

Annex 4

Investigations, Prosecutions and Sanctions (Housing and Council Tax Benefits)

771 fraud referrals have been received in the first 9 months of the year, of which 319 have been accepted for investigation (41.4%) (1,131 referrals were received in total during 2006/07, of which 704 were accepted for investigation). The following table summarises performance to date;

	2007/08 Actual (to 31/12/07)	2007/08 Target	2006/07 Actual
Number of fraud investigations completed	397	540	539
Prosecutions	19	19	22
Administrative Penalties	11	20	15
Cautions	8	20	14
Cases Currently in the Process of Prosecution	14		

In addition to the above, the Fraud team has investigated 20 cases of suspected blue badge fraud. The investigations have led to badges being surrendered in five cases.

Although the number of prosecutions to date has already exceeded the target for the year, the number of sanctions achieved (cautions and administrative penalties) is below the level expected at this point. This is in part due to the Fraud Team Leader post being vacant for several months, which has led to a backlog of cases awaiting decision on action to be taken. A recruitment exercise is currently underway and it is expected that the new Team Leader will be in post before the end of the Financial Year. It is anticipated that this will enable the backlog to be reduced, and the target level of sanctions achieved.

Performance of the fraud team is also measured and reported through three statutory Best Value Performance Indicators. The projected outturn for 2007/08 (based on the performance of the team to 31 December 2007) is as follows.

	2007/08 Projected	2007/08 Target	2006/07 Actual	Comments
BVPI 76b – Number of investigators per 1000 caseload	0.49	0.50	0.51	There has been a slight decrease in this indicator due to a rise in the benefits caseload (up by approximately 1.5% on 2006/07).
BVPI 76c – Number of investigations completed per 1000 caseload	43.15	45	44.59	This indicator is slightly lower than expected (0.5%) due to the increase in benefits caseload. However, the number of investigations completed has also been affected by the vacancy within the team. It is hoped that this will be addressed by the appointment of a new Fraud Team Leader in early 2008.
BVPI 76d – Number of sanctions/prosecutions per 1000 caseload	4.13	5	4.22	As noted above, there is currently a backlog of cases awaiting decision. It is anticipated that this will be addressed following the appointment of a new Fraud Team Leader.