

**Annex 3
Counter Fraud Activity**

Activity	Work Completed or in Progress
Training	Fraud awareness training has been provided for new benefits and housing staff during the course of the year. In addition, annual fraud awareness training sessions are currently being arranged for all other Housing and Council Tax Benefit staff – these will be delivered in January and February 2008.
Public and Internal Fraud Awareness	As in previous years there will be a targeted fraud awareness publicity campaign in February and March. This will include material directed at both the staff and the public and will include for example, radio and press advertisements, articles in staff newsletters and publications.
Advice and Guidance	Ongoing advice and guidance is provided on the design and implementation of measures to prevent and detect fraud and other financial irregularities. For example changes to the design of benefit claim forms and the implementation of security measures in Council establishments and offices. Feedback is now given to relevant staff on all cases investigated. This feedback is intended to encourage more referrals but, where necessary, will include recommendations to change or improve systems and procedures so as to prevent or detect fraud in the future.
Data Matching	<p>The Fraud Team is currently finalising work on 2006/07 Audit Commission National Fraud Initiative (NFI) data matches. The Commission have commended the work carried out to investigate these matches in a recent report.</p> <p>Work is also underway to coordinate the collection of data for an additional 2007/08 NFI data match using council tax and electoral registration records. Details of any matches are expected to be received in early 2008.</p>

	<p>The Fraud Team has continued to investigate potential benefit fraud cases identified each month by the DWP through the HBMS data match process. In total, 457 HBMS matches have been referred to the Council in 2007/08 of which 110 have been referred for further investigation. Total benefit overpayments identified through the investigation of HBMS matches this year is £123k of which £63k is fraudulent.</p>
<p>Joint Working with Other Agencies</p>	<p>The Fraud Partnership Agreement (FPA) with the DWP which encourages and facilitates joint working on relevant cases is now fully operational and is proving to be very successful. Both agencies are cooperating on individual investigations and sharing information to identify further possible fraud. In 2007/08 the Fraud team has been involved in 65 joint working cases with the DWP.</p> <p>Where appropriate the Fraud team has also continued taken part in specific joint exercises with other agencies and other Council departments. For example, the Fraud team are currently taking part in joint exercises with Housing, Trading Standards, and are involved in a major investigation involving the police and DWP.</p>
<p>Financial Investigations</p>	<p>All investigations are monitored on an ongoing basis to assess their suitability for financial investigation and asset recovery. A small number of cases are currently being considered for further action.</p>
<p>Proactive Work</p>	<p>A programme of targeted investigation work is planned for early 2008. This will be based on analysis of benefits and related data using data interrogation software.</p>
<p>Other</p>	<p>A review of the Council's Fraud and Corruption Response Plan is currently underway.</p>