

Internal Audit & Counter Fraud Shared Service
Medway Council & Gravesham Borough Council

Counter Fraud Satisfaction Survey 2024

Medway Council



1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Internal Audit & Counter Fraud Shared Service was established on 1 March 2016 to provide internal audit assurance and consultancy, proactive counter fraud and reactive investigation services to Medway Council & Gravesham Borough Council.
- 1.2 As part of our commitment to continually improve the Service, surveys are undertaken annually to gauge the level of satisfaction from client services. These surveys are issued to all council employees and elected Members.

2 Executive Summary

- 2.1 The level of response to the survey was poor with only 37 responses, compared to 88 in 2023 and 200 in 2022. These were however spread across all divisions of the council, although none were received from elected Members. The results show improvements on previous years in some areas but not all, with results relating to fraud awareness particularly disappointing given the effort that has been focused on that area of work.
- 2.2 Of the 37 responses received, 30 (81%) were aware of the council's counter fraud and corruption strategy, but only 12 (32%) had seen/read it. In addition, eight (22%) provided a negative response when asked about their awareness of the Counter Fraud Team and the services available, and 32 (86.5%) indicated that they have not had any fraud awareness training in the last twelve months.
- 2.3 These results, and those of previous years, demonstrate a clear need for the strategy to be promoted more, as while large numbers of staff are aware of it, the number that have read it requires significant improvement, which in turn could help to raise awareness of the team and its services. The high number of respondents indicating that they have not had any training in the last 12 months is extremely disappointing given that sessions have been delivered to a number of services during the year and there have been 13 sessions available via ishare, which 125 Medway staff have attended. There is still a clear desire from staff to have the training with 25 (67.6%) indicating it would be of benefit to their service/team.
- 2.4 There continues to be a lack of awareness of the team amongst respondents, which is likely to be a compounding factor in large percentages of people seemingly unaware of all the areas where the fraud team may be able to investigate concerns. This may again be a lack of knowledge outside their own area of work, and the fact that 40.5% of respondents still indicate that they do not know how to report their concerns is worrying. As with previous years, the low number of respondents (11) confirming they had reported concerns to the team in the last twelve months could indicate that potential fraud is going unreported purely because people do not know how to report it.
- 2.5 The core principles adopted by the team were expressed as statements with respondents asked to indicate how much they agreed the team demonstrated compliance. As with previous years, the vast majority of respondents provided positive responses, but there were still some negative responses to all statements. Those providing negative statements were asked to explain why, although not all did, and the service will review these to aid further improvements.
- 2.6 Overall, the satisfaction with services available received a neutral score, with an average of 6.68 out of ten but the ten who had received services from counter fraud within the twelve months gave an average score of 8.20 out of ten with positive feedback in 70% of responses and neutral scores in the remaining 30%.
- 2.7 Due to the poor level of response in comparison to previous years, the results may not be truly reflective of the work that has been undertaken by the team, particularly in relation to fraud awareness, but we will use any key lessons from the responses to seek further improvements.

3 Survey Results

3.1 The survey was designed to focus on five key areas, which are listed below,

- Awareness of available services and the Counter Fraud Team,
- Fraud Awareness,
- Counter Fraud activity,
- Compliance with core principles/values, and
- Overall Satisfaction with the Counter Fraud Team.

3.2 Where practical, statistics from the surveys undertaken in 2022 and 2023 have been included for comparison purposes, although in some cases questions may have been added/removed as the surveys were refined. Any new questions added since the first survey in 2022 are marked with an asterisk to reflect that not all previous year data is available.

3.3 There were 37 responses on behalf of Medway, compared to 200 in 2022 and 88 in 2023, and a breakdown of the respondent's roles and the area of the council they work in are shown in the tables below.

