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Introduction

Fraud is deception carried out for personal gain, usually for money, but can also involve the abuse of a position of trust.

The National Crime Agency website states that fraud remains a significant problem for the UK and remains the most prevalent crime against individuals in England and Wales, with the potential for causing immense financial, psychological and emotional harm.

As well as individuals, all organisations are at risk of fraud, and our experience shows that they will be targeted where key control weaknesses are identified.

This edition of Fraud Stop includes fraud cases in court in the last six months, fraud prevention advice, Report Fraud replacing Action Fraud, and a reminder of organisation’s responsibilities following the implementation of the Failure to Prevent Fraud Offence in September 2025.



Cases in Court

Building society cashier jailed for fraud

In May 2026, a building society cashier who stole from vulnerable customers to fund expensive holidays was jailed for 16 months.

The cashier forged the signature of a man with learning disabilities and other elderly customers at a Welsh branch of Nationwide.

Colleagues had spotted Facebook posts showing the cashier on luxury holidays.

The cashier stole at least £8,605 over 12 months and admitted five counts of fraud.

Victims included a 49-year-old man with learning disabilities whose bank card was held at the Nationwide branch for safe keeping after he had previously been a victim of fraud, and the cashier stole £6,300 from an 85-year-old man who had suffered a stroke.

An internal investigation began as the cashier was suspected of forging customer signatures and processing cash withdrawals without their knowledge, and when confronted by investigators, the cashier admitted everything.

Nationwide has already reimbursed everyone who lost money, but a further court hearing in July 2026 will decide how much of the money the cashier should pay back.

Friends, family members, carers or company employees may be asked to look after personal or business finances. However, they may instead take advantage

of their access to bank accounts or information for their own benefit.

In another case, a care company owner defrauded service users of more than £330K. The owner assumed power of attorney for his victims to manipulate care arrangements for personal financial gain. He was jailed for six years and nine months in March 2026 after previously pleading guilty to four counts of fraud by abuse of position.

Proceedings under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 are set to recover monies for the victims.

Click on this link for more information on how to protect yourself from fraud by abuse of position of trust or spotting the signs of abuse of position of trust. [Abuse of position of trust - Report Fraud](#)

The Age UK website also provides helpful guidance on financial abuse and how to seek help. [Financial abuse: what is it? | Age UK](#)

So what is the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002?

The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA) is designed to strip criminals of their financial gains. Enforced by various agencies including the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the National Crime Agency (NCA), POCA provides mechanisms for asset recovery through criminal and civil proceedings. The act addresses several key areas such as confiscation orders, restraint orders, and civil recovery.

Holiday company director jailed for fraud

The director of a collapsed holiday firm, who defrauded customers out of nearly £300,000 was jailed in May 2026 for 33 months.

Trading Standards said more than 90 victims paid Sphere Events Ltd for luxury holidays and tickets that were never booked.

The director forged payment confirmations and spent the money on business debts, private school fees and herself. She pleaded guilty at Crown Court to a charge of fraudulent trading.

Victims thought they were buying discounted holidays including honeymoons or once-in-a-lifetime trips to luxury destinations, but the director forged booking confirmations and bank statements to show payments had been made. In some cases, holidaymakers only discovered the problem after setting off and had to pay extra to rescue their trips. A proceeds of crime hearing will try to recover money for customers.

Sphere Events displayed ABTA and ATOL logos despite having no affiliation with either travel protection organisation.

For further information on how holiday fraud works, spotting the signs of holiday fraud and top tips to help prevent falling victim to holiday fraud, go to: [Holiday fraud - Report Fraud](#)

Remember you can check that the travel company you are looking to book with holds an Air Travel Organiser's Licence (ATOL) or holds ABTA membership at:

[Check for ATOL - ATOL and Member Check](#) | [ABTA Protected Holiday & Travel Companies](#) | [ABTA](#)

Taxi firm bookkeeper and director jailed for pension fraud

A bookkeeper was jailed in April 2026 after stealing nearly £700,000 from the company she worked for and its staff pension schemes. The fraudster had pleaded guilty to fraud by abuse of position a month earlier and was sentenced to four years in prison.

