

Press release: Government saves £300m in two years by preventing fraud and error

- Minister for the Constitution, Chloe Smith, announces over £300 million in savings from clamping down on fraud and error in the public sector through the National Fraud Initiative
- Minister for the Constitution, Chloe Smith said, “We are determined to build a fairer society and stopping a small group of unscrupulous people who break the law will help us achieve this.”

The government’s National Fraud Initiative (NFI) has saved over £300 million in taxpayers’ money over the last two years – the equivalent of the annual salary for 7,843 full time teachers – by detecting and preventing fraud and error in the public sector, Minister for the Constitution Chloe Smith has announced today (Friday 31 August 2018).

The government and the organisations that take part have been able to detect or prevent fraud and error worth hundreds of millions, ensuring that money is spent where it should be, including in areas such as:

- £144.8 million in occupational pension fraud and overpayments
- £32.6 million in fraudulent or wrongly received council tax single-person discount
- £24.9 million of housing benefit fraud and overpayment
- £25.5 million in social housing waiting-list misrepresentation
- £18 million of blue badge misuse – 31,223 blue badges were revoked or withdrawn
- £5.5 million from tenancy fraud

Public bodies spend billions of pounds of taxpayers’ money delivering essential services. Often delivered through complex and wide-reaching systems, these can be seen as targets for fraudsters, undermining our fairer society by robbing those with a genuine entitlement to these services.

When people defraud public institutions, they are diverting funding from essential public services, denying citizens the help and support they are entitled to, including access to social housing or disabled parking spaces in the towns and cities.

Minister for the Constitution, Chloe Smith said:

I am delighted that the National Fraud Initiative has been able to save UK taxpayers over £300 million since April 2016.

In England alone, more than £144 million will be going to protect vital public services instead of pension fraud and error.

We are determined to build a fairer society, and stopping a small group of unscrupulous people who break the law will help us achieve this.

The NFI compares sets of data, such as the payroll of a company with benefit records, allowing fraudulent claims and payments to be identified. Between April 2016 and March 2018, the NFI worked with over 1,200 public and private sector organisations, preventing and/or detecting over £300 million fraud and error nationally, of which £275.3 million has been in England alone.

NFI report

PDF, 833KB, 38 pages

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Notes to editors

[News story: More support to help schools with costs](#)

A new toolkit to help schools save money to ensure every pound possible is being spent in the classroom has been published today by Education Secretary Damian Hinds.

The School Resource Management Strategy provides schools with practical advice on how to reduce the £10 billion non-staffing spend spent across England last year. It is estimated schools could save up to a billion pounds through better procurement and buying strategies.

The strategy includes information on how to work collaboratively with other schools to drive down costs on things like stationery, energy and water bills, as well as supporting schools with staff recruitment and retention.

Between 2014/15 and 2016/17 schools saved £106 million on non-staff spending

and a nationwide network of Schools Resource Management Advisers, who work with schools to use every pound they spend effectively, is helping to build on that success.

Today's announcement follows a pledge by the Education Secretary to work with schools and bear down on cost pressures so every pound counts in the classroom.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

I want to help schools use their resources as effectively as possible. This strategy equips head teachers and school business professionals with the practical advice, resources and support they need so that they can focus on what they do so well – delivering high-quality education for their pupils.

There can be no great schools without great teachers to inspire and motivate children, so it's absolutely right that we help schools to maximise the money they have to spend in the classroom by working together, making sure they're getting the best deals and are not being overcharged for services.

Earlier this year, Mr Hinds unveiled plans to clamp down on agencies charging schools excessive fees to recruit staff and provide a free platform for schools to advertise vacancies, which costs on average £75 million a year.

A national network of buying hubs which offer procurement support to schools, a register of recommended best value deals and an online utility bill comparison tool are among other steps which have already been taken by the department.

The register of recommended deals has helped schools save £21 million since April 2018, with one school – Belmont Community School in Durham – £30,000 better off by simply switching to a better printing and photocopying deal. Another eight deals will be added to the register today.

The strategy has been welcomed by The Institute of School Business Leadership.

Stephen Morales, CEO of the Institute of School Business Leadership, said:

ISBL welcomes the Department's guidance on excellent school resource management. We believe that the effective review of the school's resources by the whole leadership team across pedagogy, governance and business will help to ensure that schools reach appropriate recommendations for the effective use of their resources. We would recommend that school leaders use this guidance to help to steer and focus their discussions when considering how to reduce cost pressures and optimise the use of available resources.

