

Message

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Subject: Readout and actions: SoS meeting on BBLs fraud

Dear all,

With warm thanks to you all for contributions, we had a very productive meeting with the Secretary of State yesterday and some clear steers to take forward. I thought it would be useful to set out those steers and actions for delivering them.

My understanding of SoS steers were:

- **Increase funding for NATIS**
 - We should “get on with NATIS” – i.e. we should seek to expand NATIS’s work in a sensible and effective way
 - The Perm Sec agreed and suggested we signal to NATIS that BEIS is willing to make funding available if they can demonstrate it will be well-used
 - [NR] advised that we do not need to seek HMT approval for increasing NATIS funding, (e.g. on ‘novel and contentious’ grounds), but we should keep them sighted
- **He wants to speak to the lenders** on actions they can take
 - We should support SoS private office to arrange a meeting as soon as practicable. Challenge will be HMT.
- **Learn lessons for the new scheme** to be launched in January 2021
 - We need to demonstrate we’ve learnt the lessons from BBLs and implement a robust counter-fraud response ready for the launch of the successor scheme.
- **Establish “BEIS Task Force”** i.e. expand the BEIS Counter Fraud team to 10 members of staff
- **Do not introduce more stringent checks for new applications**
 - He explicitly does *not* wish to introduce more stringent checks for new applications – Perm Sec agreed and noted it would appear desperate at this late stage
- **Hold fire on proactive/deterrent communications** for now, re-evaluate once new programme of work in place
 - The Perm Sec cautioned about adding fuel to the fire of fraud media stories, which the SoS ultimately agreed with
 - But happy for us to move forward with nudge letters to businesses, when ready to do so next year
- **Funding Insolvency Service – no specific steer on this** but Tom T advised we should work with InSS to determine what they can do

Actions

Workstream	Actions
NATIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• C-19 debt schemes team to develop business case for NATIS expansion, working with NATIS and Counter Fraud team

BEIS Task Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counter Fraud team to progress with expansion of their team, including BEIS staff and contractors/secondees from OGDs
Engagement with lenders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C-19 debt schemes team to engage with BBB and determine best way of having this conversation with lenders, while managing HMT interests • C-19 debt schemes team to support SoS PO to set up meeting with lenders
Learn lesson for new scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C-19 debt schemes team to engage with HMT
Insolvency Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counter Fraud team to develop proposals jointly with Insolvency Service

Do flag if I've missed anything or if any issues/questions

Best,

NR



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

NR

Priority Projects Team
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