

# REVIEW OF ANTI-FRAUD ACTIVITY – APPENDIX 6

## PURPOSE OF APPENDIX

- 1 The purpose of this Appendix is to provide a summary of anti-fraud activity over the last 3 years.

Year	FTE Fraud Employees	Cost of Fraud Investigation	Total Number of Investigated Frauds/errors	Total Number of Identified Frauds/errors	Total Number of Prosecutions	Total Value of Identified Frauds/errors
2016/17	1.0	£41,110	570	153	3	£358,004
2017/18	1.0	£43,917	398	154	3	£356,925
2018/19	1.0	£44,795	304	167	3	£298,036

DWP took over responsibility for sanctioning Housing Benefit cases from 1/7/15.

Despite the transfer of housing benefit fraud to the DWP, the related aspect of Council Tax Reduction and Council Tax discounts continues to be a key fraud risk facing the Council. In addition to our participation in the National Fraud Initiative (periodical data matching exercises between authorities of various datasets) we have also undertaken additional exercises ourselves to review entitlement to discounts and exemptions.

Although SLDC no longer holds social housing stock, it holds responsibility for homelessness and the Homelessness Reduction Act which came into effect in April 2018 places a new legal duty on the Council to provide support to everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness regardless of whether they are in priority need. The NFI estimates the average cost of keeping a family in homeless accommodation at £93,000 per year. Therefore it is imperative the Council takes steps to prevent fraudulent applications. The Council's Fraud Officer has worked with the Housing Options Team in conducting investigations and this work will continue.

SLDC also has an interest in fraudulent applications for Right to Buy. Each property purchased under the RTB scheme reduces housing stock and leads to the Council placing individuals or families into temporary accommodation. The Fraud Officer works with South Lakes Housing to reduce this type of fraud and every application received by SLH is referred to the Fraud Officer for enquiries to be made, resulting in a number of refusals. The Fraud Officer also investigates some allegations of tenancy fraud for SLH.