

## 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><b>Tenancy Fraud/Misuse</b></p> <p>1. <b>(2334) – Suspected Abandonment/not using as main or principal home:</b> Referral from MPCH that tenant is not living in the property and maybe subletting. Utility checks showed electricity usage was very high whilst gas usage was low. Earlier this year the Police raided the property for drug related concerns, tenant was arrested and bailed. Unannounced visit undertaken but with no response, recommendation made that notices be issued due to abandonment and anti social behaviour. Notices issued and following legal action possession awarded and property recovered.</p>	None
<p>2. <b>(2467) – Suspected Abandonment:</b> Anonymous referral of abandonment and potential subletting. The tenant was in receipt of housing benefit and has included her son as a dependant. Credit checks link tenant to another address in Sutton but this appears to be a family property. Visits to the property undertaken but with no response. Evidence appears to support allegation of abandonment. Tenant subsequently made contact stating that they had been staying with their parents with no plans to return. Tenant signed Notice and returned keys property recovered.</p>	None
<p>3. <b>(2863) – Suspected sub-letting:</b> Referral from MPCH following an interview with the tenant who admitted to living with his partner at another MPCH property, leaving his adult sons living at the property. Credit checks show both sons linked to the property and the tenant and sons are on the electoral register. Visits undertaken and tenant seen at partner's address. Tenant stated that he wanted to be included on his partner's mutual exchange. Recommendation made that notices be issued as tenant is not using the social housing as their main/principal residence. Notice served and tenant surrendered the property with vacant possession.</p>	None
<p>4. <b>(2914) – Suspected sub-letting:</b> Referral from MPCH of subletting as they have been unable to contact the tenant and cleaners believe a man lives at the property although the tenant is female. Unannounced visit to the property identified individual who claimed to be renting the property. They contacted the tenant who returned to the property, claiming the occupants had only stayed overnight with her and denied sub-letting. The evidence obtained so far appears to support the allegation so recommendation made that notices be served. The tenant subsequently contacted MPCH and surrendered the property with vacant possession.</p>	None
<p><b>False Housing Applications</b></p> <p>5. A total of 14 housing applications have been rejected following pro-active data matching and the investigation of referrals from housing officers. The fraud partnership had access to a tenancy fraud hub. 19 referrals were derived from participation in this pro-active data matching exercise. 2 referrals are still being reviewed. (Case references 2919, 2920, 2921, 2922, 2923, 2924, 2925, 2926, 2927, 2928, 2929, 2930, 2931, 2932) Another pro-active data matching exercise will be undertaken in May 2018.</p>	Finalise review of applications flagged by the data matching exercise.

Offence/irregularity, sanctions and redress	Key outstanding actions
<p><b><u>Right to Buy Applications</u></b></p> <p>6. 58 RTB applications are being reviewed with priority given to applications where the tenants are receiving Housing Benefit. Applicants details are cross-checked with other Council systems and credit records to ensure that the eligibility criteria are met, visits are undertaken where needed. Following intervention, including visits, 11 applications have been cancelled/withdrawn (Case references 2369, 2566, 2637, 2849, 2386, 2360, 2917, 2385, 2393, 2588, 2696) with 20 referrals still under review.</p>	<p>Continue to review referrals, cross-checking applicants' details with other Council systems and accessible credit data, visiting applicants where necessary.</p>
<p><b><u>Corporate Fraud</u></b></p> <p>7. <b>(1696) False SPD claim:</b> Referral via Merton's fraud hotline that a resident is falsely claiming SPD through failing to declare that their partner resides with them. System and credit checks completed were inconclusive so unannounced visits arranged. At the visit a male (later confirmed as the tenant's partner) was in the home, cooking. He explained that the tenant was out at work. At a further unannounced visit the tenant was seen but denied that her partner lived with her. Further system checks undertaken and an arranged visit undertaken. At this arranged visit the tenant confirmed that her partner was in fact living with her but claimed that initially she did not know whether this arrangement would continue which is why she had not notified the Council. SPD cancelled and incorrectly received discount repaid.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>8. <b>(2657) Employee conduct, false RTB application:</b> Referral from LB Haringey who had concerns about a RTB application they had received which included an individual who they identified as a Merton Employee as a joint applicant. Their main concern was that the individual did not reside at their property so did not meet the RTB eligibility criteria. Information exchanged which showed that the officer had submitted information to support their North London residence but this conflicted with the declared local (Morden) residence as a Merton School employee. Individual invited for formal interview but did not attend. Investigation report prepared recommending disciplinary action as the individual has submitted false statements in order to obtain a £103,900 RTB discount that they were not entitled to. Prior to formal disciplinary hearing the employee resigned. The RTB application has been refused and LB Haringey are in the process of recovering possession.</p>	<p>None</p>

### Glossary

LB London Borough  
RTB Right to Buy

MPCH Merton Priory Circle Housing (now Clarion)  
SPD Single Person Discount