

**FRAUD, CORRUPTION AND FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES – RESULTS OF CASES CLOSED 01/04/19 to 31/08/19**

Offence/irregularity, sanctions and redress	Key outstanding actions
<p><b><u>Housing Fraud:</u></b></p> <p>1. <b>(3206) Suspected Abandonment:</b> Referral from Clarion following several unsuccessful visits to contact tenant. Investigation identified tenant's links to Doncaster. Utilities checks confirmed minimal usage and repossession action with the issue of notices commenced. Tenant's response was to surrender possession on expiry of these notices.</p>	None
<p>2. <b>(4572) Suspected Subletting:</b> Referral from Clarion following forced entry to the property by police. Investigation confirmed that property showed signs of occupation and post, including Companies House documents addressed to individuals other than the tenant. The tenant was served with notices and following a Court hearing, possession was awarded, and an eviction was carried out. Further details from suspected sub-tenants were not forthcoming so it was not possible to take any further action for alleged sub-letting.</p>	None
<p>3. <b>(5383) Suspected Subletting:</b> Referral from Clarion following unknown female being found at the property. Investigation commenced and further contact attempts found an unknown male at the address who claimed to be just visiting. Credit search identified that the tenant had no financial links at the property and additional enquiries showed the tenant was no longer the recorded liable party for utilities. Notices served resulting in the tenant returning the keys. Further details from suspected sub-tenants were not forthcoming so it was not possible to take any further action for alleged sub-letting.</p>	None
<p>4. <b>(3864) Suspected abandonment:</b> Referral from Clarion due to the tenant not being seen at the property for some time. The estate officer had only ever spoken with the tenant's daughter via phone as part of support plan checks. Intel checks revealed that the tenant had been in the Philippines for the last 4 years. Notices issued and possession was awarded at a Court hearing and an eviction was carried out.</p>	None
<p>5. <b>(4019) Suspected Subletting:</b> Referral from Clarion following receipt of suspected false Right To Buy application. Intel checks identified that the tenant has been in Morocco for substantial periods whilst their adult son had remained in residence. Notices served and possession was awarded at a Court hearing and an eviction carried out.</p>	None
<p>6. <b>(4534) Suspected Abandonment:</b> Referral from Clarion due to gas access failure. Further joint visits conducted proved unsuccessful and a court order for a forced entry to carry out the gas safety inspection was obtained. Intel checks on the tenant failed to return current links with this tenancy or alternative address links. Notices served and following expiry possession was awarded at a Court hearing and an eviction carried out.</p>	None

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<p><b><u>Right to Buy:</u></b></p> <p>7. Since 01/04/19 the SWLFP have reviewed 9 applications. Priority is given to applications where the tenants are receiving Housing Benefit. Home visits are arranged to confirm funding source for purchase, at which point some applicants withdraw their application. After an offer is made the applicants are requested to provide evidence of the financing. Following intervention, including visits, 2 referrals have been closed with no further action required and 4 referrals have been closed with the applicants withdrawing their application (2586, 3294, 3396, 4019). A further 3 referrals are still being examined, with applicants' details being cross-checked with other Council systems and visits being arranged where needed.</p>	<p>The SWLFP continues to review right to buy applications referred and carry out visits or interviews with applicants to help validate their application.</p>
<p><b><u>Council Tax Reduction:</u></b></p> <p>8. <b>(4966) CTR, Undisclosed Capital:</b> Referral received as part of an Kingston Right to Buy application in which the Merton residents had written a letter declaring that they were gifting the Kingston tenants a large amount of money to fund their purchase. The Merton residents were found to be in receipt of CTR and had not declared the Capital. The claimants did not respond to requests to interview and an overpayment of £134.44 was created.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><b><u>Permit Fraud:</u></b></p> <p>9. <b>(5366) Suspected Blue Badge Misuse:</b> Anonymous referral that a Blue Badge had been seen in use and the badge holder was known to be deceased. The vehicle was seen parked outside an address as reported but the badge was not on display. The household occupants were questioned about the whereabouts of the badge. The badge was eventually returned to the officer and seized and having confirmed that the badge holder was deceased the badge was cancelled. As no offence had been observed no further action could be taken</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><b><u>Employee Fraud:</u></b></p> <p>10. <b>(3497) Suspected Forged or Falsified Documents:</b> Referred by in-house parking team as representations had been received regarding a PCN from a member of staff at Merton Council. Investigations showed that the employee's father had requested that she look into a PCN and that some documents emails had been fabricated by the employee in order to void the PCN. Interview arranged but officer failed to attend. The officer resigned ahead of any formal disciplinary process.</p>	<p>None</p>

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<p>11. <b>(5195) Suspected Misuse of Work Time:</b> Referred by Manager who found out that one of his team who was to be undertaking two positions at Merton and suspected that there might be some duplication in hours being claimed. When interviewed the employee claimed that all the necessary paperwork was in place for this arrangement and it had been agreed with his previous manager. There was no record to substantiate these claims. The investigation also identified that the employee had been undertaking his secondary role whilst reporting as unfit to work and being signed off sick from his primary role. Formal disciplinary process commenced but during the process the employee resigned.</p>	None

**Glossary**

CTR	Council Tax Reduction
PCN	Penalty Charge Notice
SWLFP	South West London Fraud Partnership

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