

REPORTING FRAUD - LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY CODE (2015)

2023-24 FINANCIAL YEAR

Number of occasions they use powers under the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud (Power to Require Information) (England) Regulations 2014, or similar powers.	0
Total number (absolute and full time equivalent) of employees undertaking investigations and prosecutions of fraud.	0 (see Note 1)
Total number (absolute and full time equivalent) of professionally accredited counter fraud specialists.	2.0 Absolute 0.3 FTE (see Note 1)
Total amount spent by the authority on the investigation and prosecution of fraud.	£27,580.32 (see Notes 2-8)
Total number of fraud cases investigated.	22 (see Notes 2-8)

Note 1 – Leicestershire County Council does not have a dedicated counter fraud team and / or staff employed specifically to investigate fraud and irregularity. The role lies within the Internal Audit Service and within it there are staff with counter fraud qualifications. The County Council is not a Housing / Council Tax administering authority, and its exposure to fraud is considered to be relatively low compared with, say, a typical district council or unitary council. Where fraud investigations do occur, these are typically led by managers or Human Resources staff, where it is appropriate to do so, or, in more complex cases, by Internal Audit Service staff.

Note 2 – These figures include the cost of all investigations into suspected fraud, irrespective of whether fraud was ultimately proven and/or whether there was a prosecution.

Note 3 – This does not include any estimate of time spent on the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) as this takes place every two years and would lead to very variable figures for those years in which the NFI is run. NFI is proactive counter-fraud work undertaken by the County Council as opposed to reactive investigations into allegations of fraud.

Note 4 – The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 places a duty on registration officers to submit a report to the Home Office (Immigration Service) if they suspect a marriage is a sham. This reporting may be at any stage, e.g. at initial contact by the couple to make an appointment to be married. If a registration officer has suspicions that an offence has been committed details are referred to the General Register Office (GRO) Data Unit which in turn forwards to a contact in the relevant government department. The County Council may or may not be advised of the outcome of any such investigations.

Note 5 – There are other ‘low level’ investigations, e.g. blue badges, where misuse is suspected but these are dealt with through operational business as usual controls, e.g. penalty charge notices rather than formal fraud investigations / prosecutions. Such time is not quantifiable and is therefore not recorded in the figures above. In serious cases, or in cases of persistent misuse, criminal prosecution would be considered.

Note 6 – Business as Usual prosecutions by regulatory functions such as Trading Standards have been excluded. The Trading Standards Service prosecutes consumer fraud on a regular basis both in the Magistrates and Crown Courts. These include Fraud Act 2006, Proceeds of Crime Act, S993 Companies Act, etc.

Note 7 – This does not include any estimate of time spent on investigating fraud at non-LCC establishments, e.g. in the academies’ sector.

Note 8 – This does not include any estimates of time spent on investigating fraudulent insurance claims received by the County Council.