



Case Study



"Harrow's new corporate approach to investigations is the right transition to make; it has enabled us to look across investigations in a more informed multi-aspect way. Also, we now look at fraud prevention and detection across the authority as a whole, not just in isolated areas or pockets."

Justin Phillips, Corporate Fraud Manager, Harrow Council

Harrow Council acts on the 2006 Government Review

The 2006 Government's review suggested that fraudulent activity cost the UK as much as £20 billion and demanded that the 'public sector should take a zero tolerance approach'. This combined with a focus to improve efficiency and make savings has resulted in a clear need for local authorities to take a more innovative approach to tackling fraud. Some local authorities have already started to take a zero tolerance approach by bringing all investigations into one corporate unit, thus raising the authority's proactive approach in combating fraud from a council wide perspective.

Harrow Council is an outer London Borough situated on the border of leafy Hertfordshire but only 10 miles from the buzz of central London. Covering 50 square kilometres, Harrow is the 12th largest borough in Greater London in terms of area and is one of the most diverse boroughs in the UK.

In 2006 Harrow Council took the view it needed to have a more encompassing approach to fraud detection, investigation and prevention. The authority decided to take a 'zero tolerance approach' and took the bold step of setting up a Corporate Investigation Team.

Harrow benefits officer



Justin Phillips, Corporate Anti-Fraud Manager, Harrow Council comments:

"Harrow was concerned that its approach to combating fraud was too singularly focused. We investigated benefit fraud and



other frauds as separate investigations, with separate teams. This meant that at times, crucial links between the investigations were missed and therefore some fraudulent activity was missed. Harrow's new corporate approach to investigations is the right transition to make; it has enabled us to look across investigations in a more informed multi-aspect way. Also, we now look at fraud prevention and detection across the authority as a whole, not just in isolated areas or pockets."

Data from any of Harrow Council's numerous internal databases such as pensions, payroll, housing benefit, council tax, non domestic rates, blue badges, residents parking, student awards and housing rents can be searched upon and matched within the Civica Data Warehouse. This provides investigation officers with instant access to data from the various sources of information that the local authority holds on its citizens.

Recently there has been a lot of publicity regarding Blue Badge fraud and misuse. The UK-wide blue badge scheme provides easier parking for people registered as disabled or blind. It also allows users free parking and exemption from congestion charging. Harrow Council is now in a position to use the Data Warehouse to deal with this type of misuse within their region. The authority

Harrow Council currently benefits from using the following Civica solutions



Workflow & Doc. Management



Contact Management



Revenues & Benefits



Housing



Environment



Traffic & Streets



Planning



Finance



Legal



Pensions



Health & Social Care



Education & Skills



Managed Services



Consulting



Software Licensing



Voice Solutions



Internet Solutions



Fleet Management



Service Management

issues blue badges therefore the data can be stored in the data warehouse and used for fraud prevention and detection.

Civica's Data Warehouse also provides the facility for data matching between several databases, using pre-defined matching criteria. This has enabled Harrow to take a positive proactive approach to eliminating fraud across the authority as a whole.

Phillips highlights an interesting case that came to light when matching housing benefit against payroll. Officers at Harrow identified what appeared to be an employee as an undeclared non dependant on the claim. After some initial checks and an interview of the employee, officers became suspicious of her status in the UK, as she claimed that she had lost her passport. A check was made immediately with the Border & Immigration Agency who confirmed that she was an overstayer who had absconded. The vignette found in the passport held on the HR file, was actually issued to another person some eight years previous. The employee was arrested and charged with obtaining a pecuniary advantage and is currently serving three months with a recommendation for deportation once released.



Whilst the Data Warehouse currently only matches internal data, (unlike the NFI that matches both internal and external data), matches can be run on different data sets at anytime and as frequently as required. This facility promotes a more proactive approach to combating fraud instead of having to wait every two years for the NFI and in addition helps Harrow Council to adhere to the Audit Commission's requirements in terms of the KLOE (Key Lines of Enquiry) 'use of resources' criteria.

Harrow is also looking to use Civica's Data Warehouse as a prototype development tool in which authorities could work together and share data legally, for example Harrow's payroll database could be matched against Ealing Council's benefits data to identify cross borough fraud that may get missed by NFI.

Benefits of the Civica Anti-Fraud solution include:

- Minimise loss of public funds
- Substantially reduce administration costs
- Improve investigation verification productivity
- Reduce number of fraud cases at source
- Provide effective visiting schedules
- Increase detection rates
- Improve intervention scheduling and reporting
- Encompass DWP, Gershon and Government anti-fraud strategies including SAFE (Securing Against Fraud and Error) framework
- Share information with other authorities and agencies
- Mobile working

Features of the Civica Anti-Fraud solution include:

- Comprehensive searching
- Advanced searches
- On-line data matching
- Case processing
- Case investigation
- Browser facility
- User definable fields
- Risk analysis
- Reporting
- Integration with Harrow's Document Management and Workflow System
- Robust and Reliable

Civica is one of the most experienced providers of consulting, software and managed services for the public sector. Supplying more than 1,500 organisations in the UK, Australia and the USA, including 89% of the UK's local authorities. Civica has a 20-year history of delivering software-based solutions that help customers in local government, criminal justice, housing, education and healthcare sectors to improve service delivery.

Civica UK Limited

Vanguard House, Dewsbury Road, Leeds LS11 5DD

Tel: 0113 244 1404 Fax: 0113 244 0835

Email: enquiries@civica.co.uk Web: www.civica.co.uk