Fraud Strategy launch

10.3.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

Lord Hanson introduces the Fraud Strategy at the launch event.

There are a lot of familiar faces in the room today who have contributed to the Fraud Strategy and its development over the past 18 months or so in a range of ways and I appreciate all that help.

As has been mentioned, I'm David Hanson and I'm the Home Office Minister of State and I was given the task after the election in July 2024 by the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary to lead a revised fraud strategy. building on the work of the previous government to see through the fraud strategy that was in place then, but also to look at how we can develop and refresh that strategy for the future.

I'm particularly pleased to do so in conjunction with some absolutely fantastic officials in the Home Office and with colleagues from the private sector, the banking sector, and from the City of London Police.

My thanks go to the Lady Mayor and the City of London Corporation for hosting today in such a magnificent setting and also particularly to people in the Commission and the team in the City of London Police for leading this important area.

This building's endured the Great Fire of London, it's endured the Blitz, and if we go outside we can see where Roman Britain once stood.

I have to say that no doubt fraud occurred in all of those times - that in every week of every month people were defrauding.

But I'm acutely aware that we have lived through, all of us in this room have lived through, a revolution in the past 30 years and in the next 10 years that has changed the nature and scale of fraud as a whole and will change the nature and scale of our necessary response as a whole.

When I was first elected to Parliament, which was 33 years ago, I didn't have a mobile phone, I didn't have an email address, I didn't have a website.

Now I have all of those things and now I also have deep fakes of me and there are people trying to impersonate all of us in this room today.

So today is important not just because of the vast scale of fraud that occurs, not just because of the significant impact, but because, of course, we live in a world where it is changing, it has changed.

And even in the past two years as we've developed this strategy, it has changed even more. And in the next four to five years, it will change even more.

Bad actors are trying to steal our money more than ever before.

Fraud is the most common crime occurring in the UK, 45% of all crime, and if we as a government want to tackle crime, it's one thing to put 13,000 police officers on the street and to invest in support to try and deal with some of those major terrorists and other threats but if we want to deal with fraud, we need to take a new approach, and this is what today is about.

Because fraud drains billions from our economy, it fuels organised crime, it impacts upon people in an individual way on a daily basis, it destroys businesses, it's a threat to our security, it causes unhope, in part, to victims and their families.

And for a government that wants to try and increase growth in our economy, it damages growth, trust and confidence in people buying things online.

There have been 4.15 million incidents of fraud against individuals over the last year,45% of all crime, making it the largest crime type in the UK.

And it's simply not good enough to not do something about it.

Fraud remains a national security challenge, an economic risk, and for us, all parts of government, from the Treasury to DSIT to the Home Office, are committed to trying to do something about this.

Businesses are under attack, one in four businesses experiencing fraud, 6 million incidents a year.

It is simply not good enough to ignore that.

We cannot allow it to become an accepted cost of doing business for people who do business.

As the Lady Mayor said, we must dispel the notion, that this is a crime without victims.

I have met victims who have been destroyed emotionally, financially, physically by the fraud that they have had and in the economic and social cost of fraud to the UK at 14 billion pounds that is money that is being defrauded from you and me and the people around us and it is leaving, very often, this United Kingdom to fund glorious lifestyles for selected individuals overseas.

Again, that is simply not good enough.

So, our mission is clear today, to make the UK the hardest place in the world for fraudsters to operate and a safe place for people to live, work and to do business and that is why today we're launching the Fraud Strategy, copies of which for ease of help are available at the back of the room.

The fraud strategy today, 2026 to 2029, will ensure that we have a new system-wide approach to tackling fraud, backed by over 250 million pounds worth of government investment.

And the strategy will set out how we can disrupt criminals' ability to commit fraud, to safeguard the public and businesses and to ensure that victims receive justice.

And this is a strategy, as you know, by being here today that is built not in isolation, but in partnership we have held through officials who are here today. Fifty roundtables, numerous bilateral meetings, countless written submissions to help shape this work.

Leaders from technology firms, telecoms, financial services, law enforcement, victim support, civil society have contributed openly and rigorously around this.

And from within government, the City of London Police, the National Crime Agency, the Serious Fraud Office, all of our law enforcement partners are contributing to that today.

So to each and every one of you who has done that, my thanks go for your expertise and insights as they have strengthened this strategy and I want to emphasise that I accept my gratitude for that.

So, we've put in place, as you'll see in the document, 3 pillars for the Fraud Strategy - disrupt, safeguard and respond.

