

FRAUD, CORRUPTION AND FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES – RESULTS OF CASES CLOSED for 2022/23

Offence/irregularity, sanctions and redress	Key outstanding actions
<p><u>Housing Tenancy</u></p> <p>1. (6432) Subletting: - Referral from social housing provider who suspected that the tenant was subletting their property to various families. Initial investigations identified linked to multiple individuals and the property and that the tenant was likely residing abroad. Attempts made to speak to the tenant, but they failed attend interview under caution requests. Evidence pack prepared for legal and notices were served. Following Court proceedings an eviction was secured and</p> <p><u>Housing Waiting List</u></p> <p>2. 492 housing applications have been identified from NFI for removal from the waiting list. Merton advised of a staffing issue, therefore, in line with the next NFI data run in September, it was agreed that Merton work on 81 of the cases identified for deceased tenants. These applications have now been removed. The majority of these applications highlighted for removal are likely due to failure to notify changes in circumstance as opposed to a deliberate fraudulent intent to secure social housing that they would no longer be entitled to, but it is important for the authority to ensure that applicants details are current and correct.</p>	<p>None</p> <p>Work with Housing to have the remaining 411 applications, and any further applications highlighted within the 23-24 NFI exercise are removed.</p>

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<p><u>Corporate Internal</u></p> <p>1. (8434) Fraud by false representation to gain employment: Allegation that individual had provided falsified qualifications and references in order to gain employment. Investigations revealed that the previous job titles and experience had been exaggerated and the references submitted could not be verified. Investigation report and evidence provided and following a Disciplinary hearing their employment was terminated.</p> <p>2. (8438) Theft: Allegation that a breach of food voucher scheme had occurred with a School whereby unused vouchers had been downloaded and cashed at Sainsbury's by someone other than the intended recipients. Evidence gathered during the investigation highlighted an individual who had likely downloaded the vouchers for personal use. This individual was Interviewed Under Caution and a report was issued. Formal disciplinary action was commenced but the individual resigned before the hearing.</p> <p>3. (9063) Theft: Allegations that an officer was undertaking private work during their paid time and using materials paid for by a school for their private work. he was working as a handyman during the school day. Evidence gathered that supported the allegation and an investigation report issued. Formal disciplinary action was commenced but the individual resigned before the hearing was arranged.</p> <p>4. (9344) False SPD claim: Allegation that an individual working for the Council had failed to notify a change in their circumstance that meant that they were no longer entitled to an SPD. Report produced, recommending formal written warning but the officer resigned before any further disciplinary action.</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p>
<p><u>Permit Fraud</u></p> <p>5. (8190) Blue Badge Misuse: Blue Badge found being used regularly near Merton Council Offices, was identified as having been lost/stolen. Vehicle found to be linked to an agency worker who left the organisation before further investigation could be undertaken and insufficient evidence of who had been misusing the badge to pursue further action. Badge recovered and case closed.</p>	<p>None</p>

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<p>6. (8928) Blue Badge Misuse: Investigation into the misuse of a child's Blue Badge being used by an individual. The person was identified as a parent of the child and interviewed under caution. The parent denied the misuse of the badge however, checks confirmed that the child was at school at the time the badge was being misused. Case taken to court where individual pleaded guilty to the 5 charges. The Court imposed costs & fine totalling £828.00. Case closed – successful prosecution.</p> <p>7. (9103) Blue Badge Misuse: Misuse investigation identified the owner of a business was misusing a blue badge, individual was interviewed and provided a preprepared statement in which they admitted responsibility for the misuse. Case heard at Lavender Hill and individual pleaded guilty to four charges. Total costs & Fine £1,128. Closed – Successful Prosecution.</p> <p>8. (9799) Blue Badge Misuse: Anonymous referral suggesting that the badge holder had died, and the badge was still being used by a family member. Badge subsequently cancelled and recovered and removed from circulation.</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p>
<p><u>CTR/SPD</u></p> <p>9. (7938) False SPD claim: Investigation highlighted that an individual was claiming SPDs at two different properties and identified which property they were not residing at. query relating to the Mitcham address and possible Wandsworth address recommendations sent to Ctax. Confirmation received discount has been removed. Case closed Overpayment of £2,142 being recovered.</p> <p>10. (8302) Undeclared Income: Claimant declared income as an employee and failed to declare that he was the Director of 2 companies that had applied for a Covid 19 Grant. Claim re-assessed and a CTR adjustment of £3,395.26 was created as well as a Housing Benefit overpayment of £10,318.29</p> <p>11. (8816) Undeclared income: NFI match indicated that partner was employed which had not been declared. Earning details sent to Benefits as claim was being paid on the basis of DWP Benefits. Re-assessment carried out and CTR adjustment of £4,038.55 created.</p> <p>12. (8817) Undeclared Pension: NFI match identified that claimant was in receipt of a pension which had not been declared. Investigation found that private pension had not been declared. CTR adjustment of £578.57 created and incorrect award of £200 covid grant.</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p>

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13. (8834) Undeclared Non-Dependant: NFI match identified an undeclared non-dependant residing at the property. Information requested from claimant who confirmed the information and Benefits were asked to re-assess the claim. CTR adjustment of £658.76 created.	None
14. (9504) Undeclared Non-Dependant: NFI case suggests customer has an undeclared non dependant living at the property. Investigations found that this was the case and the claimant confirmed that another adult had been residing at the property and provided details of income during this time. Information passed to benefits and an overpayment of £1,189.06 was created. Case closed.	None

NFI Match Category/Number	Number of matches closed NFA	Sanction Outcomes (No. & value)
Pensions-(180)	163	1
Payroll-(61)	42	2
Procurement-(27)	11	0
Resident Parking Permit-(10)	8	0
Blue Badge-(547)	264	0
Waiting List-(1346)	22	411
Creditors-(2531)	2241	0
CTR Scheme-(1259)	679	18
HB-(429)	8	3

Glossary

ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
CTR	Council Tax Reduction
NFI	National Fraud Initiative
RTB	Right to Buy
SPD	Single Person Discount