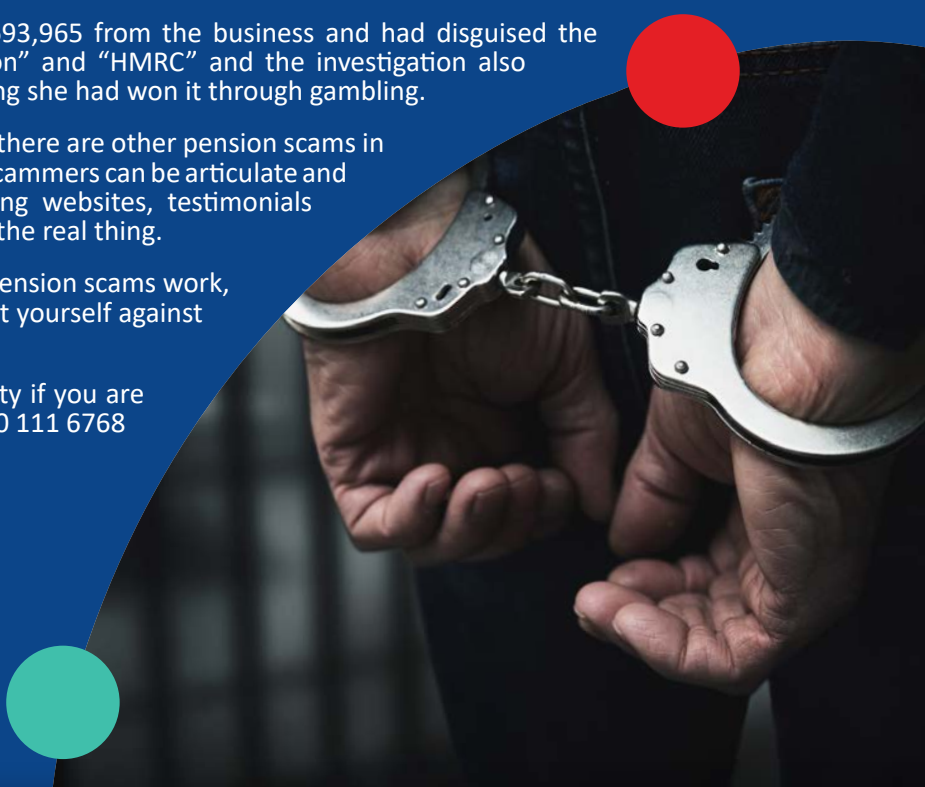
She was responsible for managing the business accounts of the taxi firm and paying drivers and office staff. Local police said it received reports of staff pension contributions not being paid and an investigation found the bookkeeper had paid them into her own bank account.

The force discovered she had stolen about £693,965 from the business and had disguised the transactions under references such as "Pension" and "HMRC" and the investigation also found she had offered money to friends, claiming she had won it through gambling.

As well as insider pension frauds such as these, there are other pension scams in circulation. Pension scams can be hard to spot. Scammers can be articulate and financially knowledgeable, with credible-looking websites, testimonials and materials that are hard to distinguish from the real thing.

Click on this link for more information on how pension scams work, types of pension scam offers and how to protect yourself against pension fraud. [Pensions scams - Report Fraud](#)

You can also call the Financial Conduct Authority if you are worried about a potential pension scam on 0800 111 6768 or contact them online at: [Contact us](#) | [FCA](#)



Businessman jailed over £150K Covid Bounce Back loan fraud

A businessman was jailed in March 2026 after admitting claiming £150,000 in Covid Bounce Back loans he was not entitled to.

The fraudster was also running a clothes wholesaler and online retailer despite having been disqualified from acting as a company director for 10 years in 2021.

The Insolvency Service, who led the investigation, said the businessman applied for three loans across three companies in 2020 when the government was offering support to help businesses survive lockdown measures imposed during the coronavirus pandemic.

He admitted three counts of fraud and one of acting as a director while disqualified and was jailed for two years and four months.

Each business was entitled to one loan, but the businessman claimed a second £50,000 loan for two businesses, while overstating the turnover of one of them.

The third Bounce Back Loan related to a sole-tradership, but he again overestimated the turnover and provided a false statement that the money would be used to the benefit of the business.

The Insolvency Service said it would also look to recover the loans via the Proceeds of Crime Act, in addition to about £27,000 already returned.

Social worker with multiple employments handed a suspended prison sentence

A social worker who fraudulently worked at three different councils at the same time and made multiple wage claims was given a suspended prison sentence in February 2026.

