



# Veritau

## Annual Report

### 2024-2025







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# Foreword

We're pleased to present the 2024/25 annual report for Veritau. The report highlights the continuing growth and success of the business over the last year. It's also been a year of significant change. We successfully restructured the business and created a new company called Veritau Public Sector Limited (VPS) to provide services to our member councils. We also welcomed two new partners, Leicester City Council and Cherwell District Council. Veritau Limited is now the commercial arm of the business providing services to our other clients. This split will allow each company to focus on the respective needs of their clients and to tailor their service offering accordingly.

We've maintained our successful training and development programmes with a record number of new trainees recruited during the year. We've also continued to invest in new systems and tools to support the delivery of services as well as looking to the future to see how AI can transform the way we work. This ongoing investment provides a solid foundation for the future expansion of the business.

The public sector continues to face many challenges linked to increasing demand, limited resources and technological change. At the same time, structural changes are taking place in large parts of the public sector including local government and the NHS. This inevitably creates uncertainty and adds to the pressures faced by those organisations. The shared service model offered by Veritau therefore provides real value by providing greater resilience and delivering efficiencies and economies of scale. The ability to share knowledge and best practice across many organisations also enhances the work being done.

We have more great plans for the business so look forward to another year of continued success.

**Debbie Mitchell, Chair of Veritau Public Sector Ltd  
and Gary Fielding, Chair of Veritau Ltd**



# Introduction

This has been a year of significant change. We successfully completed a restructure which has resulted in the business being split into two parts. A new Teckal company called Veritau Public Sector Limited (VPS) has been established to provide services to our member councils. Veritau Limited is now the commercial arm of the business providing services to our other clients. VPS is a 'not for profit' company limited by guarantee, and it started trading on 1 August 2024. Veritau Tees Valley also provided services in 2024/25 although the company is expected to cease trading in the next few months. The restructure was intended to ensure the business remained Teckal compliant and to allow new member councils to join more easily.

The results for all three companies have been amalgamated for the purposes of this report. In future, we expect to show the results for VPS and Veritau Limited separately.

In addition to the restructure, we welcomed two new member councils, Leicester City Council and Cherwell District Council. We also continued to attract new clients with Bradford Children and Families Trust, schools, charities and sports governing bodies signing up for services during the year. Ad-hoc work was also requested by a number of other clients. Client satisfaction and retention rates have remained high.

Investment in new systems and technologies has continued. New case management systems went live in our internal audit and information governance services, and we implemented new redaction software to support our information access team. This ongoing investment helps provide a good foundation to support future growth across all our services. We also retained our Good Business Charter and Cyber Essentials accreditations and signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant.

**Max Thomas, Chief Executive of Veritau**





# About us

Veritau provides assurance services to a wide range of clients, helping them to operate effectively, manage risks and comply with laws and regulations. We have two companies, Veritau Public Sector Limited which provides services to our member councils on a 'not for profit' basis and Veritau Limited which provides services to our other clients.

Our main offices are in York, but we provide services across the country.

## Our mission

To deliver efficient, effective and professional assurance services which are responsive to the needs of our clients and add real value.

## Our core values

- ▲ **Working together** to help our clients deliver excellence
- ▲ Embodying the principles of **honesty** and **integrity**
- ▲ **Championing innovation** to help achieve the best outcomes for our clients and adapt to change
- ▲ **Investing in our people** to help them succeed and deliver outstanding services



# Management team



**Max Thomas**  
Chief Executive



**Richard Smith**  
Deputy Chief Executive



**Stuart Cutts**  
AD - Audit Assurance



**Connor Munro**  
AD - Audit Assurance



**Phil Jeffrey**  
AD - Audit Assurance



**Ed Lambert-Martin**  
Internal Audit Manager



**Thomas Absalom**  
Internal Audit Manager



**Amy Stroud**  
Internal Audit Manager



**Bharat Mistry**  
Internal Audit Manager



**Jonathan Dodsworth**  
AD - Corporate Fraud



**Daniel Clubb**  
AD - Corporate Fraud



**Sarah Butler**  
Corporate Fraud Manager



**Helen Swan**  
AD - Information Governance



**Rosie Kelly**  
AD - Information Governance



**Andy Nutting**  
Information Governance Manager



**Julie Ferguson**  
Information Governance Manager





# Financial performance

Turnover and operating profits before tax and pension adjustments for each group company were as follows:

