

Appendix 2 - Housing Tenancy Fraud Case Study's 2017/18

Case Study 1

The City secured a successful prosecution following an investigation into a social housing tenancy obtained by a former tenant of the City's Golden Lane Estate. Investigations established that the defendant had furnished tenancy agreements from a fictitious landlord, making it look as though he was renting a room in a house in support of his housing application; he did in fact own the property outright and was a landlord himself, renting out a number of rooms. When the defendant obtained the Golden Lane property, he proceeded to rent out the room that he used to use in the house that he owned.

Following a complex investigation, the defendant pleaded guilty to fraud at Inner London Crown Court on 31 May 2017 and received a two-year suspended prison sentence and 115 hours of unpaid work. A financial investigation under the Proceeds of Crime Act enabled the City to recover £111,818 in compensation and confiscation, along with legal costs and investigation costs. The property was also successfully recovered and is now let to others in far greater need of affordable housing.

Case Study 2

The City secured a successful recovery of a tenancy on the City's Middlesex Street Estate following an investigation into the social housing tenancy of the former joint tenants after allegations from a neighbour that the defendants had returned to Thailand. Witness statement was obtained from witnesses and it was further established that the tenants were renting out both bedrooms in the property and receiving rental income into their bank accounts. The team worked with two of the sub-tenants who provided evidence and described the details of the sub-let arrangement, which lead to the City having sufficient evidence to take recovery action, however faced with the prospect of legal action, the tenants returned possession of the property to The City with immediate effect and it has now been let to others in far greater need of affordable housing.

Case Study 3

The City secured a successful recovery of a tenancy in West Point on the Avondale Estate following an investigation into the social housing tenancy of the sole tenant. An investigation commenced after a referral from the Estates Manager, after he had been contacted by an employee from The Department for Work & Pensions. An individual was claiming Job Seekers Allowance from the address claiming that the tenant was his landlord. Residency checks carried out revealed that the tenant had not been resident at the property for approximately 10 years and had likely returned to Nigeria as he was uncontactable. Witness statements obtained from two persons showed that the property has been sub-let to one person who had then assumed the tenancy and was sub-letting to another individual and her child.

Following conclusion of the investigation, The City had sufficient evidence to take civil action to recover the tenancy, however faced with the prospect of legal action, the sub-tenant handed back the keys of the property to The City. The property is now let to others in far greater need of affordable housing.

Appendix 2 - Housing Tenancy Fraud Case Study's 2017/18

Case Study 4

The City secured a successful recovery of a tenancy at George Elliston House on the Avondale Estate following an investigation into the social housing tenancy of the sole tenant. An investigation commenced after a referral from an Estates Officer advising that a lady had attended the Estates Office and was evasive about her connection to the flat in question, when requesting an additional key fob. After visiting the lady at the address and obtaining a Witness Statement it was established that she was a friend of the tenant and had moved into the property after the original tenant had returned to Lithuania to live with her partner - a former joint tenant at the property who had been prosecuted and deported from the UK. The sub-tenant was paying rent herself at the property having been provided with the rent card and had assumed the tenancy at the address.

Following conclusion of the investigation, The City had sufficient evidence to take civil action to recover the tenancy, however faced with the prospect of legal action, the sub-tenant returned possession of the property to The City as she had no intention of returning to the UK. The property is now let to others in far greater need of affordable housing.