Together they amount to a comprehensive plan to stop fraud at source, protect the public and businesses and deliver justice for victims.

And I want to say something if I may about each pillar in turn.

Let me start with disrupt, but that’s really the most important to disrupting criminals from doing bad things in our community.

This is all about us going further upstream and breaking the criminal business model by making it harder for criminals to commit all forms of fraud.

Fraud is constantly changing, constantly shifting. Criminals organise globally, move quickly, exploit technology ruthlessly - from spoofed calls to manipulated adverts to AI-enabled social engineering and large-scale data breaches.

Our response must match that at pace.

It must be mounted earlier and have a greater sharpness of instructor coordination.

We need to, quite frankly, close the gaps criminals exploit and create an environment where fraud is harder to commit and far less lucrative.

And that means, again, denying tools, data and infrastructure they rely on and raising the cost of doing harm.

The principle may be simple, but putting it into practice demands action.

That’s why one of the first things we’re doing today, with great cooperation from partners in this room, is the establishment of the Online Crime Centre - a public crime partnership bringing together policing, the UK intelligence community, key to this industry partners.

And the government will support the online crime centre with 31 million pounds of government funding.

The Online Crime Centre, as has been mentioned already, will fuse data, will fuse expertise, will look at tools to spot enablers and trends in real time, will accelerate high impact interventions and coordinate disruption across platforms and sectors.

It moves us, quite frankly, from a fragmented insight to a shared operational picture of how criminals operate, and which criminals cannot outgrow.

And again, I want to pay tribute to the City of London Police colleagues that are here today, to the National Crime Agency and to our public-private partners in doing that.

By this time next year, I expect to have seen a significant impact with the OCC and that impact will continue to grow.

We want to strengthen our defences across all sectors, that criminals abuse, work with industry, hold them to account for their crucial role in preventative use on their platforms and services. Banks, telecoms, tech firms, all have a responsibility to take action.

And again, I think over the last 18 months or so, I welcome the commitments that have been made not just to be online, private sector in terms of resources, but also the second telecoms charter that was approved and published in November of last year, and also the improved outcomes to the public through APP reimbursement.

However, I want to ensure that we scrutinise performance in these areas very closely and we find new ways to measure across sectors and the action that's being taken.

And where this doesn't stack up, I just give notice that new initiatives and incentives may be needed.

I expect by this time next year we will have seen significant interventions by all industries represented here in tackling fraud.

And internationally, particularly, we know that fraud does not respect borders.

Now that's why, as the Lady Mayor said, next week I'm delighted to be travelling to Vienna for the second Global Fraud Summit where the UK is playing a central role in driving global collaboration.

And I suppose it goes more deep than that, by us putting just under a million pound into that conference to secure international support on cooperation.

We have, in the past 12 months, signed back arounds as an understanding with a number of countries - Nigeria last year, Vietnam at the end of this year - both as bilateral partners where it was a common interest in driving down large-scale fraud in each country.

We want to give more of that in the future, ensuring our partnerships are agile and wide region.

And next week in Vienna, with that study, we will have the support of over 30 countries and the United Nations to step up the fight further.

And I hope to get some minimal examples of what we need to do to tackle fraud on an international basis.

Building on those further foundations, we will continue to see more and more countries prioritising fraud.

The second area of work after disrupt is safeguarding.

This is about reducing vulnerability and building resilience.

Prevention is our strongest defence because fraudsters do prey on vulnerability, on infusion, on lots of change.

They target young people through social media and on university campuses.

They target older people and the vulnerable.

They target those looking for romantic relationships or cheaper drugs to manage the rising cost of living.

And they target small businesses and hard-working, trusted employees.

And our job, quite frankly, is to reach people before the criminals do.

So, what we're going to do from this strategy again for your interest in examination today is to expand proactive intelligence-led policing. To identify on the ground fraud hotspots, to intervene earlier, to try to find mechanisms to shield the most vulnerable communities and focus resources where impact is greatest.

We're going to evolve the stop, think fraud operations to cover a wider range of harms, reaching more people and businesses with consistent practical advice, and the refreshed team that, again, sitting with the police have been key drivers for this and they are absolutely vital to that.

We want to embed fraud literacy education for young people and resources are put in this document to do that.

We want to strengthen the protective work and support cyber resilience centres to keep businesses safe and support is in this document again.

These are all the key steps to combat the threat of fraud and to increase resilience.

