

East Lothian Council

FOI Ref: 2018/535636

This FOI seeks to understand what Councils are currently doing to identify and tackle public sector fraud.

1. Does the Council have a Counter Fraud Team or persons in the Council responsible for investigating public sector fraud cases?

Yes, East Lothian Council's (ELC) Internal Audit team has responsibility for investigating frauds.

2. If so, how many fraud investigators do you have?

The Internal Audit team comprises of 5 members of staff.

3. If not, are you part of a shared counter fraud service with another council or other organisation? Please detail who.

Not applicable

4. Did the Council's benefits/counter fraud team transfer to SFIS when SFIS was established?

Yes, the Benefit Fraud team transferred to the DWP in November 2014.

5. Has the Council increased/decreased the number of fraud investigation officers within the last 24 months? If so, by how many?

No, there are no Benefit Fraud investigators in the Council.

6. How many fraud referrals or reports of fraud did the council receive in financial year 2017/18?

Any reports of Benefit Fraud are passed directly to SFIS and not recorded by ELC*.

7. Please supply a notional value for fraud successfully stopped and/or prosecuted in 2017/18?

This information would be held by SFIS*.

8. Do you record fraud statistics? If so, are they published? Where? Online?

Please refer to Q6 above.

9. How do you record and manage your fraud cases? Spreadsheet or software package?

Not applicable, Benefit Fraud is not managed by ELC*.

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10. Do you use a fraud case management system? If so, which one?

Not applicable

11. How many referrals/cases did you receive from the NFI (National Fraud Initiative) in 2017/18? How many led to a successful prosecution/outcome?

A total of 107 reports were received in respect of ELC for the 2016/17 NFI exercise – the reports contained 3,152 individual matches, of which 578 were recommended matches.

In 109 cases, errors were identified in respect of blue badges and residents parking permits and in 5 cases overpayments were identified and recovered.

12. Do you use reports from NAFN? If so, how much did you spend on these in 2017/18?

No

13. Do you use credit bureau reports/data/services? If so, how much did you spend on these in 2017/18?

Not applicable

14. Do you have plans to increase your counter fraud capability/budget in 2018/19?

No

*Under Section 17(1)(b) of the Act, I must formally advise you that ELC has been unable to comply with those parts of your request marked * as the information you require is not held.

Finally, it may help to explain that Freedom of Information legislation only applies to information which is held or recorded by a public authority. It does not apply to views, opinions, intentions or questions which simply require a yes/no answer. In view of this, some of the questions asked are not technically valid for the purposes of this legislation as they are not requests for specific recorded information that ELC may or may not hold.

In order to assist you, however, colleagues have addressed the questions posed to the best of their knowledge. For future reference, a link to the "Tips for Requesters" page of the Scottish Information Commissioner's website has been provided which you may find useful:

<http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/YourRights/Tipsforrequesters.aspx>