

# **Protecting Public Resources in Scotland**

**The strategic approach  
to fighting fraud  
and error**



**The Scottish  
Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



# **Protecting Public Resources in Scotland**

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to fighting fraud  
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## Ministerial Foreword

In Scotland we recognise the importance of working together across organisational boundaries to protect our precious public resources from the risk of fraud, bribery and corruption.

*Protecting Public Resources in Scotland* sets out our five clear strategic objectives to deter, disable, prevent, detect and deal with fraud, bribery and corruption in Scotland. This strategy signals an enhanced emphasis on prevention as part of our efforts to combat money laundering, cyber-crime and other financial crime: to ultimately help achieve a more productive, cohesive and fairer Scotland.

This strategy forms an integral part of a commitment to ensure our resources are protected for the benefit of the Scottish people, that the efficiency of our public services are maintained in the face of continued austerity. This all contributes towards this Government's central purpose to create a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.

We believe that a One Scotland approach is needed to deliver on our strategic ambitions, with all public sector agencies working together - recognising that all can and should make a contribution towards combatting fraud, bribery and corruption, across the public sector, the third sector, trade unions, businesses and communities.

Working in collaboration, we can create a partnership that continually improves our approach to *Protecting Public Resources in Scotland*.

John Swinney  
Deputy First Minister and  
Cabinet Secretary for Finance,  
Constitution and Economy

Michael Matheson  
Cabinet Secretary for Justice

## Purpose

Our ambition is to improve the approach to counter fraud across the public sector in Scotland, to safeguard essential services and improve performance: **working together to further reduce the risk and the impact of fraud, bribery and corruption.**

Our strategic approach to Protecting Public Resources in Scotland will raise the profile of the counter fraud agenda; share good practice collaboratively across the public sector to stop fraud; raise awareness of the risks of fraud, bribery and corruption; and ensure that where incidents do take place, they are identified and investigated professionally and effectively.

This approach is designed to help shape the future delivery of public services through four main areas:

- a decisive shift towards **prevention**
- **greater integration** and partnership working
- **workforce development** through investment in the skills and capacity
- a sharp focus on **performance**.

## Strategic Objectives

We have five strategic objectives in our approach to countering fraud, bribery and corruption:

- **Awareness:** We will deter fraud, bribery and corruption by raising awareness among public organisations in Scotland, our partner organisations in the voluntary and private sectors and our stakeholders.
- **Prevention:** We will disable fraud, bribery and corruption through improving our systems and controls to support our operations.
- **Teamwork:** We will prevent fraud, bribery and corruption by removing silos and working together across organisations and the public sector to share information and develop collaborative approaches.
- **Investigation:** We will detect fraud, bribery and corruption by being proactive in analysing data to identify areas at risk, by being effective and professional in our investigations of specific cases and by maintaining robust whistle-blowing procedures.
- **Enforcement:** We will deal with fraud, bribery and corruption by continuing to be tough on fraudsters by punishing them more efficiently and effectively.

## Zero Tolerance Approach

Our approach to countering fraud, bribery and corruption is one of **zero tolerance**. This can be achieved and maintained through the effective management at all levels of public service delivery, as follows:

- **Promoting clear ethical standards** through a formal counter-fraud policy, including the prevention of bribery and corruption.
- **Communicating our commitment** to deter fraud, bribery and corruption by raising awareness of policies to all staff and stakeholders.
- **Supporting all staff and stakeholders** in their responsibilities in preventing fraud, bribery and corruption through guidance and training.
- **Providing managers with specialist support** in designing, operating and reviewing internal controls.
- Maintaining comprehensive procedures for **disabling and detecting fraud** that must be carefully followed and monitored.
- **Protecting members of staff** through a robust process for reporting suspicions of fraud, bribery and corruption.
- Effectively dealing with fraud by **implementing a comprehensive fraud action plan**, including professional investigation by skilled staff.
- **Using data, and technology, efficiently** in current and future systems, to combat fraud and error.
- **Sharing knowledge** of vulnerabilities and lessons-learned through strong communication channels across public bodies in Scotland.

## Commitment

**We will work together on this approach to Protect Public Resources.** The sophisticated methods used now by criminals to perpetrate fraud, and other financial crime, have increased. The rise of organised criminal gangs, and cyber-crime in particular, has brought a new dimension to that threat. This strategic approach is designed to combat this risk and signal our commitment to Protecting Public Resources in Scotland.



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