

FRAUD, CORRUPTION AND FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES – RESULTS OF CASES CLOSED 01/04/16 to 31/01/17

Offence/irregularity, sanctions and redress	Key outstanding actions
<p>1. (0141) – Suspected Abandonment/false tenancy: Pro active data matching exercise linked occupant to an alternative address. Several visits made to the site but tenant not seen. Investigation identified occupant was currently liable for council tax at alternative property In Surrey. They claimed that the tenant had moved overseas and they had been given the tenancy. This was not substantiated by MPCH records. Notices were issued and legal proceedings commenced. At court the Judge awarded possession and following bailiff action the tenancy was recovered.</p>	None
<p>2. (0241) – Suspected sub-letting: Pro active data matching exercise linked tenant to alternative address. Further investigation carried out which identified that the tenant got married in 2013 and moved in with their partner whilst sub-letting their tenancy. The relationship broke down and the tenant moved back in February 2016, being absent for this period of time means that they could lose their security of tenure. Tenant interviewed and whilst initially denied subletting they admitted subletting and agreed to return the property with vacant possession. The tenant accepted a formal caution and property was recovered.</p>	None
<p>3. (0195) – Suspected sub-letting: Pro active data matching exercise identified an alternate address for the tenant. Further investigation identified tenant had got married and was living elsewhere in house they owned and had left their son in the property. Tenant had informed her bank of her new address. Tenant attended an IUC and stated they had moved out leaving their son in occupation. Notices were served and the tenant returned the property with vacant possession.</p>	None
<p>4. (0611) – Suspected abandonment: Referral from MPCH who have experienced issues with gaining access to the property since June 2015. When access was finally gained there was little evidence of personal belongings; clothes were in suit cases and there were locks on bedroom & living room doors. Additional system check completed but these failed to provide any evidence to support occupation. Notices served and provisional court date sought. Further court action not required as tenant returned the keys and the property with vacant possession.</p>	None
<p>5. (1039) – Suspected sub-letting: Sub-tenant informed MPCH they had been renting property from tenant. Investigation identified that tenant had credit history at another property. Tenant was interviewed and initially claimed that their ex-partner had moved the sub-tenant into the property but had no knowledge of the arrangement. Further evidence came to light and tenant was interviewed under caution again during which the tenant confirmed that they no longer live at the property. Notices were issued and tenant relinquished possession.</p>	None
<p>6. (1542) – Suspected sub-letting: Referral from MPCH who suspected that the tenant has inherited another property and moved out, leaving their daughter and her family reside there. Checks carried out confirming the suspicion that tenant no longer used her MPCH property as her main and principle home and the tenancy was ended.</p>	None

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<p>7. (1869) – Suspected False Housing Application: Referral received advising the tenant was the owner of a property prior to being assigned the tenancy. Visit made to the property and in a discussion with the tenant following this it was explained that if Merton Priory had been aware of this he would not have been entitled to the tenancy. Dates for a formal interview were offered to tenant however he made the decision to sign back the tenancy. The keys were returned prior to the date of the notice period expiring of 11/09/2016.</p>	None
<p>8. (1922) – Suspected false succession claim/Right to buy application: Referral from MPCH as they received notification that the tenant was in a residential home, since November 2015, and is a permanent resident. In July 2017 the tenant's son submitted a Right to Buy joint application, claiming to be a co-resident at the tenancy. System checks only identified a residency history for the tenant who had been receipt of HB and had declared to live alone, claiming SPD and was the only person on the electoral register. As there was no evidence to support the Son's residency claim the Right to Buy application was refused. The Son then sought to have the tenancy transferred to him. However, as this was no longer the tenant's main or principal home and the Son could not provide proof of residency notices were served and vacant possession of the property was obtained.</p>	None
<p>9. (1372) Suspected of undertaking secondary employment whilst claiming to be unfit to attend for work: Management referral about an officer who was off long term sick with a suspicion that they were working. The employee had declared that they had an interest in a Minicab business but as they did not hold a valid taxi license they could not work. Manager suspected that they might be working within the minicab office. Enquires with TFL established that contrary to what had been claimed the employee did hold a valid taxi licence. In discussion with HR it was decided to progress the matter on a sickness capability basis rather than request the officer to attend for interview. Employment ended.</p>	None
<p>10. (1884) Suspected misuse of resources: Management referral raising a concern about officer usage of a Council oyster card. An analysis of records obtained from TFL highlighted that a card had been used more frequently than the others and it appeared that an officer was using the card for their own personal travel including travel to and from work and for travel on days when not at work. Officer attended for interview, during which they claimed that they thought the card was part of their remuneration package and as such could be used for non work related travel. The extent of personal usage was calculated to be in the region of £800. Disciplinary hearing convened, officer admitted personal use and agreed to pay back the cost of this. Officer given a written warning.</p>	None
<p>11. (0806) Suspected false CTR application: Information provided by DWP following data matching. Claimant failed to declare a change to their employment, at a Merton School, as a result they received £3,100 in HB and £447.89 in CTR that they were not entitled to. Claimant attended an interview, provided a prepared statement and then proceeded with a 'no comment' response. Claimant issued with an administrative penalty, £223.95 and was subject to informal management action at the school and received a warning.</p>	None

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<p>12. (0926) False HB application: Following joint working with the DWP information obtained that an applicant had claimed HB, CTB and IS that they were not entitled to over a six year period between 2006 to 2013 and is so doing had obtained £129k in public funds that they were not entitled to. The claimant pleaded guilty to all 8 allegations and was sentenced to 2 years imprisonment, suspended for 18 months</p>	

Glossary

- CTB Council Tax Benefit
- CTR Council Tax Reduction
- DWP Department for Works & Pensions
- HB Housing Benefit
- IS Income Support
- MPCH Merton Priory Circle Housing
- SPD Single Person Discount
- TFL Transport For London

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