

Quarter 1 - Example Cases

Case 1

A 26 year old woman was prosecuted after it was identified through the National Fraud Initiative data-matching exercise that she was receiving student income. The investigation also established that the customer had failed to declare that she had ceased to be self-employed as she started working for a care home before she became a student with a bursary and student loan. A review form had also been completed during the period of offending, but the customer failed to declare her true circumstances at that time.

An overpayment of Housing Benefit totalling £9,401.60 was established and is now being repaid through monthly instalments.

The customer was sentenced to a 12 month conditional discharge and ordered to pay a £15 victim surcharge.

Case 2

A 74 year old man accepted a caution as an alternative to prosecution after it was identified through a HBMS data-match that he was receiving income from an annuity.

When interviewed under caution the man fully admitted that he had failed to declare both the income and the account that it was paid into because he knew that he would not qualify for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support if he had done.

Housing Benefit of £1,051 and Council Tax Support of £323 was overpaid and it was considered appropriate to offer a caution because of the full admission and amount involved in this case. The overpaid Housing Benefit is being recovered through monthly instalments.

Case 3

The investigation into the claim of a 22 year old woman was closed without sanction after the case was rejected for prosecution by the legal team.

This investigation began after anonymous information was received alleging that the customer was living with her partner who was serving in the armed forces. Evidence was obtained to show that a false tenancy agreement had been obtained from a member of staff in a letting agency showing the customer as a sole tenant whereas the tenancy had been granted in joint names with the undeclared partner. The customer was interviewed under caution using this and other evidence linking the partner to the property.

Using all of the information obtained, the Benefit Team decided that the claim had been incorrectly in payment and calculated overpayments of £6,814 Housing Benefit and £748 Council Tax Support.

The case was referred for prosecution but was rejected by the Legal Team as it was considered that although a significant amount of evidence had been obtained, the offences could not be proven beyond reasonable doubt.

The overpayment stands and recovery is currently being pursued.