This strategy is the latest in a series of steps taken by the department to help schools deliver the best value for money and ensure resources can be targeted at the frontline. It includes:

- Introducing a new deal for teacher recruitment agencies by publishing a register that will set out agency mark ups so schools will know up-front what they are paying for. This will help schools avoid agencies which charge fees for making temporary staff permanent. These fees can be as much as 30% of an annual salary;
- A toolkit for schools to help reduce unnecessary workload. This provides free online training materials, audit tools, practical examples and model policies – developed and tested by school leaders and teachers;
- Recommending deals to schools that could save money on things they buy regularly – including new deals on books, ICT solutions and software licenses; and
- Increasing the number of School Resource Management Advisers to provide support to more trusts and schools to help them ensure they are getting the best value for every pound they spend.

The strategy also underscores the Department for Education's commitment to investing in the school estate, to work with schools and local authorities to reduce running costs, and to ensure school places are available in the areas that need them.

Today's announcement builds on the Education Secretary's commitment to work with the profession, unions and Ofsted to strip away unnecessary workload and to champion the teaching profession.

[Speech: Annual meeting of the Corporate Leaders Group Chile Chapter](#)

It is a pleasure to be with you this evening at the first annual meeting of the Corporate Leaders Group Chile Chapter. The first of many, I'm sure. I have only recently arrived in Chile and I feel fortunate that within my first few weeks I have had the honour of hosting the Board of Directors in my house and then attending this dinner.

This chapter of the CLG was established, of course, by HRH The Prince of Wales during his visit to Chile in 2009. I mentioned at the Board of

Directors breakfast that I was already very familiar with the CLG concept from my last job as a Private Secretary for HRH. I have attended CLG meetings in a number of countries with him and he devotes considerable time to encouraging the creation of new CLG chapters and to following the work of existing ones. He will be delighted that I have been able to establish a relationship with you so soon after my arrival.

The CLG chapters in Chile, the UK and around the world play an important role in the development of new initiatives, policies and innovative solutions to combat climate change and help to accelerate the transition to a global low carbon economy. Supporting the Chilean CLG is therefore one of the top climate change priorities for our team at the British Embassy as well as for our partners at the British Chilean Chamber of Commerce.

And we have been delighted to witness how the CLG in Chile has grown in strength, increasing its membership to 18 companies this year. Much of this is due to the leadership of Thomas Keller and the Board of Directors as well as the energy and commitment of Executive Director, Marina Hermosilla.

I congratulate them. But I know that no one intends to rest on their laurels. CLG members worldwide are committed to playing a leadership role in combating climate change, both in terms of changing their own businesses and sectors, and in advocating change in the wider economic and political context. The CLG supports the goal of achieving, at a minimum, net zero emissions globally well before 2100, with at least 40% emissions reductions overall by 2030.

In the UK, many business leaders have embraced this challenge and are actively promoting low carbon transition as well as the commercial benefits of sustainable business. High profile examples include Richard Branson and Unilever's Paul Polman. They are in good company. Across the globe we are seeing big corporations such as Nestle, Coca-Cola, Kellogg's and Mars promoting sustainable business models.

But I think it's fair to say that globally, as well as in Chile, we need more business leaders championing these issues. We need more Chilean businesses to follow the example that you – the 18 member companies of the CLG here- are setting.

At the Embassy, we look forward to playing our part in assisting Chile's transition towards a low carbon future and in ensuring the further growth of the CLG.

Thank you.

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Press release: New UK support to boost long-term stability in Somalia

Updated: Added image for context.

The international community must do more to help the African Union lead the fight against al-Shabaab as Somalia takes on greater responsibility for its own security, Theresa May will say today.

The UK has a strong track record both in supporting the African Union and helping Somalia rebuild its police and military forces after decades of insecurity.

On a visit to a UK-backed Counter-IED training centre in Nairobi the Prime Minister will see British troops helping prepare soldiers from Kenya and the region to deploy as part of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM).

British instructors and their Kenyan counterparts are training troops in the tactics and techniques needed to identify and destroy the home-made bombs which are increasingly the weapon of choice for terrorists in the region.

Announcing over £7 million of new UK funding to support the AU's peacekeeping mission in Somalia, she will call on international donors to contribute more, setting out that an unstable Somalia has a knock-on effect on stability across the region and further afield.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Somalia is at a critical juncture and sustainable, predictable funding and support for the troops who are building stability in the region is vital to support a transition to Somali-led security, when the conditions for a handover are right.

Last year the UK contributed £385 million towards international efforts to help the Somali people build an increasingly secure, stable and prosperous country.

The Prime Minister hosted the London Somalia Conference in 2017 which agreed the international community's new partnership with the Federal Government of Somalia.

While in Kenya, she will announce further funding to support Somalia in a range of areas, including:

- more than £60 million to help over a million people cope with and recover from the impact of conflict and drought. Lifesaving food, clean water and medicine, along with support to find stable jobs, will help Somalis to look after themselves and their families in the long-term, reducing their dependence on humanitarian aid
- more than £25 million to support Somalia as it works to establish a stable and democratic political system. This will include advice to help develop rules on resource and power-sharing, and to prepare for landmark elections, including through support for voter and political party registration