

# PRESS RELEASE



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## Improved local police response on fraud needed, says Fraud Advisory Panel

Ten years on from the first fraud review, Government is not doing nearly enough to help the public defend themselves against a deluge of fraud and cybercrime, according to the Fraud Advisory Panel (the 'Panel').

The criticisms are made in the Panel's new report, *The Fraud Review – 10 years on*. In 2006 the Fraud Review described a fraudsters' paradise of patchy policing, muddled legislation, soft penalties and ineffectual courts. Many of those same failings – including under-resourced policing, widespread ignorance of fraud threats, an uncoordinated approach to fighting fraud – persist to this day, and while some promising and significant fraud fighting improvements have been introduced, they too often fall victim to policy change and cost-cutting.

Fraud Advisory Panel chair, David Kirk, said "A decade after the government's fraud review, official support for fraud victims is still poor and the local police response to the growing fraud threat remains inadequate. Meanwhile, little is done to help people understand the dangers of fraud and what they can do to protect themselves. This simply is not good enough."

He added: "A national public education campaign is now long overdue. It must be well-funded, sustained and smart, to press home these important messages – just like seatbelt and drink-drive campaigns. The benefits will far outweigh the costs and this should be given the highest priority by the government."

The Panel is also highly critical of fraud policing outside London. "If a fraud victim involves their local police force they quickly find that much fraud policing outside London is no better than in 2005, with little chance of any kind of investigation. The only difference being that victims are now referred to Action Fraud which, in too many cases, does not lead to any substantive law enforcement action."

David Kirk commented: "Local fraud policing is so important in preventing repeat victimisation and further loss. We need a nationwide fraud policing response that can match the challenge and government should find the resources to create it. It is a national embarrassment that these failings persist a full decade after the Fraud Review."

As well as a public education campaign and improved local law enforcement, the Fraud Advisory Panel has also called for a new body with strategic oversight for fraud, a government-led fraud indicator and an overhaul of the disclosure regime.

ENDS

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**Notes for editors:**

1. **The Fraud Review** was established in October 2005 by the then attorney general Lord Goldsmith. The review team included counter-fraud experts from the NHS, City of London Police, Serious Fraud Office, Home Office and Crown Prosecution Service. Its findings were damning: the state's inadequate fraud response was characterised by scant knowledge, limited coordination, inadequate resources, flawed legislation, ineffectual trials, weak penalties and low risks to fraudsters.
2. In December 2015 **Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary** found widespread evidence of poor police understanding and practice with regard to fraud victims, with many forces believing that the creation of Action Fraud had removed their responsibility to tackle fraud at all. The full report (*Real lives, real crimes - A study of digital crime and policing*) can be found here: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/our-work/digital-crime-and-policing/real-lives-real-crimes-a-study-of-digital-crime-and-policing/>
3. The **Fraud Advisory Panel** is the respected, influential and independent voice of the fraud-fighting community. It seeks to make a tangible, practical difference in the fight against fraud and financial crime by championing anti-fraud best practice and helping people and organisations to increase their fraud resilience and risk awareness. The Panel is a registered charity. It was established in 1998 by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) which continues to provide valuable support.
4. The Fraud Advisory Panel's full report, *The Fraud Review: Ten Years On* can be found here: <https://www.fraudadvisorypanel.org/resources/the-fraud-review-ten-years-on/>