees such as your own, and from our constituents, businesses and consumer groups, who want to see scams prevented, and fraudsters punished.

The strategy outlines our comprehensive and long-term approach, across 3 pillars: **Pursue fraudsters** and bring them to justice; **Block** frauds before or as they are carried out; and **Empower the public** so they are more likely to avoid fraud and the harm that comes with it. It shows how government alongside all partners will:

- Cut fraud by 10%
- Make it easier to report fraud online
- Ban SIM farms
- Tackle number 'spoofing'
- Replace Action Fraud
- Appoint an Anti-Fraud Champion
- Ban cold calls on financial products
- Lead a new international response to international crime

I would like to draw your attention to several key announcements in our Strategy and their relation to the work of your committee.

Pursue fraudsters. We have listened about the need to improve how we investigate and prosecute fraud. We have announced a new National Fraud Squad that will fulfil the role of a centrally run unit drawing on resource from national, regional and City of London Police investigators as well as 400 new posts by 2025. We have also committed £30m to upgrade the Action Fraud service, making reporting easier and more effective for the public. It is important that victims see justice served so we have also announced a review into investigating and prosecuting fraud with a focus on modernising the disclosure regime, the current efficacy of the Fraud Act 2006 and making it easier to inform on criminal associates.

Block frauds. Ensuring that industry step-up to help in our efforts is paramount to this Strategy. We have recently announced the introduction of a Failure to Prevent Fraud offence in the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Bill, bringing corporate criminal liability in line with other similar crimes. Furthermore, the Online Safety Bill continues to pass through Parliament, and will lead to a shift in how the sector is held to account for fraud on its platforms. We have also begun work on an Online Fraud Charter, with social media, search engines and other tech companies, which will also revolutionise collaboration between government and the tech sector, leading to greater protections for the public and more sectoral involvement in countering fraud.

Empower the Public. Protecting and supporting the public is of the utmost importance and this Strategy sets out our approach for this. Ensuring victims are not left out of pocket is one way to mitigate harm so we have outlined our plans to empower the Payment Systems Regulator to mandate reimbursement of victims by Payment Service Providers. Furthermore, we have announced that we will be launching a significant national comms campaign to help the public spot and avoid frauds and seek support.

I hope you can see that our Strategy represents a drastic increase in efforts across the public and private sectors and beyond to counter fraud and protect the public. We would be delighted to welcome your support in this work. I am confident that together we can do more to protect UK citizens from fraud and ensure there is no safe space for criminals to commit these terrible crimes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Tugendhat', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rt Hon Tom Tugendhat MBE VR MP

Security Minister

