15th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Dear conference attendee and member

**Midlands Fraud Forum Annual Conference 2022**

As a new or continuing member of the Midlands Fraud Forum it is a pleasure to welcome you to Tally-Ho for our fifteenth Annual Conference hosted by West Midlands Police, and we are delighted by your support in returning to this venue for the first in-person conference since 2020. Whether you are from the public or private sectors, professional services or crime enforcement you are part of one of the largest and most active of the national fraud forums. It is fantastic to see everyone in person again!

Sincere thanks go to the steering committee for their contribution over the last two years with the master class programme achieving record online attendances and the team producing a virtual conference in 2021 for the very first time. As well as that went, we sincerely hope that the return to in-person events will be permanent.

Our master class programme has covered diverse topics from Cyber Fraud and Enforcement to Covid-19 related Fraud Risk; from Open Source Intelligence training to Whistleblowing; and from the Insolvency Service’s perspectives on financial fraud to Gambling and Sports Fraud with a memorable session on Russian state sponsored fraud in the sports sector. Our last December debate covered the difficult issue of in what (if any) circumstances is it justifiable to pay a ransom for a ransomware/cyber-attack; and our last master class offered training from Bond Solon on virtual investigative interviewing. It has been a packed agenda and one we hope our members have found valuable.

In the past year, the forum has also been pleased to contribute financial funding to the West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner’s Office to enable cutting-edge research into a ‘public health approach to dealing with fraud’ to be completed by the eminent Professor Michael Levi, who will be presenting his key findings today. The forum is integral to supporting the PCCO’s counter-fraud efforts and we are delighted to be joined at conference by the West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner, Simon Foster, who is giving renewed focus on this area. The forum has also agreed to contribute financial funding to the Tenancy Fraud Forum in 2022 to support its efforts to research this area and identify more effective methods of combatting tenancy fraud.

The forum’s website continues to be a go-to point for news items and publications pertinent to fraud supported with both our Weekly Digest to members and our Twitter feed @MFF\_Forum to nearly 1,700 followers. We encourage everyone to share the messages in your respective organisations.

Your engagement here today shows your interest and commitment to tackling current fraud issues either through enforcement agencies, public sector fraud and error, investigators, criminal and/or civil prosecution, academia, finance and business. Regrettably, the scale of fraud in the UK only appears to be increasing, and the counter-fraud community’s efforts have never been more needed. One only needs to hear the news about the reported massive scale of fraud on the UK Government’s covid loan schemes to appreciate the scale of the challenge.

We are delighted and obliged to our speakers, sponsors, partners and hosts today. Engage with them but also with those around you today in the network of our Forum. Exchange your ideas, share the challenges and hopefully discover some solutions.

You are welcome to use social media with #2022MFF but please be respectful of our “Chatham House” environment and refrain from direct quotes or sending any sensitive images.

In the year ahead we hope again to deliver a programme of masterclasses tailored to your specific interests to assist in the education and awareness of fraud and help with the challenges you are face in your organisations and professional undertakings. Please do continue to give us your feedback so we can shape the Forum to your requirements.

Enjoy conference 2022 and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible during the day.

**Andrew Herring, Chair**

**June 2022**