

London Borough Of Waltham Forest

Anti-Fraud Policy Statement

We do not tolerate fraud of any type or in any circumstances, whether committed by any type of claimants or our employees.

- We are committed to fighting fraud, corruption and dishonesty in all of our activities.
- We are determined to root out fraud and corruption carried out by employees who are abusing their position, and by others who try to get assets or services from us to which they are not entitled.
- We expect all our staff to demonstrate the highest standards of honesty at all times. These standards are clearly set out in our Code of Conduct. Our disciplinary procedures make sure that managers take firm and appropriate action wherever fraud or corruption by employees has been proven.
- All of our managers are responsible for putting into place and maintaining effective systems of internal control (making sure staff keep to procedures, monitoring how well officers are keeping to set systems, dealing with any problems with procedures) and making sure that our resources are used on the activities they are meant for. This includes being responsible for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption.
- We aim to prosecute anyone who commits fraud and corruption as this is an important way of discouraging other people from committing fraud in future.
- In cases of benefit fraud, we will charge a fine or issue a formal caution wherever appropriate.

- We consider the abuse, by employees, of financial or other benefits, from us or any other public organisation as gross misconduct.

We have set up the Corporate Audit and Anti-Fraud Team (CAAFT) to lead our fight against fraud and corruption. It is an independent unit which reports to the Head of Strategic Finance. One of its purposes is to make sure that all allegations of fraud and corruption are properly investigated. Managers must report all suspicions of fraud and corruption to CAAFT.

Managers are responsible for identifying suspicions of fraud and CAAFT officers will advise and support them in this. Where appropriate, CAAFT will investigate the matter independently. Also, CAAFT has set up a programme of checks to detect, deter and prevent attempted fraud and corruption.

The anti-fraud policy statement and anti-fraud and corruption strategy apply to all staff, members, temporary staff and any type of contractor.

CAAFT's work covers the following.

- Housing investigations to deal with fraud relating to homelessness, housing applications, council tenancies and related issues. This work of this team part of our anti-fraud arrangements.
- Housing Benefit/Council Tax investigations to counter benefit fraud either by members of the public or by members of staff. Benefit fraud accounts for a large part of fraud across the country.
- Internal fraud investigations to deal with any type of corruption by members of staff or by our contractors.
- Vetting prospective members of staff to make sure that we only employ staff who are honest.
- Asylum seeker fraud investigations to check people's identity and where they live to prevent the system being abused.

The Anti-fraud team's work is supported by our Internal Audit Team. Internal Audit provides an independent assessment of our internal control system, by examining, evaluating, and reporting on the adequacy of internal control as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources. The Anti-Fraud Team and the Internal Audit Division are part of the same unit, so work in close liaison to ensure a comprehensive defence against fraud and corruption, by supporting managers and through specific anti-fraud and corruption initiatives.

We fully support the Police and other external agencies, such as the Department for Work and Pensions, in the fight against fraud and corruption within the public sector. We have set up proper arrangements for co-operating and working with outside organisations. We support the London Team Against Fraud's London-wide multi-agency schemes, which are aimed at detecting fraud and corruption.

We encourage our employees to tell us if they have any concerns about fraud and corruption to the Council. Normally, such reports can be made via the employee's line manager but, if necessary, there are other ways for the employee to raise concerns. These are listed in the Whistleblowing Policy.

However, abusing this process and wasting valuable resources by raising unfounded, malicious allegations is a serious disciplinary matter.

The Whistleblowing Policy can be found on our intranet and internet.