

FOI number: **HBC_FOI_20210148**
Date FOI Received: **13/03/2021**
Department: **Benefits**
Title: **Overpaid Covid Claims: 01/20 - 02/21**
Description: **Overpayments for COVID-19 Government Grants**

Request: (As Redacted sent by requestor)

Q1) How many overpayments did your council identify for claims made as part of Covid-related government grant schemes it administered (for example, but not limited to: small business rates grant scheme; retail, hospital and leisure grant scheme) over the stated period?

1a) If such overpayments did occur, please could you tell me the total frequency of/ reasons for /such overpayment (for example, but not limited to: 'payment error', 'ineligible claim', 'fraudulent claim').

1aa) For each of these overpayments please can you state: the cost to the council of the overpayment amount (in £); how much of its total has been recovered (in £) as of the current date, and how much money (in £) is outstanding as of the current date.

So, for instance, taking the 'fraudulent claim' category as an example, your council may have made overpayments worth £300,000 for 30 fraudulent claims, recovered £25,000 for 2 of them as of the current date, meaning there is £275,000 outstanding for 28.

1b) In relation to the identified fraudulent claims, please can you break this information down in terms of what kind of fraud occurred (for example, but not limited to: 'organised fraud').

Response: (Response as Redacted sent by service)

1. The council have identified 2 incorrect payments during the stated period
 - 1a) the payments were both one off payments. One was caused because of fraudulent activity the other was due to officer error.
 - 1 aa) The payments were for £25,000 each meaning £50,000 was overpaid
 - 1b) The fraudulent claim was caused by organised fraud

If you have any queries about the processing of your request then please do not hesitate to contact me. Further information explaining the Council's process for responding to information requests together with a complaints/appeals procedure is available in our reception or via our website at:

<https://www.hertsmere.gov.uk/Your-Council/Official-Publications--Guides--Policies/Access-to-Information.aspx>

The Information Commissioner oversees the application of the Freedom of Information Act. You may contact the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioners Office
Wycliffe House, Water Lane

Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF
Telephone: 01625 545700
Website: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Please include the above reference number on all correspondence related to this request.

Thank you for your request.

Kind regards
Information Services