Role	Number of respondents 2022	Number of respondents 2023	Number of respondents 2024
Chief Executive / Director / Assistant Director / Chief Officer / Strategic Service Manager	5	4	1
*Service Manager	N/A	N/A	3
Other Manager / Supervisor / Team Leader	62	23	7
Other Council Employee	127	61	26
Elected Member	6	0	0
Total	200	88	37

*Service Manager moved to its own heading for 2024

Division	Number of respondents 2022	Number of respondents 2023	Number of respondents 2024
Adults	24	6	4
Childrens	42	12	3
Communications	N/A	1	1
Culture & Communities	13	6	4
Education	8	7	2
Finance & Business Improvement	34	18	9
Front Line Services	25	8	4
HR	11	5	N/A
Legal & Governance	2	4	2
Public Health	14	6	4
Regeneration	21	12	4
N/A - Elected Member	6	3	0
Total	200	88	37

3.4 It should be noted that not all respondents have answered all questions, so the detailed results that follow are not all based upon 37 responses. Analysis of the results are also expressed in percentage terms as well as number to try and provide some reasonable comparison, but it is acknowledged that the significant variation in the level of responses each year will have an impact on results.

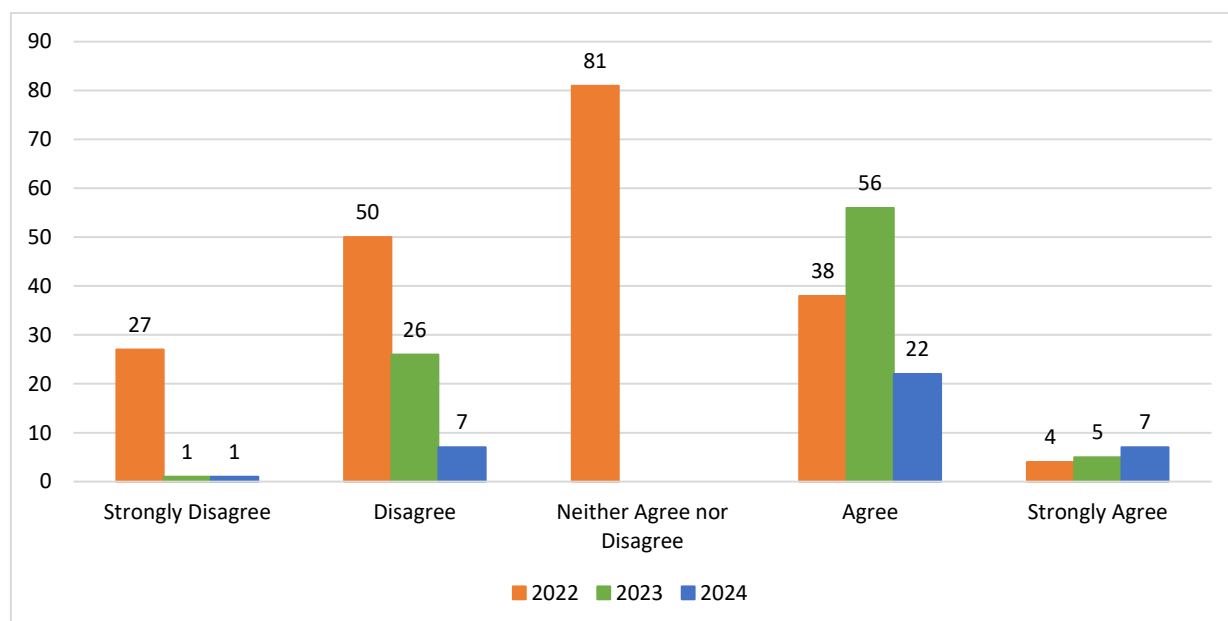
Awareness of available services and the Counter Fraud Team

- 3.5 The work undertaken by the Counter Fraud Team is underpinned by the council's counter fraud and corruption strategy. Respondents were asked the following,