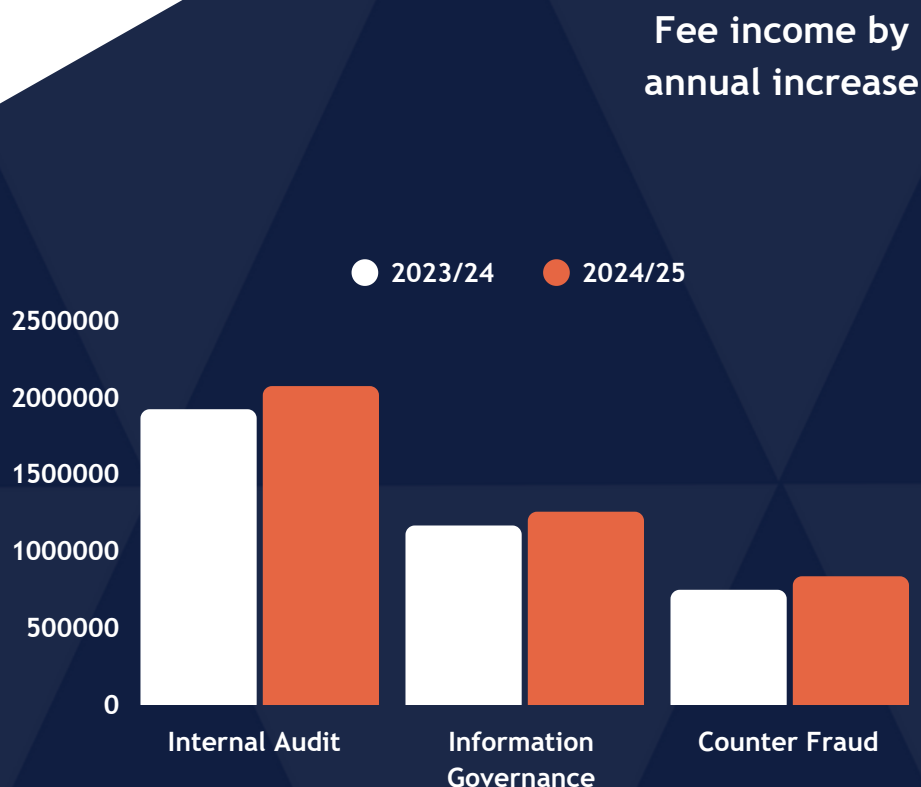
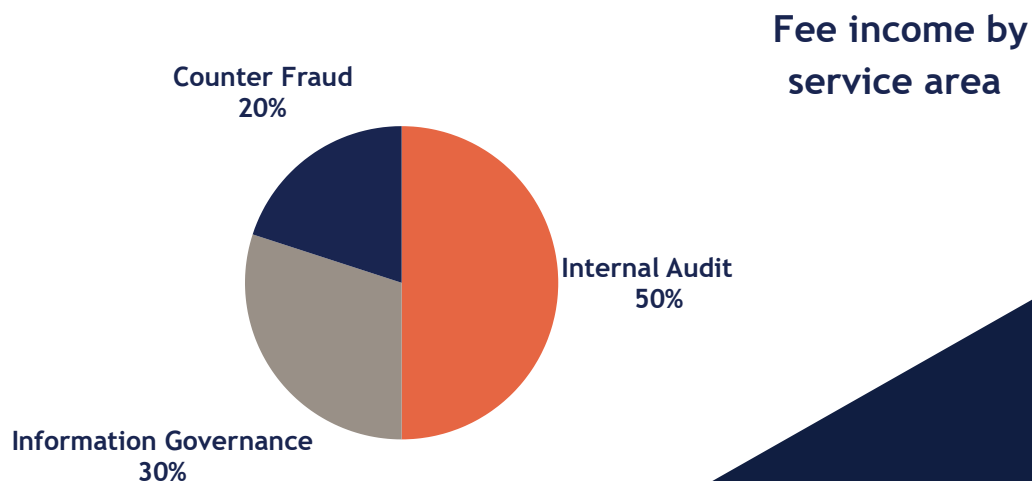
Group Company	2024/25		2023/24
	Turnover (£k)	Operating profits/(loss) (£k)	Operating profits/(loss) (£k)
Veritau Limited	1,893	24.8	56.4
Veritau Public Sector Limited	1,986	14.4	0
Veritau Tees Valley Limited	300	(4.8)	0.1
Total	4,179	34.4	56.5

