

Example 1

An Irvine lady had claimed Housing and Council Tax benefit on the basis of being a private tenant from April 2008.

She failed to disclose that she in fact became the owner of the property she lived in from August 2009.

Between August 2009 to May 2010 she had claimed £1600 she was not entitled to in terms of Housing benefit.

Notes

She was discovered through anonymous information.

Her original claim correctly reflected her circumstances at that time.

She did not notify the Council of her ownership of the property from August 2009.

The result was the offer of an Administrative Penalty to the customer by North Ayrshire Council's Benefit Fraud Group.



Example 2

A retired couple claimed Housing and Council Tax benefit and Pension Credit from North Ayrshire Council and the Department for Work & Pensions between February 2007 until January 2010.

During this period they had claimed almost £29,000 that they were not entitled to.

Notes

They failed to disclose to North Ayrshire Council and the Department for Work & pensions that they were in receipt of an occupational pension from his previous employment.

They admitted the offence during an interview under caution.

This resulted in the case being referred to the Procurator Fiscal.



Example 3

A single parent customer had claimed Housing and Council Tax benefit for the past 2 years.

She described her ex-partner as a drug addict who had no employment nor did he claim any Department for Work & Pensions benefits.

A marriage certificate was obtained in respect of the customer and her alleged ex-partner. They married 6 months ago. It was also established that he was in full time employment.

Notes

Referral made by a member of the Benefits Team.

At the interview under caution the customer stated that their marriage, which had never been reported, had only lasted one month.

The case was passed to the Procurator Fiscal.



Example 4

An unemployed 29 year old man who was in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance and Council Tax benefit was stopped whilst driving a taxi during a multi-agency road-stop initiative with Strathclyde Police.

When questioned by a member of our Benefit Investigation Team he claimed he had only started work that morning.

A visit to his employer resulted in an interview under caution when he admitted that he had been working since November 2009.

Notes

The customer had failed to report his employment.

He received in excess of £1000 of benefits which he was not entitled to.

He accepted a statutory 30% administrative penalty as an alternative to the case being sent to the Procurator Fiscal.



The Local Cost

We have seen that the Government estimates Benefit Fraudsters are stealing approximately £80 per year from every household.

There are approximately 65,000 households in the North Ayrshire area.

This means that if we eliminated Benefit Fraud, over £5 million would be available locally which could be used to:

- ➔ provide more money for schools
- ➔ improve employment opportunities
- ➔ pay for better support for the elderly
- ➔ develop local roads and services
- ➔ improve sports facilities for our kids