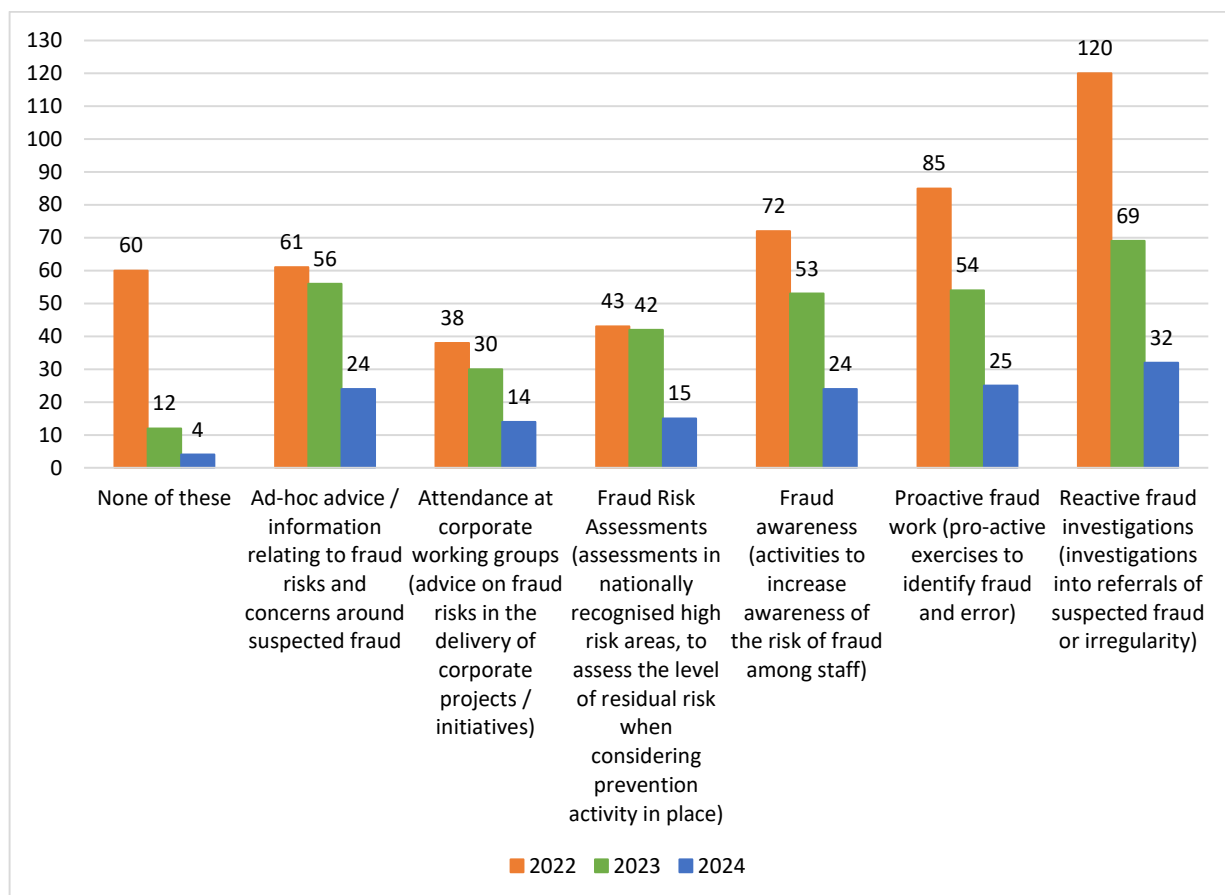
Question: Were you aware that the council has a Counter Fraud & Corruption Strategy?	Number of respondents 2022	Number of respondents 2023	Number of respondents 2024
Yes	103	61	30
No	97	27	7

Question: Have you seen / read the Counter Fraud & Corruption Strategy?	Number of respondents 2022	Number of respondents 2023	Number of respondents 2024
Yes	19	20	12
No	181	68	25

- 3.6 In percentage terms, awareness of the counter fraud and corruption strategy has improved, with 81% confirming they were aware of it, compared to 51.5% in 2022 and 69.3% in 2023. The number of respondents who have seen/read the strategy remains very low at 32%, which is compared to 9.5% in 2022 and 22% in 2023.
- 3.7 This demonstrates that more work is needed to make staff aware of the council's strategy and a need for the best methods for circulation to be identified to ensure the widest reach possible, which may be the use of Metacompliance.
- 3.8 Several questions were asked aimed at identifying whether respondents had a good understanding of the role of counter fraud and their services.
- 3.9 Respondents were asked: How much do you agree that you have a good understanding of the role of the Counter Fraud Team?
- 3.10 The results show that seven (19%) strongly agreed, and 22 (59%) agreed that they had a good understanding of the role of counter fraud. However, seven (19%) disagreed and one (3%) strongly disagreed. Overall, this shows 78% of respondents with a good understanding, in comparison to 70% overall in 2023 and 21% overall in 2022.



