

## Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Benefit fraud

Your request for information has now been considered and the Council's response to your questions is shown below.

### You asked:

**1. The number of employees that you employ to investigate Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Fraud. Please identify how many managers, investigators and clerical officers are included.**

12 staff.

1 manager, 8 investigators and 3 support staff

**2. The number of cases that they were given to investigate in the years 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14. I would like to know of the cases given to them how many they actually investigated.**

In 2011/12 1259 referrals were received of which 680 were allocated for a full investigation.

In 2012/13 1349 referrals were received of which 682 were allocated for a full investigation.

In 2013/14 1238 referrals were received of which 573 were allocated for a full investigation.

**2. Have the government cut backs in spending affected how many cases the team can investigate?**

No

**3. Did you have to reject any cases given to the team because you didn't have enough people to investigate? If you did, how many did you have to reject each year?**

No. The cases not allocated for a full investigation did not pass the scoring matrix used to assess referrals.

**4. How many cases of fraud did they identify each year? I mean real fraud, not just mistakes.**

In 2011/12 285 formal sanctions were achieved for proven benefit fraud offences.

In 2012/13 221 formal sanctions were achieved for proven benefit fraud offences.

In 2013/14 182 formal sanctions were achieved for proven benefit fraud offences.

**5. How much money did you get back from the fraudsters each year?**

To provide an accurate figure of the total amount over the last five years would require an officer to manually look at some 787 cases and determine the amount of overpaid benefit outstanding and as such Section 12 of the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for local government is set at £450. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 2.5 working days in

determining whether the department holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

We estimate that it will take us in excess of 2.5 working days to determine appropriate material and locate, retrieve and extract the information in reference to your request. Therefore, this part of your request will not be processed further.

**6. How much does it cost each year to run the team that carries out the investigations?**

For the last three financial years the salary spend has been £384,539.99 per annum.

**7. If you're not getting the money back is it worth investigating?**

The authority has a legal obligation to investigate suspected fraud.

The legislation allows you to use the information supplied for your own personal use, or for journalistic purposes. If the information is a dataset (which does not relate to the environment), you may also use the information for commercial re-use under an [Open Government Licence](#).

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request please write to:

**Information Governance Manager**  
**Information and Support**  
**Leicester City Council**  
**FREEPOST (LE985/33)**  
**New Walk Centre**  
**LEICESTER LE1 6ZG**  
e-mail: [info.requests@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:info.requests@leicester.gov.uk)

Your request for internal review should be submitted to the above address within 40 (forty) working days of receipt by you of this response. Any such request received after this time will only be considered at the Council's absolute discretion.

You may also seek independent advice from the Information Commissioner at:

**Information Commissioner's Office**  
**Wycliffe House**  
**Water Lane**  
**Wilmslow SK9 5AF**  
**Telephone: 01625 545 700**  
[www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk)

Please be aware that the Information Commissioner does not normally consider requests until the internal appeals process of the Council has been exhausted. You are therefore advised to appeal to the Information Governance Manager before contacting the Commissioner.