Fee income increased by 8.7% compared to the previous year (2024 – 21.9%) with strong growth across all the areas of the business. The total operating profit was £34.4k compared to the budget of £46.1k. This profit was also after incurring approximately £33k of costs associated with the business restructure.



# Fee income

The following graphs show the breakdown of fee income between service areas for 2024/25 and the increase in fees compared to 2023/24:



# Our clients

Our clients include:



councils



schools and  
academies



council owned  
companies



housing  
associations

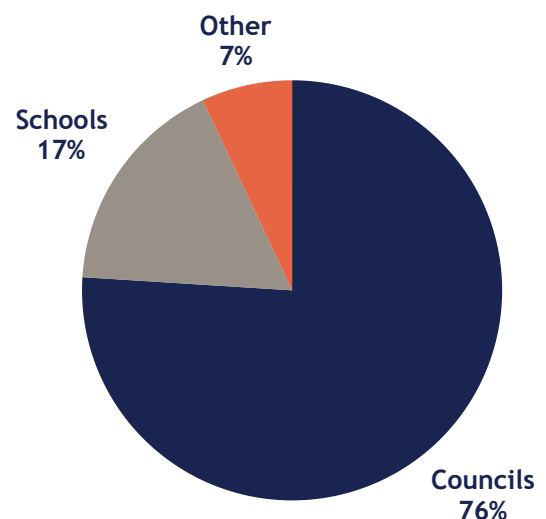


national sports  
bodies



national park  
authorities

This graph shows the breakdown of fee income received in respect of each sector in 2024/25:



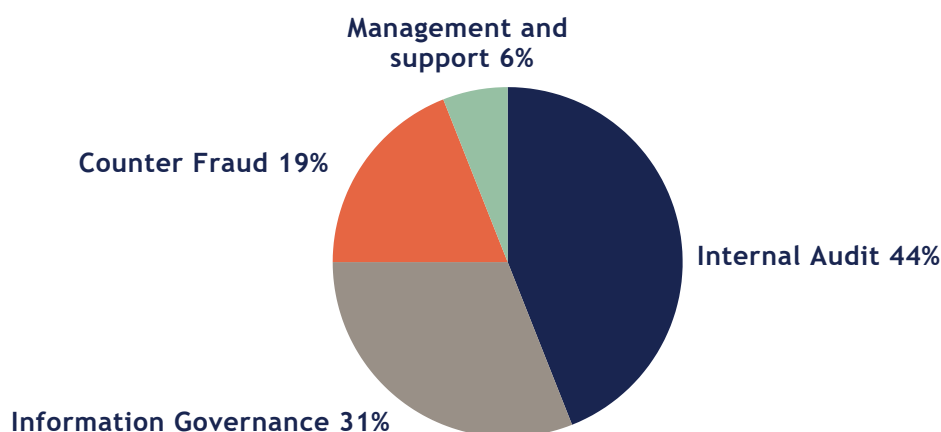






# Our people

The average number of people employed across the group increased from 86 to 89 FTEs in 2024/25. The following graph shows the percentage of people working in each service area during the year.