3.11 Respondents were provided with a list of services and were asked to indicate which of the services they were aware that counter fraud provided.



Awareness of Services	Number of respondents 2022	Number of respondents 2023	Number of respondents 2024
None of these	30.0%	13.6% ↓	10.8% ↓
Ad-hoc advice / information relating to fraud risks and concerns around suspected fraud	30.5%	63.6% ↑	64.9% ↑
Attendance at corporate working groups (advice on fraud risks in the delivery of corporate projects / initiatives)	19.0%	34.1% ↑	37.8% ↑
Fraud Risk Assessments (assessments in nationally recognised high-risk areas, to assess the level of residual risk when considering prevention activity in place)	21.5%	47.7% ↑	40.5% ↓
Fraud awareness (activities to increase awareness of the risk of fraud among staff)	36.0%	60.2% ↑	64.9% ↑
Proactive fraud work (pro-active exercises to identify fraud and error)	42.5%	61.4% ↑	67.6% ↑
Reactive fraud investigations (investigations into referrals of suspected fraud or irregularity)	60.0%	78.4% ↑	86.5% ↑

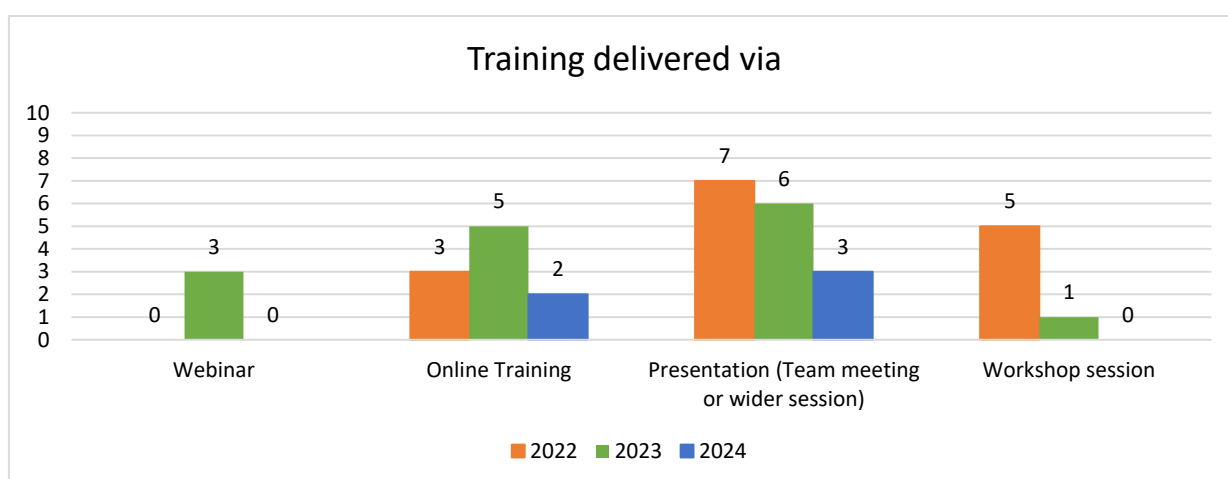
3.12 There has been a significant amount of effort by the Counter Fraud Team to improve awareness of services available from the team and the results suggest that the impact of this work has been positive based on an increase in awareness of all services except for fraud risk assessments.

