

Revenues Service Investigation Team

2007 - 2008 Performance Report

Countering Fraud Housing and Council Tax Benefit System and Student Loan Scheme

Introduction

Since April 2002 the Council's Fraud Investigation Team have been working under the requirements of the Department for Work and Pensions Security Against Fraud and Error scheme (SAFE).

The aims of this scheme are quite simple, to professionally investigate allegations of fraud and successfully apply penalty based sanctions against those committing fraud.

Luton embraced this approach from the start and has worked hard since the inception of the scheme to successfully deliver a tough and robust response to fraud within the borough.

Joint working over the last financial year with colleagues from the Department for Work and Pensions and Bedfordshire Police has strengthened the Investigation Teams ability to deal effectively with fraudsters and bolstered the skills and expertise of all those involved.

The Investigations Team is back to full strength with two new Investigation Officers having been appointed in November 2007. Their training is progressing well and they have both recently submitted their first prosecution files to the Council's Legal Service.

Over the last year the Courts have taken a more robust stance and there has been a considerable increase in the number of suspended sentences, Fines and Community Punishment orders handed down to offenders.

It is hoped that these *Performance Statistics* can provide a useful guide to the on going efforts of the Revenues Investigations Team in combating fraud and abuse within the benefits system.

Paul Lincoln Taylor Fraud Investigation Manager May 2008

Summary

These statistics show that since the council's investigation team started working under the Security Against Fraud and Error Scheme (SAFE) in April 2002:

- There have been 143 successful prosecutions against housing and council tax benefit and student loan fraudsters.
- There have been 156 summonses issued against housing and council tax benefit fraudsters.
- 50 housing and council tax benefit fraudsters have been cautioned.
- 68 fraud awareness and document verification presentations have been delivered to key LBC staff and other agencies.
- 784 calls have been received on the confidential fraud hotline from concerned members of the public.
- 92 press releases have been issued to the media promoting our successful prosecution cases.



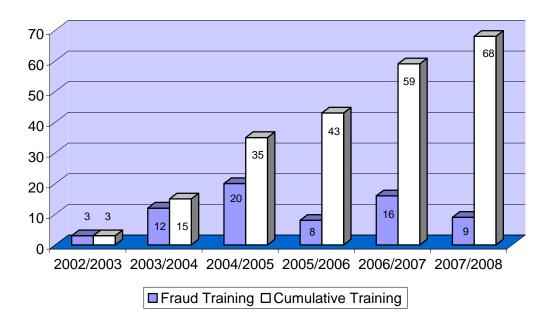




Development of the anti-fraud culture

	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
Fraud	3	12	20	8	16	9
awareness						
training						
Cumulative	3	15	35	43	59	68
fraud						
awareness						
training						

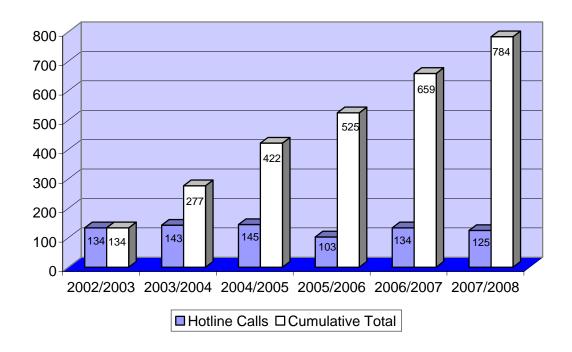
Source LBC Investigation Team Management Information



Fraud Hotline

	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
Fraud hotline referrals received	134	143	145	103	134	125
Cumulative total	134	277	422	525	659	784

Source LBC Investigation Team Management Information



The deterrent effect

	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
Press	9	8	14	15	27	19
releases						
Running	9	17	31	46	73	92
total						

Source LBC Investigation Team Management Information

Note: These statistics reflect the number of media articles or stories, which referred positively to LBC counter fraud work for each year. The LBC investigation team works to publicise each aspect of what it does. This is not to seek publicity for it's own sake but to create a strong deterrent effect.