We continue to actively support our graduate and aspiring manager training programmes. During the year, 10 trainees were recruited into our graduate training programme, with 6 successfully completing their training and progressing to officer roles. A further 2 seniors joined our aspiring manager programme.

Average staff turnover across the group was 8.5% (2024 – 9.4%).

Staff absence averaged 6.8 days per FTE (2024 – 6.6 days). The short-term absence rate was 4.8 days (2024 – 4.6 days).

Overall staff satisfaction was 83.1% (2024 – 84.6%).

We have also supported those staff who transferred from Leicester City Council as a result of the Council joining Veritau.



# Governance

The Veritau Limited and Veritau Public Sector Limited boards of directors each met twice during the year. Leicester City Council and Cherwell District Council joined Veritau during the year and Stuart McAvoy and Michael Furness were appointed as directors to the Veritau Public Sector board.



# Client satisfaction and retention

Customer satisfaction has remained high with 96% of respondents rating the services provided by Veritau as excellent or good (2024 – 97%). A separate survey of school clients showed 100% rated our data protection services as excellent or good (2024 – 96%).

Client retention also remained strong with 99% of clients indicating that they would continue to purchase services in 2025/26. This was unchanged from the previous year. New clients gained in the year include:

## Internal Audit

- ▲ Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Academy Trust (Dewsbury, Huddersfield and Halifax)
- ▲ Lighthouse School (Leeds)
- ▲ Endeavour Academies Trust (Middlesbrough)
- ▲ The People's Learning Trust (Liverpool)
- ▲ Firthmoor Primary School (Darlington)
- ▲ Cascade MAT (Sheffield)



## Data Protection Officer and related advisory services

- ▲ Behaviour Smart
- ▲ Swim England
- ▲ The Teesside Hospice
- ▲ Aspire Schools Trust (Lincoln)
- ▲ The Education Alliance (Hull and East Yorkshire)
- ▲ Talentum Learning Trust (Staffordshire)
- ▲ Finborough School (Suffolk)
- ▲ Mortimer Community College (South Shields)
- ▲ The Learning for Life Trust (Cumbria)

Internal audit, counter fraud and data protection services were provided to Bradford Children and Families Trust during the year. Services were also provided to the Mid Kent Audit Partnership, West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Transport for the North, Leicestershire County Council and the Butler Trust. In addition, we supported the introduction of core risk management arrangements at the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority and continued to support the implementation of an assurance mapping process at Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council to allow the Council to identify and review the assurance it receives on an ongoing basis.

The contracts to provide internal audit services to the Yorkshire Dales and the Peak District National Park Authorities were also retained.



# Key achievements



Achieving high levels of savings from counter fraud work. Cashable savings for all clients totalled £723k whilst the total value of fraud and error detected was £935k



Completing the implementation of our new redaction software, Nalytics and a new case management system for the Information Governance Service, DeskPro



Refreshing and relaunching our internal audit strategy which sets out the areas we will prioritise for development over the next three years



Adopting a new menopause policy and associated guidance, designating two menopause champions and establishing a menopause support group for staff



Signing up to the Armed Forces Covenant and retaining our Cyber Essentials and Good Business Charter (GBC) accreditations

