

## Appendix 1: Fraud Excuse Press Release

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 0001 HRS SUNDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> MAY**

**29 May 2011**

### **Lord Freud: No more excuses**

Fraud investigators are regularly faced with ridiculous excuses benefit cheats use to cover up their crimes, Lord Freud Minister for Welfare reform has said today.

Two recent cases of benefit fraud have shown the lengths people will go to con the taxpayer:

- Vitislav Podola from Leeds claimed nearly £17,500 to look after his sick father, but had to admit to the lying when his father revealed he hadn't seen his son for years.
- Trevor Osgood from Somerset claimed over £55,000 in disability benefits while he was actually working on a farm herding and milking cows.

### **Lord Freud, Welfare Reform Minister said:**

"Benefit fraud is no joke, and yet our investigators are routinely dealing with bare faced cheek and ridiculous excuses for stealing money from the taxpayer.

"Universal Credit will simplify and automate the benefits system. This will make it much easier to catch people who make false claims."

A survey of fraud investigators has revealed the top ten worst excuses used by benefit cheats:

- *"We don't live together he just comes each morning to fill up his flask"*
- *"I wasn't using the ladders to clean windows, I carried them for therapy for my bad back"*

- *“I had no idea my wife was working! I never noticed her leaving the house twice a day in a fluorescent jacket and a Stop Children sign”*
- *“My wallet was stolen so someone must have been using my identity, I haven’t been working”*
- *“I didn’t know I was still on benefit”*
- *“I didn’t declare my savings because I didn’t save them, they were given to me”*
- *“He lives in a caravan in the drive, we’re not together”*
- *“He does come here every night and leave in the morning and although he has no other address I don’t regard him as living here”*
- *“It wasn’t me working, it was my identical twin”*
- *I wasn’t aware my wife was working because her hours of work coincided with the times I spent in the garden shed”*

£1.6 billion of taxpayer’s money is lost through fraud in benefits and tax credits each year.

The proposals for 21st Century Welfare will tackle the main causes of fraud and error in the benefit system. Universal Credit will remove fundamental design weaknesses and result in a more efficient and effective system.

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