

**COUNTER FRAUD ACTIVITY 2016/17**

The table below summarises the outcomes from fraud investigation work for the period to 31 August 2016. The indicators include the full range of counter fraud work undertaken.

	<b>2015/17 (Actual: 31/8/16)</b>	<b>2016/17 (Target: Full Yr)</b>	<b>2015/16 (Actual: Full Yr)</b>
% 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).	49%	30%	41%
Amount of actual savings (quantifiable savings - e.g. CTS) identified through fraud investigation.	£44,769	£100,000	£141,579
Amount of notional savings (estimated savings - e.g. housing tenancy fraud) identified through fraud investigation.	£90,200	£250,000 <sup>1</sup>	£511,100

**Caseload figures for the period are:**

	<b>As at 31/8/16</b>	<b>As at 1/4/16</b>
Awaiting allocation	10	10
Under investigation	84	93

<sup>1</sup> The annual target for notional savings has been reduced from £500,000 following changes to the scope of work undertaken for the Housing Department.

## Summary of counter fraud activity:

Activity	Work completed or in progress
Data matching	<p>Preparations are underway for the 2016/17 National Fraud Initiative. Data will be extracted from council systems in early October before being securely transferred to the Cabinet Office for data matching. Results of the exercise will be returned in early 2017.</p> <p>The council has joined Ryedale, Selby, Hambleton and Richmondshire district councils to undertake data matching exercises to detect cross boundary fraud. Initial matching has begun looking at single person discounts and other council tax exemptions.</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>• <b>Social Care fraud</b> – is a substantial risk to the authority and remains an area of development for the fraud team. In 2015/16 the team uncovered £166,000 in losses to the authority in this area whilst aiding in the recovery of over £68,000. There are currently 23 ongoing investigations in this area.</li> <li>• <b>Housing fraud</b> – Working in conjunction with housing officers, 5 properties have been recovered to date in 2016/17. In addition, 3 properties were prevented from being let where the prospective tenants had provided false information in their housing applications. There are currently 12 ongoing investigations in this area.</li> </ul>

Activity	Work completed or in progress
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Internal fraud</b> - The team has received 4 referrals for internal frauds in 2016/17 and six cases are currently under investigation.</li> <li>• <b>Council Tax/Non Domestic Rates fraud</b> – This area is the subject of cross boundary data matching to detect fraud. In 2015/16 the team received 47 referrals for potential fraud in this area. There are currently 22 ongoing investigations into Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates fraud.</li> <li>• <b>York Financial Assistance Scheme fraud</b> – The fraud team received six referrals in 2015/16. Two people were cautioned for fraud against the scheme and a third was prosecuted. The prosecution is believed to be first prosecution of its kind in the country.</li> <li>• <b>Benefit fraud</b> – On 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 the council’s remit to investigate and prosecute housing benefit fraud transferred to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The fraud team now acts as a single point of contact for the DWP and is responsible for providing data to support their housing benefit investigations. The team have dealt with 317 requests for the council between March and September.</li> <li>• <b>Council Tax Support fraud</b> – Despite the transfer of Housing Benefit fraud to the DWP, the council is responsible for the investigation of council tax support payments. Average fraud overpayments have increased year on year since 2014. The team have received 19 referrals to date in 16/17 compared to 11 in 2015/16.</li> <li>• <b>Parking fraud</b> – The fraud team have undertaken fraud awareness training with the council’s enforcement team this year which has lead to an increase in referrals to the team.</li> </ul>

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Work completed or in progress</b>
	<p>In 2016/17 to date the team have issued two warning letters and one case is being prepared for prosecution. Alongside the Parking department, the team are currently looking at how other authorities deal with blue badge fraud.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="465 507 2047 627">• <b>Education verification</b> – The fraud team works with the schools team to investigate and deter false applications for school placements. In 2015/16 the team received five referrals resulting in two false applications for school placement being blocked.</li></ul>