

Date: 21st May 2009
Our ref: JC/0848/fgb
Your ref:
Pages: 1 of 1

Mr Jonathan Morgan AM
Chair of the Audit Committee
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Cardiff Bay
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NATIONAL FRAUD INITIATIVE REPORT

Thank you for your letter of 22 April, in connection with the Audit Committee's report on the National Fraud Initiative (NFI), published last October.

You write that only one of the Committee's recommendations calls for any action. This is the Committee's fourth recommendation:

We recommend that the Auditor General should set targets for these developments [to extend the scope of the NFI] in more specific terms than 'medium term' and 'long term'

I accept the principle of this recommendation, but implementation is not that straightforward in all areas.

So we will be liaising with the Audit Commission, Audit Scotland and the Northern Ireland Audit Office on extending NFI into some other areas of fraud, such as measures to detect identity fraud. But the position in respect of non-fraud areas is more difficult. For example, the ability to track absconders from justice would require a change in primary legislation. The Audit Commission in England, with my support, have raised the issue of legislative changes in relation to NFI with various Whitehall departments, but with little success so far. Against this background, I am not in a position to put forward a realistic timetable for implementation.

JEREMY COLMAN
AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WALES