

COUNTER FRAUD ACTIVITY 2015/16

The table below shows the total numbers of fraud referrals received and summarises the outcomes of investigations completed to date.

	2015/16 (Actual: Full Yr)	2015/16 (Target: Full Yr)	2014/15 (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).	41%	30%	43%
Amount of actual savings (quantifiable savings - e.g. CTS) identified through fraud investigation.	£141,579	£100,000	£135,136
Amount of notional savings (estimated savings - e.g. housing tenancy fraud) identified through fraud investigation.	£511,000	£600,000	£612,700

Caseload figures for the period are:

	As at 1/4/16	As at 1/4/15
Awaiting allocation	10	40
Under investigation	93	171

Summary of counter fraud activity:

Activity	Work completed or in progress
Data matching	<p>Investigation of matches arising from the National Fraud Initiative is almost complete. There were a total of 2,540 recommended data matches to process relating to a number of council teams. A further 2,268 matches relating to possible false Single Person Discounts have been generated and will be looked at as part of an upcoming review of discounts by the council.</p> <p>The council is participating in a regional data matching exercise to identify cross boundary fraud in the York and North Yorkshire area following funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government. The project is being administrated by Veritau. Data from five local authorities has been gathered and data matching has begun.</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"><li data-bbox="472 1114 2056 1318">• Housing fraud – working in conjunction with housing officers, 15 properties were recovered in 2015/16. In addition, 17 properties were prevented from being let where the prospective tenants had provided false information in their housing applications. Four people were cautioned for falsely applying for housing. Following an investigation, one right to buy application was blocked preventing a £61k loss.

Activity	Work completed or in progress
	<p>There are currently 17 ongoing investigations in this area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal fraud - The team started 12 new investigations for internal frauds in 2015/16. Four cases are currently under investigation. As a result of an investigation a security guard employed by a contractor but working at the council was prosecuted for the theft of council ICT equipment. • External fraud – The team has received 4 referrals relating to third party frauds against the council. One warning was issued for the misuse of council recycling facilities. • Council Tax/Non Domestic Rates fraud – The team completed 40 investigations into CTAX and NNDR fraud in 2015/16 uncovering £14k of fraud. Four people were cautioned for their actions. <p>There are currently 26 investigations in this area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit fraud – Three people have been prosecuted for benefit fraud offences and a further 14 have received formal sanctions (cautions and administrative penalties). Benefits have been corrected in a further 23 cases. <p>On 1 March 2016 the council lost its remit to investigate and prosecute Housing Benefit Fraud as this responsibility transferred to the Department for Work and Pensions. Veritau</p>

Activity	Work completed or in progress
	<p>are now responsible for monitoring and facilitating the DWP's investigations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Tax Support fraud – The fraud team maintains responsibility for the investigation of Council Tax Support payments. Veritau identified £50k of fraud in 35 investigations over 2015/16. • Social Care fraud – There are currently 19 ongoing investigations in this area. The fraud team identified £166k of loss to the council in 8 investigations over 2015/16. • Parking fraud – Seventeen cases of blue badge or other parking exemption fraud were referred in 2015/16 resulting in 1 person being successfully prosecuted, 1 person being cautioned and 13 people being issued formal written warnings. <p>There are currently 10 investigations in this area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Assistance Scheme fraud – The fraud team investigate cases where the public falsely apply for assistance from the council. Six cases were referred in 2015/16. The first prosecution in this area has been approved and is shortly due in court. • Education verification – The fraud team is working with the schools team to investigate and deter false applications for school placements. Six investigations were completed in 2015/16 resulting in 3 false applications being stopped.