

Appendix 3 – Tenancy Fraud Case Summaries 2023/24

1. Prosecution Case –Tenancy Fraud / Holloway Estate

This case related to joint tenants at Holloway Estate since December 2021. Prior to becoming joint tenants, this was tied accommodation as one of the tenants worked for the City of London, as an Estates Office for many years, and ironically used to refer potential fraud cases to be investigated.

A referral was received from an Estates Officer that the tenants had not been seen for an extended period of time and that another lady had been observed entering the property.

Initial credit and financial checks linked four other persons to the property in the period since the joint social housing tenancy began.

Residency checks were carried out at the property by the City's Tenancy Fraud Investigator, and this revealed that the tenants had sub-let to different individuals shortly after the award of the tenancy and had relocated to Thailand. Witness statements were obtained from three occupiers currently in situ, whilst another person who previously lived at the property was located at an address in West London and a further witness statement obtained from her.

After advertising to rent the property online, the sub-tenants had met the tenants at the property and agreed to move in. All of them paid rent directly into the bank account of one of the sub-tenants on a monthly basis.

Both the joint tenants were contacted via e mail and made aware of the circumstances that had been uncovered and invited to return to the UK to be interviewed under caution, both declined to attend.

The joint tenants voluntarily returned possession of the property and the sub-tenants have since moved out and the property rehoused.

The criminal benefit in this case (difference between the social housing rent paid and the profit accrued from sub-letting) is over £22,000, for a period of 13 months.

A criminal prosecution was pursued, and a subsequent court order issued an arrest warrant for both of the joint tenants, to be triggered when the defendants enter at UK ports.

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2. Succession Fraud / Holloway Estate

An occupier attended Holloway Estate Office claiming to have lived at property with her Mother, who had passed away a few days' prior, for the last 18 months. She asked to succeed the tenancy stating that she would be homeless otherwise.

The occupier provided a bank statement and doctors letter showing her address as her mother's social housing property.

Intelligence checks identified that the lady looking to succeed had not been known to Islington Local Authority for Council Tax purposes, her mother was in receipt of Single Person Discount,

The occupier had only recently registered her bank account at the social housing property, less than one month before.

The occupier's financial links were all at another address in the last three years, in Bury St Edmunds, where she was on the electoral roll and still had bank accounts, utility bills and telecoms in her name. She jointly owned this property.

Following the intelligence checks, succession was denied.