National Fraud Initiative

Thank you for your invitation to comment on the National Fraud Initiative, to inform the Committee’s post-legislative scrutiny of Section 97 of the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010.

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) is helping make Scotland the best place in the world to educate, to research and to innovate. Investing around £1.5 billion of public money each year, SFC’s funding enables Scotland’s colleges and universities to provide life-changing opportunities for over half a million people.

Given the funding for which we are responsible, we recognise the importance of the National Fraud Initiative and seek to play our full part in it.

However, as is reflected in Audit Scotland’s report, very few issues have been identified which relate to colleges and universities, and none in relation to the Scottish Funding Council itself. Consequently, we are perhaps not best-placed to comment on the National Fraud Initiative’s overall effectiveness.
With regard to your specific questions:

- In relation to SFC’s own participation, placing the Initiative on a statutory basis has had no impact. However, we recognise that the position might be different for other organisations.

- We are not aware of any aspects of the legislation which need to be strengthened.

- Neither are we aware of any issues with regard to participation in the National Fraud Initiative.

- More generally, we recognise the likelihood that the National Fraud Initiative has a significant deterrent effect, which, by its very nature, it difficult to measure.

Yours sincerely,

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