The social worker was an agency worker employed by a County Council's adult social care team. However, she also worked at two other local authorities, including a City Council and an unnamed third local authority, without any of them knowing about her additional employment. Timesheets were submitted to all three of them.

The fraudster was sentenced to six months in prison, suspended for a year, and ordered to pay £2,500 to the County Council after pleading guilty to one offence of fraud by abuse of position.

Concerns were first raised by a recruitment agency who said she had submitted timesheets to the county council and another authority for the same hours. A criminal investigation led by the County Council's Counter Fraud Service found she had lied to her line manager about the need for unpaid time off on five separate occasions. Reasons she gave included that she was abroad due to a family member's death when in fact she was in the UK working elsewhere.

So what is a suspended sentence?

A suspended sentence means that imprisonment can be suspended for a certain period. As a result, an offender is not sent immediately to prison. Within the suspended period, no further offences must be committed, as this would be considered a breach and could result in the 'activation' of the original custodial sentence. There are also likely to be certain requirements set down by the court, which must be complied with, such as a curfew or unpaid work.



TIAA Anti-Crime Specialists have identified that there is a growing trend of fraud offences in relation to staff working elsewhere during their contracted business hours. The Public Sector Fraud Authority has issued guidance in respect of dual working fraud with prevention advice including:

- Prior to employment, personal and professional references should be checked
- Agencies who provide staff should provide assurance that their pre-employment screening practices are robust
- Ensure conflicts of interest have been declared which includes business interests and other employment, paid or unpaid, in line with the organisation's policy
- Employment contracts should be clear on when contracted hours should be worked, the location of the work and make reference to the organisation's policy on multiple assignments
- Agree and document flexible working arrangements
- Ensure timesheets and absence logs are updated accurately and if possible, independently verified
- Be proactive in performance management - set clear deadlines and objectives
- Regular contact with all workers to ensure that they are active and to check on wellbeing

Fraudster to pay council £23K after lying to get a home

A man lied to Islington Council to get a council home when he said he did not own a home despite owning one in Ilford. Two years later he lied again to try and get a bigger one.

After an investigation he was handed a 20-month custodial sentence, suspended for two years after he pleaded guilty to two counts of fraud at Crown Court. He was also ordered to repay the council £23,000 and was also told to do 120 hours of unpaid work and attend 20 rehabilitation days.

Tenancy fraud deprives others on a social housing waiting list of a decent and affordable place to live.

The main types of tenancy fraud are:

- giving false statements to obtain a tenancy
- illegally occupying or subletting
- giving false statements about Right to Buy
- not telling your landlord about moving out

The above may be criminal offences under the Fraud Act 2006 or the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013.

If you suspect tenancy fraud, report it to the relevant council or housing association.

In another tenancy fraud case reported in May 2026, Nottingham City Council recovered a property after concerns came to light during routine enquiries connected to a Right to Buy application. The investigation established that the tenant was actually living elsewhere in the city and they had supplied false identity information in their housing application.



Five fraudsters sentenced for ticketing scam

In December 2025 five men were sentenced for their part in a scam involving tickets for Premier League football matches.

The men were found to have dishonestly acquired tickets for Liverpool games and sold them at inflated prices using secondary ticket websites, before creating their own called Seatfinder UK.

One admitted conspiracy to commit fraud and four others admitted the same charge two days into their trial. Four received prison sentences while the fifth was handed a suspended sentence, plus unpaid work and a curfew.

Investigators found their company - Seatfinder UK - was registered in Dubai but run from a rented office in Merseyside.

The court heard the men were able to manipulate the ticket system to buy cheap tickets that should have been reserved for people with Liverpool postcodes.

But some of these £9 tickets were never made available to local fans because the fraudsters bought them before they went on general sale, reselling them for many times their face value.

The next method used to obtain tickets involved the creation of hundreds of club memberships using fake names and details. These allowed the group to get early access to cheap tickets to Liverpool games, and a document found on a computer suggested they also had hundreds more fake membership accounts with Manchester and London clubs.

How to protect yourself from ticket fraud

Where to buy tickets: Only buy tickets from the venue’s box office, official promoter or agent, or a well-known ticketing website.

Paying for tickets: Avoid paying for tickets by bank transfer, especially if buying from someone unknown. Credit card or payment services such as PayPal give you a better chance of recovering the money if you become a victim of fraud.

