

FRAUD, CORRUPTION AND FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES – RESULTS OF CASES CLOSED 2020/21

Offence/irregularity, sanctions and redress	Key outstanding actions
<p><u>Housing Fraud:</u></p> <p>1. (5062) – False Housing Application/Abandonment: Anonymous referral linking non-residents with this property. Housing award was based upon a family with two children. Investigations found that tenant was claiming housing benefits for a wife and two children who had never been resident in the UK. Joint working with DWP quantified a benefit overpayment of £50,885.00. As family had never resided Notices were served. Tenant failed to respond. A forced entry was made for Gas maintenance and property was found to be empty, property recovered.</p>	None
<p>2. (6238) False Succession: It was alleged that the social housing tenancy had been handed over to unauthorised occupant as a false succession following the death of the previous tenant. Occupancy check confirmed unauthorised occupants, so notices were issued. Information obtained from the previous tenants' families and statements taken to support the application for possession. Possession Order awarded and property recovered.</p>	None
<p>3. (6298) Abandonment: Information received that tenant had moved overseas. Investigation confirmed that property was no longer occupied, and trace checks showed that the tenant had gone overseas but had not returned. Notices issued and property recovered.</p>	None
<p>4. (6396) Subletting/Abandonment: Anonymous referral received alleging subletting and suspected criminal misuse of social housing property. Investigations found that property was being used as brothel and rooms were being rented out to sex workers, Police involved. There was no trace for the tenant, so she has been reported to the Police as a missing person. Vacant possession of property secured.</p>	None
<p>5. (7124) Abandonment – PA Housing reported that they had not seen their Tenant for some time. Investigations whilst inconclusive with locating an alternative address for the tenant, did reveal that they had notified council tax of their intention to leave. As tenant is not contactable and she did not return the key, Notices were served, and property recovered.</p>	None
<p>6. (7137) False Succession: A joint tenancy where the tenant in residence passed away in 2020. The other joint tenant submitted an application to succeed but investigation identified evidence that they had left the property a few years ago and gained her own social housing property, thus ending their claim for this property.</p>	None
<p>7. (7155) False Succession: Joint tenants within a few weeks of each other. A neighbour's daughter claimed that been living in the property and looking after the couple before they died. Investigations confirmed there was no link to neighbour and that property, not being a family member meant that they were not entitled to succeed and further information received alleging that she had been stealing money out of the account of the tenants. Property recovered.</p>	None

Offence/irregularity, sanctions and redress	Key outstanding actions
<p><u>Housing Applications</u></p> <p>8. Following pro-active review of Housing Application list it was identified that these 27 individuals no longer satisfied the housing application criteria so their applications were removed. Work is continuing now that additional information has been received through NFI. (5688, 6116, 6431, 6436 to 6488, 7271).</p>	<p>Ongoing review of housing applications and waiting lists</p>
<p><u>Right to Buy:</u></p> <p>9. Since 01/04/20 the SWLFP have reviewed 28 applications. Priority is given to applications where the tenants are receiving Housing Benefit. Home visits are arranged to confirm funding source for purchase, at which point some applicants withdraw their application. After an offer is made the applicants are requested to provide evidence of the financing. Following intervention, including visits, 7 referrals have been closed with no further action required and 13 referrals have been closed with the applicants withdrawing their application (6638, 6658, 66798, 6702,6749, 6768, 6901, 6966, 6990, 7011, 7037, 7048, 7110). A further 8 referrals are still being examined, with applicants' details being cross-checked with other Council systems and visits being arranged where needed.</p>	<p>The SWLFP continues to review right to buy applications referred and carry out visits or interviews with applicants to help validate their application.</p>
<p><u>Council Tax Reduction:</u></p> <p>10. (1551) Undisclosed partner: Joint case with DWP. Investigation located claimant residing with another benefit recipient. When challenged that claimant eventually accepted an Administrative Penalty in addition to having to repay HB overpayment of £27,500 and CTR overpayment of £648.98.</p> <p>11. (3103) Undisclosed partner: Joint case with DWP. Alleged undisclosed partner was found in property and evidence obtained from property showed that he had been there for approximately several years resulting in overpayments of £4,417.33 HB & £1,629.09 CTR. Which are now being recovered.</p> <p>12. (3311) Undisclosed Partner: Joint working case with DWP. Claimant was located residing with another benefit recipient. The claimant accepted an Administrative Penalty from the DWP.</p> <p>13. 3982 – Undeclared work: Investigation highlighted prolonged periods of absence from the country & undisclosed partner. Joint case with DWP. Investigation revealed that the claimant was working abroad which letting out his UK residence. The claimant has now accepted a DWP Administrative Penalty in addition to having to repay HB overpayment of £4376.56 and £648.98 in CTR.</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Offence/irregularity, sanctions and redress</p>	<p>Key outstanding actions</p>

<p><u>Internal/Employee Fraud:</u></p> <p>14. (6655) Suspected that an officer had exceeded their authority: Investigation confirmed that an officer had exceeded their authority when ordering supplies. Physical stocktake of supplies confirmed that goods ordered had been received and that quantities remaining reconciled with records of goods ordered and stock issues. Before any further enquires could be made the officer resigned. As goods ordered have been accounted for no further action taken.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><u>Corporate/Other Fraud:</u></p> <p>15. (5680) Schools Admissions: Referral from school admission team who suspect pupil does not reside at the address used for their school admissions application. Investigation confirmed that the pupil or their family did not reside at the address given on their application. The school that they had applied to is heavily oversubscribed and when the correct residential address was used it was clear that they lived outside of the school's catchment area. Application refused.</p> <p>16. (6668) Business Support Grant: Cross London joint working identified that an applicant had provided incorrect information on a business support grant claiming to be trading from premises in Kingston. Information obtained provided confirmation that the applicant had ceased trading from the Kingston premises and therefore was not entitled to grant support. The applicant was interviewed, advised that they were not entitled to the grant funding received and instructed to repay the grant funding. Monies, £10,000 have been repaid.</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p>

Glossary

CTR	Council Tax Reduction	DWP	Department for Works and Pensions
HB	Housing Benefit	SWLFP	South West London Fraud Partnership