

**Annex 3
Counter Fraud Activity 2008/09**

Activity	Work Completed or in Progress
Investigations (Housing and Council Tax Benefit)	809 fraud referrals were received in the year, of which 282 were passed for investigation. A total of 317 investigations were completed that resulted in 24 prosecutions, 22 cautions, and 9 administrative penalties. Benefit overpayments of £304k were identified by the team.
Fraud Awareness	<p>Work has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the provision of fraud awareness training for all Housing and Council Tax Benefit staff • ongoing publication of successful prosecutions through the local press • an in depth article on the work of the fraud team in Street Scene • articles in News & Jobs.
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 given to relevant staff on all cases investigated. This feedback is intended to encourage more referrals and also includes recommendations to change or improve systems and procedures so as to prevent or detect fraud in the future, where necessary.
Data Matching	<i>Audit Commission National Fraud Initiative (NFI):</i> Work in 2008/09 has included analysis of the pilot council tax single persons discount match and preparation of data for the wider 2009/10 match. This includes coordinating data extracts from departments across the council, providing support to ensure fair processing notices have been published, data cleansing, and the secure submission of data to the Audit Commission. .

	<p><i>Housing Benefit Matching Service (HBMS):</i> The fraud team has continued to investigate potential benefit fraud cases identified by the DWP through the HBMS data match process. The council received 376 HBMS referrals during the year. Benefit overpayments identified as a result of this work totalled £68k of which £49k was fraudulent.</p>
Joint Working with Other Agencies	<p>The service has continued to work closely with the DWP in the investigation of benefit fraud – a total of 17 joint council and DWP cases were prosecuted in 2008/09. The team has also continued to develop its relationships with other council departments and external agencies. This includes information sharing and support on joint cases with housing and trading standards, and involvement with police led search and arrest operations.</p>
Financial Investigations	<p>All investigations are monitored to assess their suitability for financial investigation and asset recovery. The team commenced 3 financial investigations during the year, and 2 other cases are ongoing.</p>
Proactive Work	<p>Based on analysis of benefit records, 80 cases were identified for proactive visits in 2008/09. Of these, 23 cases resulted in more detailed investigations being launched (these are ongoing).</p>
Other	<p>Six internal investigations have been undertaken by the audit and fraud teams in 2008/09.</p>