Ticket spam: Be wary of unsolicited emails, texts or adverts offering unbelievably good deals on tickets.

Look for the logo: Is the vendor a member of the Society of Ticket Agents and Retailers (STAR)? If they are, the company has signed up to their strict governing standards. STAR also offers an approved Alternative Dispute Resolution service to help customers with outstanding complaints. For more information visit [STAR - The Society of Ticket Agents and Retailers](#)



Report Fraud: New service from City of London Police

Have you personally been a victim of a fraud or scam? From 4 December 2025, City of London Police is launching Report Fraud, a new service that replaces Action Fraud as the national platform for reporting cybercrime and fraud.

The new Report Fraud service has been designed by City of London Police to provide a better experience for victims and deliver improved information to law enforcement.

The service includes:

- A new Report Fraud contact centre and online reporting tool, where victims can make reports of cybercrime and fraud
- The Report Fraud National Crime Analysis Service (N-CAS), replacing Action Fraud's backend system for analysing reports. All police forces will have access to this system.
- The Report Fraud Victim Service (formerly the National Economic Crime Victim Care Unit), continue to provide specialist victim support

How to report:

- Members of the public can report cybercrime and fraud by calling 0300 123 2040
- Or visit reportfraud.police.uk

This website also provides a very informative A-Z of the different types of cybercrimes and frauds, how to spot these frauds, how to protect yourself and what to do if you are a victim. Share this link to raise awareness with family, friends and colleagues.

[A-Z of fraud and cyber crime - Report Fraud](#)



Failure to Prevent Fraud Offence

The new ‘failure to prevent fraud’ offence, which was introduced as part of the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act (ECCTA) 2023 came into effect on the 1 September 2025.

Under the offence, an organisation may be criminally liable where an employee, agent, subsidiary, or other “associated person,” commits a fraud intending to benefit the organisation and the organisation did not have reasonable fraud prevention procedures in place. In certain circumstances, the offence will also apply where the fraud offence is committed with the intention of benefitting a client of the organisation. It does not need to be demonstrated that directors or senior managers ordered or knew about the fraud.

The offence of failure to prevent fraud applies only to large organisations. A “large organisation” is defined as meeting two or three out of the following criteria:

- More than 250 employees
- More than £36 million turnover
- More than £18 million in total assets

The offence sits alongside existing law; for example, the person who committed the fraud may be prosecuted individually for that fraud, while the organisation may be prosecuted for failing to prevent it.

The offence will make it easier to hold organisations to account for fraud committed by employees, or other associated persons, which may benefit the organisation, or, in certain circumstances, their clients. The offence will also encourage more organisations to implement or improve prevention procedures, driving a major shift in corporate culture to help prevent fraud.

It is recommended that organisations review their fraud prevention procedures, be able to demonstrate that reasonable procedures for the prevention of fraud are in place and ensure that fraud prevention procedures are informed by the six principles that underpin the fraud prevention framework. Although the offence only applies to large organisations, the principles represent good practice and may be helpful for smaller organisations as well.

- Top level commitment – those charged with governance should be committed to preventing fraud and should foster a culture that fraud is never acceptable
- Risk assessment – assessing the nature and extent of the organisation’s exposure to fraud
- Proportionate prevention procedures that are clear, practical, accessible, effectively implemented and enforced
- Due diligence procedures - taking a proportionate and risk based approach in respect of persons who perform services for or on behalf of the organisation
- Communication (including training) – prevention policies and procedures are communicated, embedded and understood throughout the organisation, with training key
- Monitoring and review – the organisation monitors and reviews its fraud detection and prevention procedures, making improvements where necessary

TIAA’s Fraud Health Check can provide an assessment of how prepared your organisation is for this new offence and provide practical advice which aligns with the government’s guidance, on further actions required to ensure compliance– see the end of this newsletter for contact details.



Disclaimer:

The content of this document is intended to give general information only. Its contents should not, therefore, be regarded as constituting specific advice, and should not be relied on as such. No specific action should be taken without seeking appropriate professional advice.

If you would like investigation support or assistance on completing fraud risk work including reviewing fraud prevention procedures for the failure to prevent fraud offence, completion of a fraud risk assessment or fraud awareness training, contact TIAA’s Director of Governance, Risk & Compliance, Nick MacBeath at:

Email: nick.macbeath@tiaa.co.uk