

Data matching and fraud prevention and detection (including the National Fraud Initiative)

Summary

Your personal information may be shared internally and with other agencies such as the Cabinet Office, and may be used in data matching exercises, for the prevention and detection of fraud.

How we use your personal information

We are required by law to protect the public funds that we administer. Information provided to us may be shared with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds or where undertaking a public function, in order to prevent and detect fraud.

National Fraud Initiative (NFI)

The Cabinet Office is responsible for carrying out the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) data matching exercise which is intended to detect fraudulent and erroneous payments from the public purse. The work is designed to help reduce the level of many types of fraud that can occur including housing benefit, council tax reduction, payroll, pension, licensing and housing tenancy fraud.

Data matching involves comparing computer records held by one body against other computer records held by the same or another body to see how far they match. This is usually personal information. Computerised data matching allows potentially fraudulent claims and payments to be identified. Where a match is found it may indicate that there is an inconsistency which may require further investigation. No assumption can be made as to whether there is fraud, error or other explanation until an investigation is carried out.

The Cabinet Office currently requires us to participate in this NFI data matching exercise to assist in the prevention and detection of fraud. We are required to provide particular sets of data to the Cabinet Office for matching for each exercise, and these are set out by the Cabinet Offices. This does not require the consent of the

individuals concerned under the Data Protection Act 1998. Details of this data matching can be found on the [Data specification Gov.uk website](#).

Once the Cabinet Office has completed the data matching exercise, the results are shared with us, we then investigate any inconsistencies to determine whether there is or has been fraud taking place.

The use of data by the Cabinet Office in a data matching exercise is carried out with statutory authority under its powers in Part 6 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. It does not require the consent of the individuals concerned under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Data matching by the Cabinet Office is subject to a [Code of Practice](#).

Further information on the Cabinet Officer's legal powers and the reasons why it matches particular information are provided on the [Gov.uk website](#).

Other fraud prevention and detection work

The primary objective of the council's Counter Fraud strategy is to ensure the prevention of fraud and corrupt acts and to ensure that any instances of these are investigated and dealt with effectively. As part of this strategy we conduct a programme of pro-active counter fraud reviews into transactions and records held across different business areas. They are designed specifically to identify unusual, erroneous or potentially fraudulent transactions.

We may also use information including personal information to prevent and detect fraud in any of our systems and may supply information to credit reference agencies or other external bodies for such purposes. Information held or received may also be used to verify information given for application purposes. We do not require the consent of individuals under the Data Protection Act 1998 to use personal information in this way.