cifas

Fighting Economic Crime Together

Fighting Fraud in the Public Sector

The leading solution to protect the public purse from economic crime

Fighting Fraud and Financial Crime Together

Providing collaborative solutions to protect against fraud and financial crime, making it harder for criminals to operate.

Data

Intelligence

Learning

Contact Us

Fill out our membership enquiry form

Visit our public sector web page

Fraud and the public sector

Fraud and financial crime can have devastating consequences in any sector, but none more so than the public sector. From social care to security, healthcare to housing – the UK's public institutions are integral to the lives and welfare of individuals and businesses.

In 2023, the National Audit Office estimated that in 2020-21 between £33.2bn and £58 billion was lost annually to fraud across all of government (excluding COVID schemes), and reported that fraud makes up 41% of all recorded crime.*

The public sector holds and operates a vast wealth of personal data, sensitive information, and significant funds and assets, just waiting to be unlocked. As a result, the public sector is a constant target as criminals – both external and internal – attempt to access it in any way they can.

The NHS Counter Fraud Authority concluded that approximately £1,198 million of NHS spend is vulnerable to fraud, while the Government Counter Fraud Function calculated a further estimate of £345m of NHS funds lost to fraud.*

Every year, the public sector is targeted by thousands of actual and attempted instances of fraud and financial crime, including cyber attacks; data breaches; theft of funds, assets or information; invoice fraud; service user fraud; bribery and corruption, and more.

It is estimated that temporary schemes put in place by national and local government to tackle COVID-19 resulted in £7.3bn of fraud between 2020 and 2022.*

*Source: National Audit Office Tackling Fraud and Corruption Against Government report, March 2023

How Cifas helps the public sector fight fraud

We are the UK's fraud prevention community. Over 700 members from across the public, private, and voluntary sectors use Cifas to share data, intelligence and learning to detect and prevent fraud and financial crime – ranging from large high street banks, telecommunications providers, and insurers, to major government departments, law enforcement bodies, and local authorities.

When you use Cifas to protect the public sector from fraud and financial crime, you also protect the UK, its citizens and its economy.

We are a long-term trusted partner and collaborator with Government and law enforcement – our CEO, Mike Haley, sits on the Joint Fraud Taskforce, and our Public Sector and Learning Director, Rachael Tiffen, sits on the DWP Fraud Prevention Board. Our data and intelligence, and the secure systems we use, are trusted and used by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau and the National Crime Agency to support their investigations and operations into a wide range of criminality, including serious and organised crime.

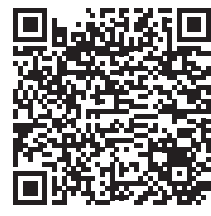## Cifas works with the Public Sector Fraud Authority (PSFA) in multiple ways:

- Supporting the drafting of the new Government Counter Fraud Profession (GCFP) Prevention Standard
- Assisting with the GCFP Culture Standard
- Acting as the Trailblazer for the forthcoming GCFP Counter Fraud Apprenticeship
- Training the PSFA and the National Crime Agency (NCA) through the Cifas Fraud and Cyber Academy
- Acting as the Pro Bono Secretariat for the Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally Initiative, the official strategy for local government

The value of Cifas

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Our members collectively save over **£1.3 billion** every year in prevented losses

As a specified anti-fraud organisation under the terms of **section 68 Serious Crime Act 2007**, public authorities have the legal power to share information with Cifas for purposes of fraud prevention

View the FFCL LGA web page

View the Cifas FFCL web pages

How the public sector uses our data

Cifas holds the National Fraud Database (NFD), which is the UK's largest database of high grade fraud risk data; as well as the Insider Threat Database (ITD), which is the only database to record instances of applicant and employee-related dishonest conduct against organisations.

Public sector organisations who contribute to our data include government departments, public bodies, local authorities and law enforcement.

Because fraudsters don't work in silos, neither do we – so you'll also access data and information from hundreds of private sector organisations, including banking and finance; loans and credit; insurance; telecommunications; retail, and many more.

As a public sector member of Cifas, you can access our data 24/7 through our secure, easy-to-access Portal to protect against threats such as:

Income evasion and service user fraud

Search against hundreds of thousands of records to help detect and prevent fraudulent conduct, including those related to key areas such as blue badge, adult social care, tenancy or pensions

Grant, procurement and commercial fraud

Check suppliers and other third parties who you hire, work or engage with

Internal fraud and corruption

Vet job applicants before and during recruitment and onboarding, and monitor staff throughout their employment and on exit

'Lambeth Council joined Cifas in April 2019 on a pilot exercise with 12 other local authorities. The initial membership was for the National Fraud Database (NFD) only, with the Insider Threat Database (ITD) membership commencing from September 2020 when the local authorities involved in the pilot were accepted for full Cifas membership.

