

**STRATFORD ON AVON DISTRICT COUNCIL
HOUSING & COUNCIL TAX BENEFITS
COUNTER-FRAUD STATEMENT**

Our objective is to pay Housing and Council Tax Benefits accurately and promptly, striving to ensure that customers receive the Benefits to which they are entitled.

We will not tolerate any attempt to submit a fraudulent claim nor a person knowingly allowing a claim to continue where their entitlement has changed.

Our Aim

Better Prevention, Effective Deterrence, Improving Detection

We Will:

Take positive action to minimise the level of fraud and error by continuously reviewing and improving our systems and working practices.

Reduce the scope for those who deliberately set out to defraud the Council, and Public funds, both internally and externally

Work together with the Department for Work and Pensions and other Agencies to effectively combat the effects of fraud.

Ensure that our staff are adequately trained to make them aware of the risks of fraud and error and encourage them to voice any suspicions

Take positive action to investigate thoroughly all cases where irregularities are suspected

Provide a confidential Counter Fraud Hotline to enable people to report suspicions of Benefit Fraud.

Conduct all investigations and interviews fairly and consistently and in line with the relative legislation.

When fraud is proven, make full use of sanctions, including Formal Cautions, Administrative Penalties, or Prosecutions

We will recover all fraudulently overpaid Housing Benefits

Aim to obtain maximum publicity for successful prosecutions as a deterrent to others who may consider defrauding the benefit system.

We Know

That most applicants are honest, and we want to protect these claims. We have a legal responsibility to prevent fraud from taking place and to take appropriate action when it does