

Single Fraud Investigation Service

In October 2010, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) published [The Fraud & Error Strategy: Tackling fraud and error in the benefit and tax credits systems](#).

The strategy was refreshed on 6 February 2012 as part of a cross Government strategy to reduce fraud and error, it also committed to develop a Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) to investigate and prosecute Social Security welfare benefits & Tax Credit fraud across Local Authorities, HMRC and DWP.

SFIS has initially been a partnership between DWP Fraud Investigation Service, HMRC and Local Authorities (LAs) working closely together to deliver a service where a single investigation covers all welfare benefit fraud and tax credit fraud allowing SFIS to make more efficient use of the resources at its disposal.

SFIS Pilots

In 2011 an agreement was reached to test and review an interim partnership approach for SFIS.

In early 2013 four SFIS pilots began to test a variety of partnership approaches and a single set of policies and procedures to identify the best delivery model. These pilots started implementation activities in November 2012 and launched in early 2013 in the following local authority areas:

- Corby Borough Council,
- Glasgow City Council,
- London Borough of Hillingdon
- Wrexham Council.

An additional pilot began in Oldham, a pathfinder area for Universal Credit (UC), on 29 April 2013 and started testing how SFIS works in a UC environment on 29 July 2013.

Three new pilots, to test the different attributes of the service, will be launched shortly in Cardiff, Cornwall, and Southampton and in Birmingham a further pilot will test the SFIS Organised Fraud process.

From the piloting activities the lower level design of SFIS is being developed.

On 5 August 2013 the project team formally recommended to the Fraud & Error Programme Board (including Local Authority representatives) that SFIS would deliver greater benefits if it could be implemented as a single organisation within DWP. This recommendation was endorsed by the board and subsequently by the DWP Permanent Secretary and Minister for Welfare Reform.

Our proposal remains a recommendation until we have completed all necessary governance steps, including stakeholder consultation and secured HM Treasury funding.

Objectives of Single Fraud Investigation

The main objectives of SFIS are:

- operate under a single policy and set of operational procedures for investigating all welfare benefit fraud
- conduct single investigations covering all welfare benefit fraud
- rationalise existing investigations and prosecution policies in order to create a more coherent investigation service that is joined up, efficient and operates in a more consistent and fair manner, taking into account all offences that are committed
- enhance closer working between DWP, HMRC and local authorities
- bring together the combined expertise of all 3 services drawing on the best practices of each
- support the fraud and error integrated strategy of preventing fraud and error getting into the benefit system by detecting and correcting fraud and punishing and deterring those who have committed fraud

Do you have any further questions?

Information on SFIS can now be found on the [Knowledge Hub](#). You will need to register with the Knowledge Hub first if you are not already a member and then search under “Groups” and request to join the SFIS Communications Hub Group.

If you have any further queries or questions you can also contact the team at singlefraudinvestigationsservice-queries@dwp.gsi.gov.uk