In Summary

- Note all relevant details, but don’t try to investigate the matter yourself.
- Refer your concerns to someone with the appropriate authority at the earliest opportunity.

The Council is very clear in its stance to prevent and detect Fraud and Dishonesty and has formally adopted an Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy. This sets down in detail what action the Council will take where cases of Fraud and Dishonesty are identified. It gives a clear message that the Council will always seek to recover losses incurred as a result of Fraud and Dishonesty and, where sufficient evidence exists and it is deemed appropriate, will pursue disciplinary action and consider referral to the Police for criminal prosecution.

If you know of any Fraud, Dishonesty or abuse taking place, speak to your Line Manager or Head of Service. Alternatively, call the Internal Audit Section, anonymously if you so wish, using the confidential Fraud Hotline on 01422 393568.

If you feel uncomfortable with these options, you can contact either of the following to raise your concerns.

Audit Commission - 0845 052 2646 or 0207 404 6609
Public Concern at Work - 0207 404 6609

If you are a manager and need more information on how to act if you suspect Fraud or Dishonesty, or if a suspected fraud is reported to you by your staff, please refer to the “Advice and Guidance to Managers” document, which is available on the intranet.

Fraud and Dishonesty

What can you do to stop it?

September 2009
What can you do to stop it?

• How should I react if I suspect Fraud, Dishonesty, Irregularity, Corruption or Computer Abuse in the workplace?
• What action should I take?
• What should I do with the evidence?
• How will the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protect me?

This leaflet will help you answer these questions and other issues you might be confronted with if you suspect Fraud or Dishonesty within the Council.

Why should I read this leaflet?

Council Members and employees are the first line of defence in the prevention and detection of fraudulent and corrupt conduct. Fraud and Dishonesty within the public sector costs taxpayers hundreds of millions of pounds each and every year.

All public sector organisations are susceptible to fraudulent, dishonest or corrupt activity by members of the public or staff.

Over the years the Council has had a number of detected cases of Fraud, Dishonesty, Irregularity and Corruption including Housing Benefit Fraud, falsification of time sheets, falsification of car mileage claims, and abuse of email and internet facilities.

The Police advise that they are often unable to prosecute fraud and corruption cases because of inappropriate action taken before the case is referred to them. The action that you take when you first suspect fraudulent or dishonest activity is crucial.

This leaflet gives you guidance on what you should or should not do if you suspect Fraud or Dishonesty against the Council.

Acting upon your suspicions - the Do’s and Don’ts

If you suspect Fraud, Dishonesty, Irregularity or Computer Abuse within the workplace, there are a few simple guidelines which you should follow:

DO....

... make an immediate note of your concerns. Note all relevant details, such as what was said in telephone or other conversations, the date, time and the names of any people involved etc.

... tell your suspicions to someone with the right authority and experience. This would usually be your Line Manager or Head of Service. Alternatively, you may wish to call the Internal Audit Section on the Fraud Hotline (01422 393568).

... deal with the matter promptly, if you feel your concerns are warranted. Any delay may cause the Council to suffer further financial loss.

DON’T....

... do nothing.

... be afraid of raising your concerns. You will not suffer any recrimination from the Council if you tell them of a reasonably held suspicion.

The public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects you from any reprisals if you make a disclosure in relation to Fraud, Dishonesty, Irregularity or Corruption as long as you meet the rules set out in the Act. In particular, where you make a disclosure to any Officer of the Council, the only requirement upon you is that you do so in good faith.

... approach or accuse individuals directly.

... try to investigate the matter yourself. There are special rules surrounding the gathering of evidence for use in criminal cases. Any attempt to gather evidence by people who are unfamiliar with these rules may destroys the evidence and therefore the case.

Internal Audit are trained to handle investigations in a proper and professional manner.

... tell anyone except those with proper authority.
What can you do to stop it?

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