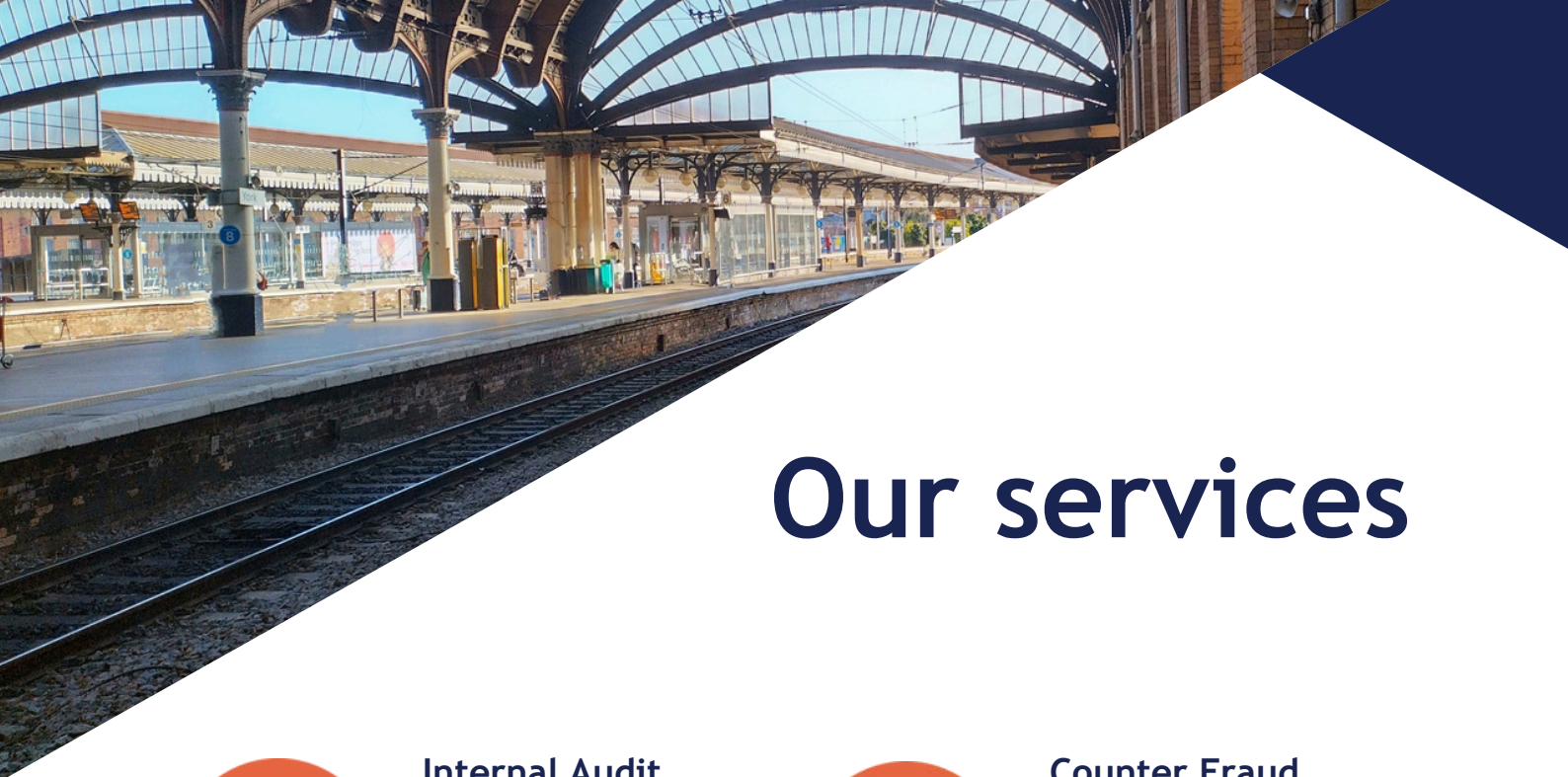


Successfully targeting the charity sector to drive prospective clients to our website



# Other service developments and achievements

- ▲ processing 1,500 potential fraud referrals and completing 533 investigations during the year
- ▲ producing a report and toolkit on behalf of the national Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally (FFCL) group. The purpose of the toolkit is to support local authorities to raise awareness of and tackle adult social care fraud. The report and toolkit were presented at national and regional events
- ▲ progressing the full implementation of the new Global Internal Audit Standards which came into effect on 1 April 2025. This has included reviewing our audit procedures and practices, updating our audit manual and relevant audit charters, and communicating the changes to clients
- ▲ launching a new 'focus week' approach for academy schools and trusts which aims to reduce audit cycles for our smaller clients. Feedback since the launch has been positive and we have already seen improvements in the achievement of key audit milestones
- ▲ implementing measures to comply with the new prevention of sexual harassment legislation, including carrying out a risk assessment and introducing mandatory training for staff
- ▲ Making improvements to the schools' DPO service to enhance client experience and staff caseload management, including adopting new template documents and resources
- ▲ Representing our member councils at meetings with the Public Sector Fraud Authority and government representatives and being vice-chair of the Yorkshire and Humberside Tenancy Fraud Forum (TFF)



