

FRAUD, CORRUPTION AND FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES – RESULTS OF CASES CLOSED 01/04/15 to 31/01/16

Offence/irregularity, sanctions and redress	Key outstanding actions
1. (0120) Suspected sub-letting: Data matching highlighted tenant with credit history and a mortgage at another property. Property visited and an individual and their partner who we suspect are the sub-tenant were seen. Tenant attended for interview and but denied sub-letting. Following the interview they surrendered the property.	None
2. (0134) Suspected sub-letting: Data matching highlighted tenant with credit history and that they were the liable party for council tax at a property in another borough. Tenant requested to attend for interview during which they admitted owning and living at another property. Following the interview the tenant surrendered the property.	None
3. (0136) Suspected abandonment: Data matching highlighted credit history at another property and further enquiries highlighted that the tenant previously held a mortgage on another property. Tenant requested to attend for interview and although initially denied having moved out, following the presentation of some evidence held and after consultation with their solicitor they provided a statement relinquishing all rights in the social housing property.	None
4. (0137) Suspected sub-letting: Investigation identified that tenant was also the liable party for council tax at a property in another authority. Tenant requested to attend for interview during which they admitted moving out and leaving their ex-partner (not a co-tenant) in the property. Notices served and tenancy terminated.	None
5. (0138) Suspected sub-letting: Data matching highlighted tenant with credit history at an address in Scotland. Despite numerous visits to the property the tenant was never seen. Tenant attended for interview, during which they admitted that they spent most of her time in Scotland where she had worked for 3 years, leaving their adult daughter in the property. Notices served and tenant gave vacant possession.	None
6. (0140) Suspected sub-letting: Data matching highlighted tenant with credit history and a mortgage at another property. Property visited and the occupant, who was not the tenant, seen who stated that they had resided at the property for six months. Tenant requested to attend for interview during which they stated that they worked away and that a relative was looking after the property whilst they were away. However, they admitted that they had not resided at the social housing property for more than 3 years whilst. Following the interview the property was recovered.	Criminal Prosecution under the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act being considered.
7. (0224) Suspected sub-letting: Data matching highlighted tenant with credit history at another property. Property visited, sub-tenant seen and witness statement obtained, they had seen the property advertised for rent on Gumtree in April 2014 and were paying £600 per month. Tenant interviewed and initially claimed that he was only taking in a lodger so they thought that it was ok. However, there wasn't sufficient room for the tenant so they moved in with their partner. Civil action taken and at Court possession granted, with tenant ordered to pay £900 in costs.	None

Offence/irregularity, sanctions and redress	Key outstanding actions
<p>8. (0150) Suspected false Right to Buy (RTB) application: Referred for investigation as a joint RTB application had been received when the current Council Tax liable party was in receipt of a Single Person Discount (SPD). Property visited, tenant seen along with two males who claimed to be just visiting but observations during the visit suggested that they, or other persons unknown, were residing in the property. A discussion with a neighbour suggested that the tenant had moved out approximately two years previously and that two males had been living there recently. Tenant interviewed; they denied sub-letting and claimed to have lived at the property for the previous 14 years with his wife and children. RTB application has been cancelled and with insufficient evidence to prove subletting case closed. SPD was cancelled resulting in £310.50 saving.</p>	None
<p>9. (0195) Suspected sub-letting: Data matching highlighted tenant with credit history at an address in Guildford, tenant had also submitted RTB application. Investigation identified that tenant had married in June 2015 and would appear to have moved into their partner's property in Guildford leaving an adult son in occupation. The RTB application was denied as tenant was no longer resident and re-possession proceedings commenced with Notices served.</p>	Continue to support recovery proceedings.
<p>10. (0371) Falsified Absence Record: A parent falsified a school's permitted absence authorisation documentation so that their child could attend a paid acting assignment. Parent attended for interview, apologised and admitted falsifying the permitted absence authorisation as they believed that they did not have sufficient time to obtain a genuine absence authorisation. Parent was issued with a formal written warning.</p>	None
<p>(0778) Abuse of Position: A property owner contacted the Council as they had become aware that the individuals who had rented his property had, against the terms of the rental agreement, sub-let the property to two vulnerable Merton clients. These clients had informed him that one of the individuals the owner had rented the property to was their Social Worker.(agency). Due to concerns over abuse of position the Police were notified and they arrested the Agency Social Worker, who was bailed whilst they complete their investigation. The Agency Social Worker's services were terminated and internal control arrangements are being reviewed.</p>	Finalise control review and liaise with the Police on their Criminal Investigation