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Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny
Committee
Via Email: papls.committee@parliament.scot

Date: 27 March 2017
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Dear Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee,

I refer to your recent circulation around "Post-legislative scrutiny: call for written submissions from public bodies". Having reviewed the documentations I can provide the following comments:-

1) What have been the benefits, financial and otherwise, of putting the National Fraud Initiative on a statutory footing?

Organisation

Having this as a statutory footing ensures that discrepancies are analysed and the results reported back, providing the board and internal/external audit with the assurance that processes and procedures are robust within the health board. Any discrepancies are analysed and lessons learned thus improving procedures for any shortfalls. It also gives the public the assurance that boards aren't paying twice for services received.

Employees

Linking in with other public bodies analysing payroll, for example, ensures health and wellbeing of employees by not contravening the working time regulations working outside the normal place of work without informing your current employer.

Financial

Highlighting possible duplicate payments allow potential over payments to suppliers which would be recovered making better use of resources.

For council this could potentially highlight the single occupancy allowance for council tax when they aren't entitled so could also maximise potential income.

Anything that confirms to the public that public bodies are doing all that is possible to maximise resources is beneficial.

2) Could the legislation be strengthened in any way?

Audit Scotland has the statutory powers to obtain data, however, there are no powers for organisations to provide it. Some public bodies may have their own process for carrying out



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National Fraud Initiative
Submission from NHS Orkney

this work, but there should be consistency and best practice in place to ensure everyone is able to carry out the same checks with the maximum benefit, if data is missing this can't be done.

3) Should participation in the National Fraud Initiative be improved? Are there any bodies who do not participate in the National Fraud Initiative who should do so?

The National Fraud initiative in Scotland only takes account of Scottish areas, however, there are cross over's with England and should include this in the exercise so linking in with their payroll, for example, would be beneficial as NHS employees have various contracts with other boards. This could also highlight staff on sick working in other health boards if NFI is carried out more regularly and also excess hours.

4) Are there any other issues you would like to raise in connection to this particular part of the legislation?

This isn't widely publicised around the NFI and its use. There aren't any penalties invoked when single council tax allowance is obtained when someone else also lives at the property.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely

Cathie Cowan
Chief Executive