# Our services



## Internal Audit

Our internal auditors take an independent view of key business processes to assess risks, review controls and identify areas for improvement.



## Counter Fraud

We protect our clients from the threat of fraud through prevention and deterrence. We also detect and investigate fraud when it occurs.



## Information Governance

Supporting clients in protecting personal data, implementing effective governance frameworks, and managing information successfully.



## Data Protection Officer (DPO)

We act as the data protection officer for over 600 schools and other public sector clients, helping them fulfil their obligations under UK GDPR.



## Data Analytics

Using the powerful data analysis tool IDEA, our dedicated group supports internal audit and counter fraud work.



## Risk Management

Our team of qualified professionals identify key risks and provide assurance to clients that risks are being managed within their risk appetite.





# Information governance

## Implementing new helpdesk system

As the number of our school clients has increased, and their expectations have evolved, we decided that we needed to replace our existing case management system with a more customer-centric helpdesk system.

Following an evaluation and procurement process we commenced the implementation of the new system in Spring 2024, going live a few months later. Offering improved internal processes and a much-needed revamp to client communications, the new system quickly became a success for both clients and our staff. Advanced reporting, through 'off-the-shelf' and bespoke dashboards, has provided us with insights not previously available, allowing the fine-tuning of the services we provide to schools.

Although initially intended only for our Schools Team, the success of the new system and its quick and easy adoption, meant we decided to deploy it across the rest of the service. Now completed, the implementation segregates the processes and 'business rules' for each team, allowing the methods of work and client communications to be optimised for each sector. This has resulted in immediate service improvements, with locally customisable automations and a modern user interface delivering efficiencies and improved usability.

## Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 (DUAA)

This year, our information governance service has continued to track the progress of the proposed changes to data protection legislation through parliament. The Data (Use and Access Act) received royal assent on 19 June 2025. The Act introduces several amendments to data protection law, including changes to data subject rights, international data transfers, automated decision-making and website cookie requirements.

There are also new legal requirements on 'information society services' which acknowledge that children merit specific protection regarding their personal data. These are particularly relevant to our education sector clients. For example, schools will need to consider the new legislation when working with ed-tech providers. These companies must now be able to demonstrate that they have appropriate security measures in place to safeguard children's data.



As a service we've received external and internal training to upskill and understand how we can best support our clients to prepare and remain compliant. We also designated team leads to develop project plans to update our resources and issue guidance to our clients.

Most of the changes introduced by the DUA Act will not take effect until towards the end of 2025 or early 2026. In the meantime, we have been providing regular updates to our clients, and we plan to keep them fully informed as each change is introduced. We'll also be updating our resources to clearly explain what each change means in practice and how clients can implement them with confidence. Our aim is to make the transition as smooth and straightforward as possible.

# Internal audit

## Supporting academy trusts

Delivering internal audit for multi-academy trusts continues to be a significant area of growth and development. A key feature of the last year has been the ongoing expansion of trusts, who continue to onboard new schools and merge with other trusts. Many of our clients have become large organisations, employing hundreds of staff and educating thousands of children and young people.

This has encouraged us to review our service offering. As client trusts continue to mature, their expectations have changed. They are asking for strategic support targeting organisational development and a shift from traditional school audits to innovative engagements that add value across their school base.

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) funding is at the top of the agenda for many of our trusts. They continue to feel the pressure of resourcing provision for young people with Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs). Our clients are asking for internal audit input in this area, and we've already completed several assignments. Feedback to date has been extremely positive. We use analytic techniques to identify strengths and weakness across trust schools. These cover areas such as the quality of provision mapping, and the analysis of costs versus types of provision and outcomes.