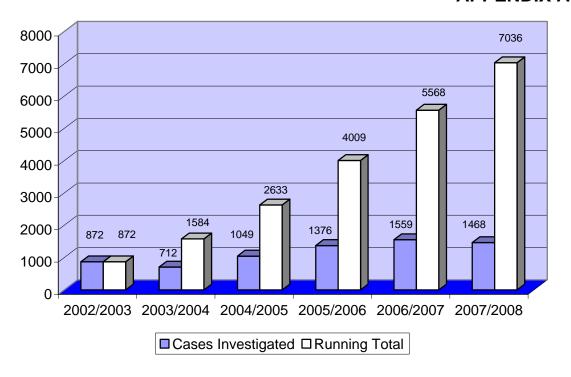


Benefit frauc	l trio caught
Three Luton women have been convicted of benefit fraud at Luton Magistrates Court; part of a year-long clamp down on benefit fraud.	The third woman was convicted of falling to tall the count that she had started to work full time and carried or claiming both housing and council tax benefit. She was fine £100 and ordered to pay £150 costs.
One woman was convicted of failing to declare that the was actually employed as a pub landady white continuing to claim housing and council tax benefit. She was fined £250 and ordered to pay £250 costs.	Said investigations manager Paul Taylor: "These as significant fines and show that the council deals firmly wit people in our community who defraud the public purse.
A second woman failed to tell the council she had increased her working hours and had received an increase in her	Since April 1st this year we have submitted 19 cases to the council's legal service and we expect more."
working families tax credit whilst still claiming housing benefit. She was fined £125 and ordered to pay £175 costs.	If you know of anyone committing fraud contact the councin confidence on 0500 500 777 or email fraud@luton.gov.u

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	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
Number of	872	712	1049	1376	1559	1468
cases						
investigated						
Cases	872	1584	2633	4009	5568	7036
investigated						
running total						

Source LBC Investigation Team Management Information



Interviews under caution

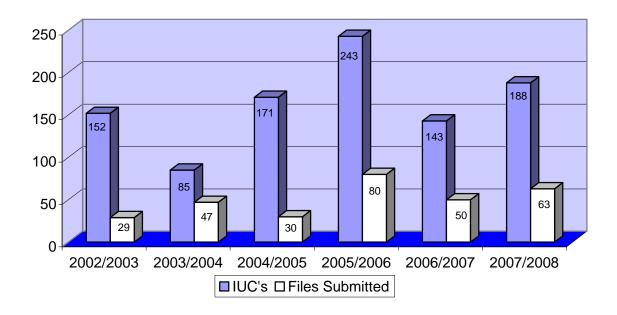
	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
Total	152	85	171	243	143	188
interviews						
under caution						
Running total	152	237	408	651	794	982

Source LBC Investigation Team Management Information

Sanction files submitted

	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
Total sanction files	29	47	30	80	50	63
submitted						
Running total	29	76	106	186	236	299

Source LBC Investigation Team Management Information

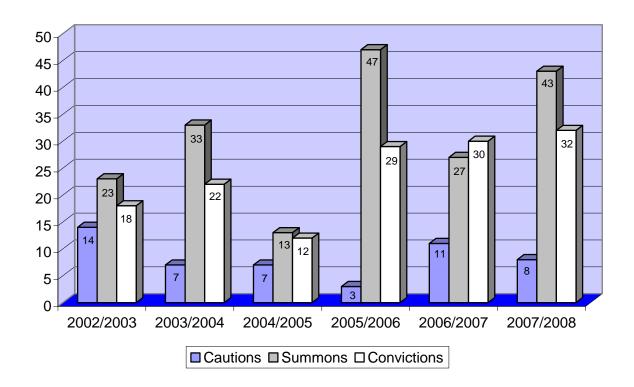


Applying Sanctions

APPENDIX A

	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
Total cautions	14	7	7	3	11	8
per year						
Total summons	23	33	13	47	27	43
per year						
Total	18	22	12	29	30	32
prosecutions						
per year						
Sanctions	55	117	149	228	296	379
running total						

Source LBC Investigation Team Management Information



Sanctions Breakdown

APPENDIX A

	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
Prison	2	-	_	1	5	_
Suspended	-	-	_	_	1	4
sentence						
Curfew	-	-	-	-	1	1
Community	1	1	-	1	1	_
rehabilitation						
order						
Fine	3	6	1	9	8	10
Probation	1	-	-	-	_	_
order						
Community	6	7	4	5	1	9
punishment						
order						
Conditional	5	6	7	13	11	8
discharge						
Total penalties	18	20	12	29	30	32

Source LBC Investigation Team Management Information