Our aim is quite simply that through the rollout of these interventions over the next 12 months and their continued delivery, by this time next year, there will be a recognisable increase in the public and businesses' ability to avoid fraud.

And thirdly, the respond field, where criminals bypass our early defences, we must support this and deliver justice.

Becoming a victim of fraud is devastating.

Our citizens and businesses deserve a response that is modern, clear and compassionate.

That's why we're going to introduce a fraud victims charter with consistent national standards of care that every victim should expect – from response times, to emotional support, to reimbursement.

I was delighted again to, with the assistance of police, sometime in the last six weeks or so, to attend the launch of the new report fraud, already transforming reporting experiences and strengthening intelligence for incident investigations.

If you are a victim of fraud, the government's pledge is that this strategy will ensure we will always find a way to listen and assistance to support you.

That is something we cannot afford to delay.

We've commissioned, also, an independent review of our fraud laws to ensure the current offences meet the challenges of modern fraud, including whether penalties fit requirement.

And during the passage of this Fraud Strategy, we will be reviewing that legislation and determining action accordingly.

And also, in this review, we are considering the use of civil penalties as an effective alternative to criminal justice.

And by this time next year, we will have a clear roadmap for ensuring criminals who commit fraud receive justice and victims receive and deserve nothing less.

And let me be clear as well, this strategy is not a document that I'm going to put on a shelf to get back to - that's not my style in this business.

It is a joint working plan containing concrete steps that must and will be implemented.

A call to action designed to unite it in common purpose against the fraudsters.

In this hall, are leaders of banks, payment firms, telecom providers, technology platforms, law enforcement bodies, academia and victims' organisations.

For tech companies, we want you to continue to harden your platforms' defences, detect and remove fraudulent content and adverts quickly, share signals through the OCC that disrupts criminals at scale.

And if that doesn't happen, we will take action to make sure it does.

For telecoms, maintain the maximum scan blockage, modernise and secure the network, help design and trace back systems so criminals can't hide in your networks, and use the OCC to share intelligence on emerging scan patterns.

We welcome the work to date, but we want you to do it more, and I'll be keeping an eye to make sure that it is done.

For financial services, I want to keep driving upstream detection, share information swiftly, support vulnerable customers, and help close cash out routes for stolen funds.

And I want to work with the OCC to provide timely intelligence on suspicious accounts and transactions, because again, what we need to do is not just catch the criminals but catch the criminal resource and take that resource down and I know that colleagues in the room from the NCA are absolutely committed to driving that agenda forward.

And for victims organisations, we want you to continue to hold us, as the government, to the highest standard.

Your advocacy has shaped this strategy and it will shape deliberately.

We want to hold ourselves to account in doing that.

So again, what I'm putting in place now, for the first time ever, in terms of the Fraud Strategy on behalf of the UK Government is a governance and accountability system across the board where we will work with cyber and economic crime, measuring the impact as we go.

And I'm establishing a ministerial oversight group that will meet to look at the progress of this strategy every three months to look at what we're doing, how we're doing it and whether we're achieving the objectives.

That would include the Fraud Minister, but also the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, decent ministers, holding our plan to account and holding partners in this room to account for what they do.

So, I'm looking at this document and there are lots of actions, lots of timescales and lots of commitments from the UK government.

And I want to finish with a note of realism and optimism.

No country, whether we go back to Roman times, over times when this hall was on fire during blitz, nobody can ever stop through them.

Just like we can’t stop speeding, we can’t stop shop theft, we can’t do that completely.

But what we can do, while no system can be perfect, is we can make sure that we keep on trying.

And with our mission, with collaboration, with the determination and evidence in this room, I know that we can significantly reduce harm.

We need to make fraud harder, riskier, less rewarding for those criminals.

And we need to ensure that victims know that we are on their side, supporting, protecting and looking after their interests.

And we need to know as well, as we all know by being here today, that doing nothing is not an option.

The challenge is great but I think if we work together with government, industry, law enforcement, academia, civil society and the private sector, we can work together to look at how we can contribute to build a system where criminals have fewer opportunities, where victims have stronger support, where the public has greater confidence.

And with these crucial goals and this strategy, we want your support to try and achieve them.

So my message today is thank you for your help to date and thank you for the work you’re going to do but this is a document that we are going to hold to account to make sure we make a difference.

I appreciate your attendance and thank you for your support.

https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/fraud-strategy-launch