



Financial Investigation Toolkit helps root out tenancy fraud

Tenancy fraud is a known concern across London. The finite supply of social housing has meant that councils are having to pay significant costs for temporary accommodation. These costs can be reduced every time a social housing unit is recovered through the identification of fraudulent and incorrect use. Even more significantly, recovered properties provide councils with the opportunity to offer the chance of secure accommodation to a genuine family in need.

The South West London Fraud Partnership (SWLFP) provides a shared fraud investigation service to five London Boroughs. They use Financial Investigation Toolkit to automate financial analysis to ensure they can keep on top of the growing challenge of tenancy fraud.

Product used

altia.

Financial Investigation Toolkit

Sector

Local authority

Territory

United Kingdom

At a glance

About the South West London Fraud Partnership

The SWLFP is a shared service undertaking fraud investigation and fraud prevention work for the London boroughs of Merton, Richmond, Sutton, Wandsworth and the Royal Borough of Kingston. Its role is to ensure the councils' limited resources are maximised for the benefit of all partners. The partnership looks after over 55,000 social housing dwellings and each year looks to recover more than 80 properties which are being sub-let or misused.

The problem

Having been formed in 2015 to help five London boroughs tackle fraud, case referrals to SWLFP have increased by 50% and it was no longer efficient or effective for individual investigators to manually check bank statements to build their cases.



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The challenge

Fraud is the most recorded offence in the UK and costs local taxpayers millions of pounds each year. This prevents public money from going to the places it is needed most and improving communities.

In the the past where tenancy fraud was identified it was not uncommon for the offenders to either return possession of the property or abscond. However, in recent years, this pattern has changed with most tenants holding on to possession while lengthy legal proceedings are progressed.

With the amount of fraud being reported to the service increasing, and the growing need to seek recovery through the courts, more in-depth scrutiny and analysis of bank material was required to provide evidence of financial gain through rental payments and evidence that places a tenant at a different location.

Initially this analysis was undertaken manually, using spreadsheets, by individual fraud investigators. The process was time consuming and challenging to ensure a consistent standard was being followed by the team and investigators. With the increasing demand for all types of fraud investigations and fraud prevention this time-intensive process wasn't sustainable.

The solution

By using Financial Investigation Toolkit, and a dedicated officer trained on the software, SWLFP was able to automate the process of analysing bank statements and producing reports that clearly demonstrated that there was a compelling case that should be pursued to an interview under caution (IUC) and then sanction and/or prosecution.



The Toolkit reduced the time spent on this part of the process from hours to only...

10 - 15
minutes

Automation and time saving

Financial Investigation Toolkit's data loaders fully automated the process of uploading bank statements, in any format, and converting them into an excel format ready for analysis. Previously, the data was manually created and highlighted on a spreadsheet. The Toolkit reduced the time spent on this part of the process from hours to only 10 to 15 minutes.

Analysis and case building

Quick Reports automated the visualisation of flows between accounts being investigated, showing the size and scale of the case in an easy-to-digest format. On a typical case, the time taken to conduct analysis was reduced from several hours to 10-15 minutes.



Bruce Baden, Intelligence Officer, SWFPL said:

By automating the process of finding links in financial data to demonstrate the need for further information and an interview under caution, Altia's Financial Investigation Toolkit has helped us work more cases and focus our resource on the most complex investigation work.

We've even been able to expand this work beyond tenancy fraud. One case that has been a particular success is where the analysis through the Toolkit and quick reports showed a pattern of a carer withdrawing and transferring funds to his account from the person he was charged with caring for.

We are now hoping to use the output reports generated for cases where prosecution is being considered.



The results

Within the first 6 months of using Financial Investigation Toolkit, the management team could see three main benefits:

Time saving



the automation of the financial analysis in cases reduced the time spent on analysis by about 90%.

Clarity



there was an increase in the number of cases that were suitable for an interview under caution.

Compelling information



the detailed reports in graphs, tables and pivot tables means the service is now looking to start to use the output as evidence in criminal cases.

Bruce Baden, Intelligence Officer, SWFPL said:

As well as Financial Investigation Toolkit delivering real value and results, we've also had excellent ongoing support from Altia. If we raise support queries, we get a fast response and we've valued the regular upgrades to the functionality of the product which show that user feedback is taken into consideration. Financial Investigation Toolkit is enabling us to improve our service in many ways.

altia.

Financial Investigation Toolkit

Fully automate the process of converting paper-based information, and analysing it to identify entities, trends, relationships and investigative avenues.

Financial Investigation Toolkit helps you perform financial investigation work in hours which would otherwise take weeks or even months. Create accurate Excel-based records and use specialist tools to speed up the process of interrogating financial data.



For more information on how Altia can revolutionise your criminal and workplace investigations, please contact us on: **tel.** +44 (0) 330 808 8600 | **e-mail** info@altiaintel.com