While the issues found were complex, our clients have welcomed the way we've presented our findings to trustees and senior leadership in a clear and understandable way. This is helping them to promote good practice and target areas where resources could be used more efficiently.

We are looking forward to seeing what challenges and opportunities this changing landscape will bring in the next year.



## Supporting risk management

Veritau was approached to help develop a risk management approach for the newly established York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority. This has been an exciting and fast-paced project, working alongside the leadership team and in-house assurance specialists to co-develop the new arrangements.

The project is divided into two phases. Phase 1, delivered in 2024/25, focused on establishing risk governance arrangements and the development of a strategic risk register. Work started before the creation of the Authority. We held workshops with key stakeholders to help us understand the organisation's requirements and their ideas about how risk management should operate. Work continued throughout 2024/25 as we drafted and refined proposals for risk management policy and procedures.

An additional challenge was the need to harmonise the risk arrangements inherited from the former Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) and the Fire & Rescue Service. Each of these had their own unique risk profiles and service delivery models. We undertook a detailed fact-finding review of arrangements across the three bodies and assessed how the new Authority could bring them together in a practical way. The outcomes were reported to the leadership team, outlining key areas where improvements could be made. For example, ensuring governance of risk at a range of appropriate levels, escalation arrangements, and better action planning through clear accountability for actions. We also provided templates for the leadership team to use to develop a strategic risk register.

We look forward to continuing the project in 2025/26, as phase 2 commences. This will see the introduction of risks registers at a service level, and work to embed arrangements, for example through the delivery of training.

# Counter Fraud

## Social care deprivation of capital investigation

We completed a long-running social care investigation in April 2024, which resulted in an agreement to repay £150k to one of our client councils.

A local resident had been receiving social care support. A financial assessment had determined that his income and capital were low enough for the care to be funded by the council. However, there were concerns about the information provided. Following a referral from the council's social care team, we launched an investigation. We found that the resident's house had been sold to family members for significantly less than the property's market value. This meant the resident's capital did not reflect the true value that it should – and the resident should have been responsible for the care payments. The council used section 70 of the Care Act to recover the cost of the social care funded. The legislation enables local authorities to bill the third-party who received the benefit of the capital, rather than the resident. Working closely with the council's legal services team we achieved a successful outcome, with the residents' family agreeing to repay £150k in care fees.

## Social care fraud - adult social care toolkit

Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally is the collaborative strategy developed for English local authorities to address the risks of fraud and corruption. The strategy is overseen by an independent board.

Veritau has significant experience in tackling adult social care fraud for client councils. In light of this we were asked to lead a national working group for Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally. We arranged a series of workshops involving counter fraud professionals from a range of local authorities. These discussions allowed us to develop a national picture of how adult social care fraud occurs and to evaluate the barriers to investigating and pursuing the people who commit fraud.



The workshops were also used to produce a toolkit of resources for councils. These are designed to help councils understand how fraud can affect social care funding and provide guidance to help them begin to address it. The toolkit includes fraud awareness presentations, a pocket guide on how to identify fraud, and suggestions on how to improve application and assessment forms. The toolkit also promotes the greater use of the legislation already in place to tackle deprivation of capital.

We have received excellent feedback, including from councils who have used the toolkit to train staff, and who have subsequently identified fraud and process issues. The toolkit was published in February 2025, and can be downloaded here: [www.cifas.org.uk/adult\\_social\\_care\\_fraud\\_toolkit](http://www.cifas.org.uk/adult_social_care_fraud_toolkit).



Veritau comprises:

Veritau Limited (6794890)  
Veritau Public Sector Limited (15735835)  
Veritau North Yorkshire Limited (7931990)  
Veritau Tees Valley Limited (12363643).

The companies are registered in England and Wales. The registered office for all of the companies is West Offices, Station Rise, York YO1 6GA

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