

Appendix 4 – Social Housing Tenancy Fraud Investigations Summary

Nature of Concern	Investigation/Outcome Summary
Property Ownership – Middlesex Street Estate Tenancy	<p>This case was identified via the National Fraud Initiative as a suspicion that a tenant of Middlesex Street Estate owned property elsewhere and was using this as his principal residence. The investigation identified that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A property in Newham was purchased by the tenant after he became a social housing tenant (<i>not evidence of fraud, because tenants are able to purchase other property, as long as it is after they become tenants and they don't use it as their main address, continuing to reside in their social housing</i>). ▪ The tenant initially purchased the Newham property in 2009 with the previous joint tenant, around the same time that he was removed from the tenancy. In 2014, the previous joint tenant was removed from the ownership, which transferred solely to our tenant. ▪ There were financial links with the tenant at the purchased property in Newham, but also at his social housing address. ▪ Checks showed that the tenant had been liable for Council tax at the address in Newham since 2014, when he became the sole proprietor and is liable for council tax at his social housing property. ▪ Bank account evidence in the form of copy statements obtained under POSHFA (Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013) show that the tenant is receiving rent from two individuals at the property in Newham, who are linked to the address via credit checks. At this time, it was not apparent that the tenant had moved to the property in Newham, so no fraud being perpetrated. ▪ The tenant was actively involved in the resident Committee at Middlesex Street Estate and had previously referred a case to the City's fraud team, providing a witness statement that resulted in the recovery of an adjacent property. ▪ The tenant was aware of tenancy terms and conditions and on the face of it is keen to prevent and report fraud. ▪ Subsequent credit checks showed an increasing financial footprint at the address in Newham, therefore indicating that this was the tenant's principal residence, and a residency check was undertaken at the property but there was no answer – a letter requesting that the tenant contact the fraud team as soon as possible was left and following on

	<p>from this the tenant relinquished possession of his social housing property in October 2021, prior to any interview under caution, and as a direct result of this investigation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The property has now been provided to others in far greater need of affordable housing.
<p>Property Ownership – Iselden House Tenancy</p>	<p>This case was identified via the National Fraud Initiative as a suspicion that a tenant of Iselden House owned property elsewhere and had failed to declare this when making his application for housing and at any other opportunity. The investigation identified that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The tenant failed to declare ownership of a property in Islington, that he had purchased from Islington Council under the right to buy scheme, many years before being awarded a tenancy by the City. ▪ The tenant then went on to rent this property out to other persons from the date he became a City tenant, until he voluntarily relinquished the property – a period of some eight years. ▪ The fraud had afforded him considerable financial benefit over this period and a criminal benefit of £86,000. ▪ The tenant had claimed to be renting his property from his son, providing false tenancy agreement documents and making false declarations in his application. ▪ During subsequent inspections and tenancy audits the tenant failed to declare ownership of any other property despite being afforded the opportunity to do so. ▪ At formal interview under caution the tenant made a full and frank admission of the offence, stating that he was lonely and wanted to be around persons of his own age. ▪ Following interview, the tenant relinquished possession of the property immediately. The tenant has recently pleaded guilty to charges contrary to Section 1 of the Fraud Act 2006. ▪ The now former tenant is subject to a confiscation timetable and must provide details of all his assets in line with the direction of the court. ▪ A hearing at the Central Criminal Court is scheduled for August 2022 for sentencing and confiscation under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The property has now been provided to others in far greater need of affordable housing.
<p>Property Abandonment – Golden Lane Estate Tenancy</p>	<p>This case was referred by the Golden Lane Estates Manager over suspicion that the property may have been abandoned. The investigation identified that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The tenant never engaged with the estates office and post had been observed stacking up in the letter tray. An individual contacted the rents team to make a payment on the tenants' behalf giving an address in Barnet. ▪ The tenant had not allowed access to the property for a gas safety check for a long time. ▪ Intelligence checks indicated that the tenant is likely to be residing at the address in Barnet and the person who made the payment on the tenants' behalf was the tenants' partner and former joint tenant. ▪ Council Tax Liability enquiries with Barnet Council revealed that the tenants' partner is the liable party for the property in Barnet. ▪ The Golden Lane address was visited on a number of occasions to conduct a residency check and tenancy audit without success. ▪ A visit was made to the Barnet address and the tenants' partner was there with their children. The tenants partner insisted that our tenant was living at the Golden Lane property but often visits. ▪ The tenant was asked to make contact and during informal discussions the tenants refused to disclose what school her children attended. The tenant was invited in for a formal interview on three occasions but failed to attend. ▪ The tenant contacted the fraud team after failing to attend the final appointment opportunity and agreed to relinquish possession of the property; this was accepted, and the case closed as the tenant was considered to be vulnerable and there was no evidence of sub-letting at the Golden lane address. ▪ The property has now been provided to others in far greater need of affordable housing.