

COUNTER FRAUD ACTIVITY 2014/15

The table below shows the total numbers of fraud referrals received and summarises the outcomes of investigations completed to date. The indicators include the full range of counter fraud work undertaken.

	2014/15 (Actual: Full Yr)	2014/15 (Target: Full Yr)	2013/14 (Actual: Full Yr)
% of investigations completed which result in a successful outcome (for example benefit stopped or amended, sanctions, prosecutions, properties recovered, housing allocations blocked, management action taken).	43%	30%	55%
Amount of actual savings (quantifiable savings - e.g. CTS) identified through fraud investigation.	£135,136	£100,000	£97,947
Amount of notional savings (estimated savings - e.g. housing tenancy fraud) identified through fraud investigation.	£612,700	£600,000	£810,000

Caseload figures for the period are:

	As at 1/4/15	As at 1/4/14
Awaiting allocation	40	40
Under investigation	171	184

Summary of counter fraud activity:

Activity	Work completed or in progress
Data matching	<p>Investigation of matches arising from the National Fraud Initiative is underway. There are a total of 2,200 recommended data matches relating to a number of council teams and services as well as 3,500 matches relating specifically to Single Person Discounts.</p> <p>The council has recently participated in a pilot NFI exercise relating to Council Tax Support payments. Results are expected to be released next month.</p> <p>Housing Benefit Matching Service (HBMS) referrals continue to be investigated - the counter fraud team received 527 HBMS referrals in 2014/15 resulting in 2 benefit fraud prosecutions and 3 sanctions.</p>
Fraud detection and investigation	<p>The service continues to promote the use of criminal investigation techniques and standards to robustly respond to any fraud perpetrated against the council. Activity to date includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing fraud – working in conjunction with housing officers, 29 properties were recovered in 2014/15. In addition, 15 properties were prevented from being let where the prospective tenants had provided false information in their housing applications. One person was cautioned for illegal subletting.

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	<p>In March 2015, City of York Council and Veritau hosted a regional conference with the Yorkshire and Humber Tenancy Fraud Forum. Over 32 social housing organisations attended the event which was over subscribed.</p> <p>Recent statistics from the Audit Commission have shown that in 2013/14 City of York Council was the 5th best performing council nationally in dealing with housing fraud as a proportion of stock held and the best performing council in the Yorkshire and Humber region in terms of actual recoveries of property and the blocking of false applications.</p> <p>There are currently 67 ongoing investigations in this area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal fraud - the team has received 15 referrals for internal frauds in 2014/15. 7 cases are still under investigation. • Council Tax/Non Domestic Rates fraud – In January 2015, City of York Council alongside a number of other councils in the area successfully bid for DCLG funding in order to create the North Yorkshire Fraud Hub. As part of this project, cross boundary data matching of Council Tax and NNDR records will be undertaken to identify fraudulent discounts and exemptions. <p>There are currently 20 investigations in this area.</p>

Activity	Work completed or in progress
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit fraud – 6 people have been prosecuted for benefit fraud offences and a further 21 have received formal sanctions (cautions and administrative penalties). Benefits have been corrected in 23 cases. <p>On 1 April 2016 the council expects to lose its remit to investigate and prosecute Housing Benefit Fraud when this responsibility is transferred to the Department for Work and Pensions. Significant work is expected to remain with (and be created for) the authority and the fraud team is working with other teams and departments to prepare for this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Care fraud – There are currently 13 ongoing investigations in this area. The fraud team is working closely with a number of departments and outside organisations to identify, detect and deter fraud in this area. • Parking fraud – 24 cases of blue badge or other parking exemption fraud were referred in 2014/15 resulting in 4 people being cautioned and 6 people being issued formal written warnings. • Education verification – The fraud team is working with the schools team to investigate and deter false applications for school placements. <p>There are currently 3 investigations in this area.</p>