

Appendix 2 – Recent Fraud Case Examples

This summary provides details of investigations that have been conducted by the Directorate since April 2016.

The Directorate is working across the Council to mitigate emerging fraud risks such as these detailed below to ensure there is continual business learning from detected outcomes.

Essential Living Fund

A referral was made to the Directorate alleging that a customer who received new white goods from the funds did not require them and was instead planning to sell them.

Intelligence Officers from the Directorate conducted internet investigations and identified that the customer had advertised the white goods for sale on a social media group. This had been done one day after they had been delivered to the customer's property.

Investigators interviewed the customer under caution who admitted to not requiring the goods. The goods were recovered and no loss to the Council was incurred.

This was a first offence and therefore a formal caution was issued to the customer.

Blue Badge Parking

A report of blue badge parking misuse was received by the Directorate. Officers from the Directorate immediately viewed the body worn video footage from the Civil Enforcement Officer. This enabled the Investigators to identify a vehicle and blue badge.

Investigators identified the person who was using the badge as someone different from the registered user. Investigators also managed to identify potential witnesses to the badge misuse and contact them. One of the witnesses was willing to provide a statement and commented how impressed they were that SBC were taking blue badge fraud seriously.

The suspect was identified and interviewed. They made some admissions in interview although did provide some mitigating circumstances.

An official Warning was issued to the suspect and the badge was returned to the service user.

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Housing Tenancy Abuse

The Directorate have worked with South Essex Homes (SEH) on two investigations where there has been insufficient evidence of fraud but where there is evidence of ongoing tenancy abuse and low level tenancy breach (where possession orders would not be granted by a civil court in the first instance).

As an alternative to costly court hearings, the Directorate have obtained information to assist SEH in applying strict monitoring conditions to two properties.

These conditions are meant to ensure that the low level breaches do not continue. These breaches include vacating the property for a period of time with an intention to return but without informing SEH, or taking in lodgers without consent.

It is hoped that the monitoring ensures that the breaches do not continue, where they do stronger evidence will be available to take possession action.