



Northumberland  
County Council

# **Corporate Fraud Team**

# **Counter Fraud Policy**

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Northumberland County Council is a major provider of services to the community, and as such the Council's members and staff have a responsibility to ensure the highest standards of probity are maintained.
- 1.2 Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 (s.151) the Council has a statutory responsibility to protect and ensure the proper administration of public funds.
- 1.3 Northumberland County Council is committed to sound corporate governance and has demonstrated this by adopting a Code of Corporate Governance in accordance with National and Professional Standards. This requires the Council to define the standards of personal behaviour and conduct that members and staff and those involved in service delivery are expected to display.
- 1.4 An integral element of this approach is the Council's determination to eradicate fraud and corruption whether it is attempted from within or outside the Council.
- 1.5 It is important to emphasise that the County Council has traditionally had a good record with respect to probity and the instances of detected fraud and corruption within its activities have been relatively few.
- 1.6 In administering its responsibilities the Council is committed to the highest ethical standards. It expects all its members and staff to lead by example in ensuring adherence to rules, procedures and recommended practices whilst maintaining conduct of the highest standards such that public confidence in their integrity is maintained.
- 1.7 The Council also expects that individuals and organisations that it comes into contact with will act towards the Council with integrity and without thought or actions involving fraud or corruption.
- 1.8 Members and staff need to be aware that fraud and corruption will not be tolerated under any circumstances and if they become aware of any malpractice or wrongdoing and they unreasonably fail to take appropriate action to eliminate that activity then they themselves become implicated in such acts.
- 1.9 If any individual has any information regarding malpractice or wrongdoing in the County Council this should be brought to the immediate attention of their Line Manager.
- 1.10 If a member of staff raises a concern regarding financial malpractice then the details must be passed immediately to the Corporate Fraud Manager for consideration of appropriate action. Managers should only establish the basic facts of the suspicion and should not attempt to carry out any investigation themselves.

## **2 Policy Aims & Objectives**

- 2.1 This Policy is relevant to the priorities in the Corporate Plan 2018-21 and links to the corporate objective of 'wanting to be efficient, open and work for everyone. The Corporate Fraud Team contributes to the objective by being committed to the prevention, detection and investigation of internal and external fraud and by working in partnership with other agencies reducing the incidence of crime and theft against the Council.
- 2.2 Under the Council's Constitution and the Finance and Contract Rules, the Section 151 Officer has responsibility for the development and maintenance of an anti-fraud and anti-corruption strategy which includes the avoidance of involvement in money laundering.
- 2.3 This responsibility has been delegated to the Corporate Fraud Manager and through this Counter Fraud Policy the Corporate Fraud Team will;
- Provide an effective counter fraud service.
  - Develop and implement measures to prevent and detect all forms of fraud against the Council.
  - Develop a range of initiatives aimed at reducing and ultimately eliminating all forms of fraud and error as far as possible in Northumberland through the building of effective controls into our working practices.
  - Operate the counter fraud service in a secure environment.
  - Conduct high quality assessments with appropriate investigations when fraud is suspected to ensure that full compliance with legal requirements are met to enable prosecution where appropriate.
  - Take action where appropriate in line with the Corporate Enforcement Policy and use all legal sanctions available for recovery of any losses through fraud.
  - Provide all Corporate Fraud Team members with appropriate and regular training.
  - Deter internal and external fraud by publicising the Councils' anti-fraud measures, including details of how any type of suspected fraud may be reported and actively encouraging the public, employees and members to report such suspicions.
  - Regularly publicise successful prosecutions and achieved savings as a result of anti-fraud activity.

## **3 Linked Policies**

- 3.1 This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following additional fraud related policies developed by the Corporate Fraud Team:
- Bribery & Corruption Policy

- Anti Money Laundering Policy

- 3.2 The County Council also has a Whistleblowing Policy which is maintained by HR in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer.
- 3.3 For further information on any of these policies or for advice on any potential fraud related concerns please contact:

Corporate Fraud Team

Telephone: 01670 624359

Email: [fraudline@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:fraudline@northumberland.gov.uk)