

Housing and Council Tax Benefits

Benefit Fraud

Benefit fraud is when someone makes a claim for benefit based on information that they know is false or inaccurate. A claim could also become fraudulent if the person claiming benefit has not told us about a change in circumstances that would reduce the amount of benefit they are entitled to. Sometimes, only the person claiming benefit is responsible for benefit fraud and sometimes the landlord, an employer, representative or someone else who helps to fill in the benefit application form may have helped them.

Benefit fraud is a criminal offence. If we think someone is claiming benefit they are not entitled to we will investigate them. If we find evidence to prove that a person is committing fraud, we may prosecute them, make them pay a fine, or issue them with a formal warning, called a caution. In any case, we would be looking to claim back the total amount of benefit which has been overpaid.

In order that a consistent approach to tackling and preventing fraud is achieved it is essential that we have in place an up to date Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Anti-Fraud Policy. A revised Anti-Fraud Policy was approved in December 2010 by the full Council, which can be viewed by clicking on this link [Anti-Fraud Policy](#)

Reporting Benefit Fraud

If you know of or suspect anyone of fraudulently claiming Housing or Council Tax Benefit you can report this by:

- **Contact the National Benefit Fraud Hotline on 0800 854 440**

(Your call is free and confidential. Lines are open 7.00am - 11.00pm, 7 days a week).

- Report a Benefit Thief Online by clicking this link <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/campaigns/benefit-thieves/report.asp> .
- Call our Benefit Section on 01595 744682

- E-mail our Benefit Section benefits@shetland.gov.uk
- Call in person or write to Shetland Islands Council, Benefits Section, Charlotte House, Lerwick, ZE1 0LX

Please note all referrals are dealt with in the strictest confidence.