

FRAUD SECTION MONITORING REPORT: Fourth Quarter 2010/11

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1.0 FRAUD WORK IN THE FOURTH QUARTER 2010/11

- 1.1 The Fraud Section receives referrals of suspected fraudulent claims from a number of sources. Many are from the Council's own Revenues and Benefits Section. Some are from the Housing Benefit Matching Service (HBMS). This is where a monthly electronic download of our benefits system is matched against records held by the DWP and any mismatches are sent back for further investigation. Other referrals come from the public in a variety of forms. Most of these are anonymous.
- 1.2 These referrals are risk scored and prioritised for investigation on a rolling basis. A summary of the workload for this quarter is shown below.

Caseload investigated 1st Jan 2011 to 31st Mar 2011

Number of cases referred:	59
Number of cases accepted for investigation:	44
Number of cases closed after investigation	65
Number of cases summonsed for prosecution:	2
Number of successful prosecutions:	1
Number of prosecutions found "Not guilty":	0
Number of prosecutions rejected:	0
Number of Administrative Penalties (fines) given:	0
Number of Cautions given:	5

2.0 **PROGRESS AGAINST TARGETS**

2.1 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have not set targets for this financial year but our results are still recorded and reported to them. For the year 2011/2012 targets have been set by the Revenues and Benefits Partnership Manager based on previous performance.

2.2 For the fourth quarter 1.1.2011 to 31.03.2011 we have achieved:-

No of investigations closed – 65

No of sanctions – 6 i.e. 5 cautions and 1 successful prosecution.

There is also 1 case referred to Crown Court and the trial will start in May.

The total number of sanctions for 2010-2011 is 35 i.e.:

21 Cautions 6 Administrative Penalties 8 successful prosecutions

3.0 **STAFFING ISSUES**

3.1 The Fraud Team was part of the shared services project under Revenues and Benefits and the employing authority from 1st June is Carlisle City Council. The final structure of the shared service has not yet been fully implemented.

3.2 There has been a decrease in the number of investigators at the present time. Copeland has 1 full-time Fraud Investigation Officer (FIO) and 1 Fraud Support Officer (FSO) 2 days a week. The FSO is based at Allerdale Borough Council for the rest of the week. 1 FIO is currently on maternity leave and is due back in October. A Visiting Officer has been seconded to the Fraud Team until September 2011. He covers both Copeland and Allerdale.

3.3 Prosecutions are still handled by the Copeland Legal Section or, where there is a joint investigation with the DWP, by the Solicitors Branch of the DWP.

4.0 **CURRENT FRAUD WORK**

4.1 As at 1.4.2011 the Fraud Section had a caseload of 65 live investigations.

4.2 We have received the National Fraud Initiative data for 2011 from the Audit Commission and work has started on that. There were 1350 matches. These are colour coded as high, medium and low risk categories. The data has been sifted and prioritised and work will continue on this for some time.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 The Fraud Teams are working well within the shared service and regular contact is made between the three authorities. The Fraud Team Leader is based at Allerdale Borough Council but is on site at Copeland and Carlisle on a regular basis.

5.2 Members are recommended to note this report.

Officers Consulted: Corporate Team

Background Papers: None