

# News Release

ISSUED ON BEHALF OF HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF  
CONSTABULARY FOR SCOTLAND

May, 12, 2008

## POLICE MUST IMPROVE THEIR RESPONSE TO SERIOUS FRAUD

A report on Serious Fraud, published today by HMICS, makes a number of recommendations aimed at improving how the Police works with its partners to tackle serious fraud.

The recommendations include:

- That the Scottish Government consult with stakeholders, including the Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) and the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS), to make certain that legislation, process and interventions relating to fraud in Scotland are no less comprehensive or robust than they are elsewhere in the UK.
- That the Scottish Government create a national fraud capability within the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency (SCDEA) structure to co-ordinate intelligence gathering, enhance knowledge of fraud, and initiate and promote prevention and disruption.
- That forces adopt consistent and transparent common processes for managing fraud in Scotland. This would specifically include clear recording guidelines to ensure that fraud is recorded in accordance with the Scottish Crime Recording Standard, and common criteria to be used in deciding whether or not to investigate a fraud.

Paddy Tomkins, HM Chief inspector of Constabulary for Scotland, said;

'Fraud in Scotland concerns everyone. For example, it is estimated that on average £330 for every man, woman and child in Scotland is lost through fraud each year. The impact is felt not just by the individuals or businesses directly affected, but by the public generally and the public purse .

"As our report highlights, although police recording of fraud needs to be improved and is inconsistent, figures

from APACS show a 16 per cent rise from 2006 to 2007, when £11.5 million was lost to plastic payment card fraud alone in Scotland. A recent estimate put the overall loss to the UK as between £13 and £20 billion each year.

"I have had the opportunity to present our report to the Serious Organised Crime Taskforce and, I am pleased to say, have subsequently received their broad support for our findings. We have also had good contact with the team tasked with addressing the recommendations of the Attorney General's Fraud Review in England and Wales.

"This has already begun to help consolidate links in the work to develop improved counter-fraud measures across the UK, even before today's publication. Consequently, both ACPOS and the Scottish Government are now better engaged with this work. My recommendations will build on this and enable further improvements.

"The inspection did find several significant challenges facing the police in relation to fraud. It is true to say that the recording of fraud in Scotland is one of the weaker areas of police data capture.

"Inconsistent recording can not only frustrate individual members of the public trying to report such crimes, but large businesses can also experience similar difficulties when trying to report large frauds or crime patterns. This is not only undesirable in itself, but also means that when considering fraud alongside the many other complex demands facing them, forces are not sufficiently informed to do so accurately.

"I am grateful to the various businesses and organisations who lent us their support and co-operation in carrying out this work. Our particular thanks go too, to the Royal Bank of Scotland, who provided us with our first ever secondee from the commercial sector. Such involvement clearly demonstrates our mutual appreciation of the need to work together to reduce crime and improve the policing response."

"My report sets out what can be done to improve the way the police handle fraud. It also suggests how we can work to reduce the incidence of fraud, as well as the number of people, businesses and public services that fall victim to it, in the first place - the ultimate outcome to strive for."

NOTES FOR NEWS EDITORS

1. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (commonly known as the Police Inspectorate or HMICS) is responsible for inspecting the eight Scottish police forces and five police services. HMICS operates independently of the police forces, police authorities and the Scottish Government and exists to monitor and improve the police services in Scotland.

2. The Serious Fraud inspection report will be available from 0800 hours on Tuesday 13th May 2008:  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/Police/>. Advance copies for the media are available from the Scottish Government press office on the number below.

3. Mr Tomkins will be available for broadcast interviews between 2.30 pm and 3.30 pm on May 12, 2008. To reserve a slot please contact 0131 244 2939.

4. The estimate of costs are taken from The Nature, Extent, and Economic Impact of Fraud in the UK by Levi, Burrows, Hopkins, Flemming and Matthews for ACPO, February 2007.

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