The ITD was an area of Cifas where we felt local authorities would really benefit, so once full membership was offered, we started the process of arranging the use of ITD for Lambeth. Making the necessary arrangements took several months, but once this was in place, Lambeth started using ITD to search those candidates accepted for employment as part of the vetting process.

We now use Cifas for vetting both agency and staff appointments at the Council, with searches taking place after an offer of employment has been made; this process commenced in late March 2021.

As of January 2024, Lambeth has refused employment to 36 candidates who had been accepted for posts before they were identified on Cifas' NFD, having being filed by other members primarily for misuse of facility, provision of false information or retaining a wrongful credit.

Lambeth now operates a shared service, managing the counter fraud team for Croydon. When the service was set up in January 2023 we encouraged Croydon to use ITD in recruitment for all agency and staff appointments. In total 12 candidates have been refused employment with Croydon in the current financial year.'

Lambeth Council Testimonial

Visit our
Insider Threat
Protect page
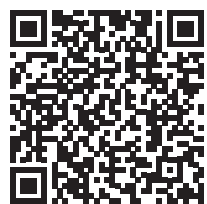
How the public sector uses our intelligence

Our fraud and financial crime intelligence is drawn from expert analysis of the data we hold, as well as information supplied by our member organisations and national bodies such as law enforcement, the Home Office, Royal Mail and the GRO.

As a public sector member, you have access to an extensive range of unique intelligence that only Cifas can provide, delivered 24/7 through our secure and easy-to-access online Portal

Develop strategies

Regular reports on current and predicted threats and trends facing the public sector, as well as the wider UK threat landscape

Stay ahead of the threat

Proactive alerts for immediate threats and potential scams facing your organisation and your service users

Build relationships

Member-only intelligence-sharing networking forums such as the Organised Fraud and Intelligence Group, the Local Authority Business Sector Working Party, and the Cifas Member Forum

Stay informed

Exclusive webinars on the broader fraud and financial crime threat landscape as well as specific sessions targeted at essential public sector delivery areas practice with the wider industry

'We have found Cifas to be a crucial resource to enable thorough and effective due diligence for the grant and discretionary payment work that we have been given from the central government...

'...it's allowed us to identify necessary follow up checks and precautions to identify and prevent fraudulent applications from being processed.'

Oxford City Council

Read about our solutions for business

How the public sector uses our learning

All our data and intelligence is used to inform and design qualifications, courses and training in a wide range of counter fraud and financial crime topics. We offer learning for all of your organisation, from essential fraud and scam awareness training for entry level and non-fraud workers, to specialist skills for counter fraud professionals. Our qualifications are recognised by Ofqual and accredited by SFJ Awards, and developed by Cifas experts and leading academics. Our learning provides your entire workforce with the right knowledge, at the right level, at the right time – making them an essential component of your first line of defence against fraud.

Programmes are flexible for today's fluid workplaces, with self-study, online and virtual classroom options available at exclusive member rates.

As a public sector member, you can take advantage of:

The Accredited Counter Fraud Specialist (ACFS)

Our provision of the ACFS qualification through our award-winning Academy, which is accredited by the Counter Fraud Professional Awards Board (CFPAB) and has been approved by Northumbria University

Discounted learning opportunites

Member-only discounted fees for all learning, including a 50% discount on our immersive digital learning solution, Apollo

Exclusive content

Exclusive webinars and masterclasses on 'hot topics' such as the latest government legislation, led by experts

Bespoke training

The opportunity to work with us to develop bespoke training designed to meet the specific learning needs of the public sector

'A hugely in-depth and detailed course that provided much insight into not just fraud investigations but also an unexpected insight into English Law, interview techniques and Court procedures.'

Mark Carter, Academy learner

'I have worked in Fraud Investigation for about 14 years for a Local Authority but coming on this [Accredited Counter Fraud Specialist] course reinforced some of my practices, corrected some of my practices and completely changed others. My confidence level is almost stratospheric.'

Learner feedback, ACFS programme

'Just wanted to give you some feedback on Apollo. Our employees love it! They really enjoy the interactive style which is incredibly engaging. The immersive videos really make them feel like they are there in the Apollo tower, and they are so involved in the storylines that they don't want the episodes to end! Thanks again for Apollo – it's a game-changer for us.'

Senior Fraud Control Manager, Close Brothers Finance

Watch our Digital Learning

View our courses and qualifications

Talk to us about bespoke training