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Corporate fraud

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What is corporate fraud?

Fraud can be defined as any dishonest action deliberately taken against either Blackpool Council, residents of the borough or the wider national community, from either internal or external sources, to secure unfair or unlawful gains, or cause unfair or unlawful losses.

Fraud Act 2006

The Fraud Act 2006 categorises fraud into three main types, namely dishonestly intending to make a gain, cause a loss or risk of loss by:

- Making a false representation - for example: an individual who falsely claims to require Health and Social Care and is subsequently in receipt of direct payments to which they are not entitled, would be committing fraud by false representation. If the individual makes a false application, then even if the payments are not made, it is still an offence on the basis of intent.
- Failing to disclose information - for example: residents who qualify for Council Tax discounts or reductions are required to notify the council of changes in their circumstances which they could reasonably be expected to know may affect their entitlement to the discounts or reduction they receive. By not accurately declaring changes to their circumstances, they would be committing fraud by failing to disclose information.
- Abuse of position - for example: if a carer took money from vulnerable adults who were unable to manage their own affairs and falsified the records to hide their actions, they would be committing fraud by abuse of position.

Why Blackpool Council investigates fraud

It is important that Blackpool Council uses its resources in the most effective way for the delivery of high quality services to the community. It is estimated that local government lose over £7 billion each year as a result of fraud (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, Fraud and Corruption Tracker 2020). This impacts on our ability to deliver local services at a time when budgets are already under pressure.

We are committed to protecting the public funds we administer and we will take appropriate action when fraud, error, bribery or corruption is suspected. [Transparency data](#) regarding the counter fraud work carried out by Blackpool Council is published yearly.

Types of fraud investigated

False claims for Council Tax discounts or exemptions

Council Tax fraud often relates to false claims for discounts or exemptions, such as:

- Claiming a Single Person Discount when more than one adult lives at the property
- Claiming a student exemption when other non students live at the property
- Claiming a property is unoccupied and unfurnished when somebody is actually living at the property

False claims for Council Tax Reduction

Council Tax Reduction provides assistance to people on a low income to help pay their Council Tax. If you receive Council Tax Reduction, you have a duty to tell Blackpool Council immediately about any changes to your circumstances.

Failing to comply with that duty is a type of fraud, could mean you have to repay any amount you were not entitled to and you could face prosecution. If in doubt, tell us of the change.

[Report a change affecting your Council Tax.](#)

[Report a change affecting your Council Tax Reduction.](#)

Blue badge fraud or abuse

The Blue Badge scheme is a national scheme that allows disabled people in England, including those with less visible disabilities, to maintain their independence by enabling them to park as close as possible to their destination. Those committing blue badge fraud attempt to avoid paying parking charges and take away parking spaces from those that are genuinely in need. Examples of Blue Badge fraud include:

- Misuse of a Blue Badge
- Fraudulent applications
- Using an illegible, lost or stolen badge
- Using an expired or deceased persons badge
- Using a badge which you are not entitled to use

Business rates fraud

National Non-Domestic Rates, widely known as business rates, is the way those who occupy non-domestic property contribute towards the cost of local services. This includes shops, offices, warehouses, cafes and many more non-domestic properties.

Business rates fraud can involve failing to disclose information or providing false information, with the intent of paying reduced business rates. This information can include:

- Occupation status
- Details of the occupier
- Size of the business
- Insolvency status

Other types of fraud

Blackpool Council is committed to investigating any other external or internal fraud, or theft of the council's assets. Examples include:

- Housing benefit claims
- Housing tenants
- Payroll
- Procurement
- Insurance claims
- Social care
- Abuse of position - financial gain
- Abuse of position - manipulation of data
- General financial fraud
- Travel concessions/resident parking
- Housing/right to buy

Proactive exercises

In addition to investigating referrals received from members of the public and employees of Blackpool Council, the corporate fraud and investigations team also conduct various proactive exercises throughout the year to both identify and prevent fraud and error.

A fraud risk assessment is undertaken yearly, which informs a proactive anti-fraud action plan for the following year. Further information regarding our proactive work is outlined within the council's Fraud and Error Prevention Charter.

National Fraud Initiative

Blackpool Council participates in the Cabinet Office's [National Fraud Initiative](#), which is a data matching exercise to assist in the prevention and detection of fraud and error.

Fraud involving Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)

Fraud involving DWP benefits are investigated by the DWP's own investigations team, not Blackpool Council. This includes:

- Housing Benefit
- Universal Credit
- Jobseeker Allowance
- Employment Support Allowance
- Tax Credits

You should contact the Department for Work and Pensions directly to report fraud online, by telephone or by post.

[Report a dwp fraud now](#)

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Blackpool Council

Municipal Buildings
Corporation Street
Blackpool
FY1 1NF

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