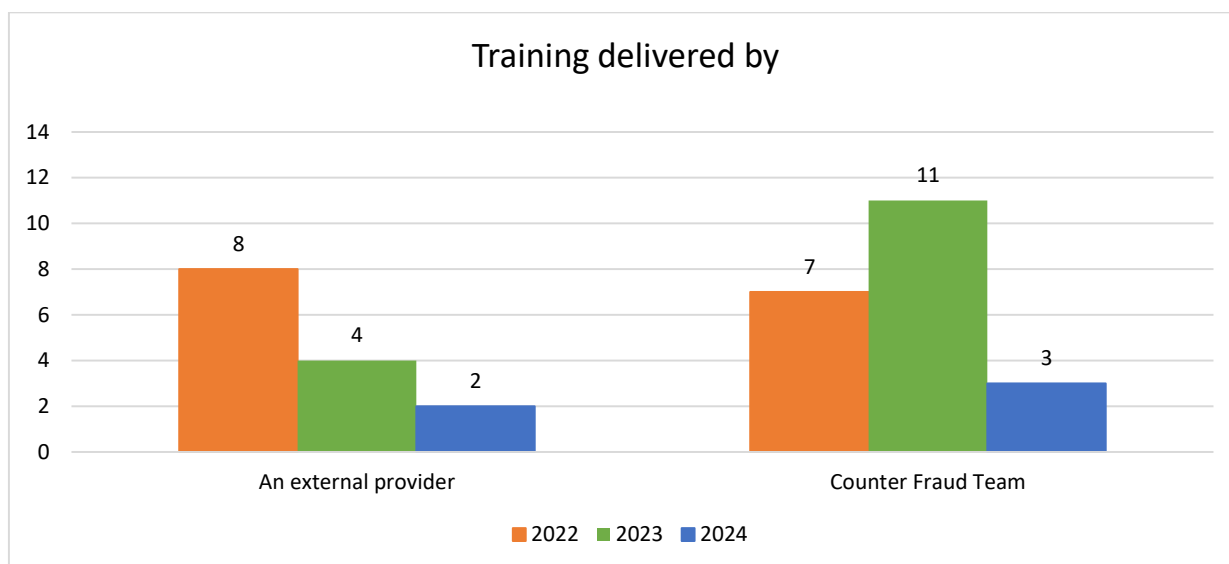
3.13 Four respondents still indicate that they are not aware of any of these services, so there is still opportunity for further improvement.

Fraud Awareness

- 3.14 As well as awareness of the service, it is important that staff across the organisation have a good understanding of fraud risks within their own services and the organisation as a whole, and how this potentially impacts on the council's ability to deliver services.
- 3.15 During 2023-24 there was a heavy focus on fraud awareness activity, with the team attending various team meetings for introductory sessions, as well as running specific fraud awareness sessions with Customer Relations, Direct Payments, Pre-payment card team, Licencing, and Members as part of their induction following the May 2023 election.
- 3.16 Multiple generic fraud awareness sessions were made available for all Medway and Gravesham staff to attend via the iShare training platform from September to November (inclusive) and over 100 Medway employees attended these sessions. There have been monthly sessions since November 2023, although a number were cancelled due to lack of sign up.
- 3.17 During Fraud Awareness Week (12-18 November 2023) the team were promoted through an article the staff newsletter, which included photo of all team members and contact details for anyone wanting to report or discuss concerns. With the help of the communications team, there were a number of social media posts attempting to raise awareness in the community, although some of the comments received were less than favourable.
- 3.18 The next series of questions were centred specifically around whether the respondents had had any fraud awareness training, who it was delivered by and how it had been delivered, to try and gauge a general level of awareness across the organisation.

Question: Have you had any fraud awareness training in the last twelve months? *	Number of respondents 2022	Number of respondents 2023	Number of respondents 2024
Yes	28	15	5
No	172	73	32





3.19 Respondents were then asked whether they felt their service would benefit from awareness training.

Question: Do you feel that you / your team / service would benefit from fraud awareness training?	Number of respondents 2022	Number of respondents 2023	Number of respondents 2024
Yes	143	47	25
No	57	41	12

3.20 Given the effort that has been put into delivery of awareness training, as detailed in paragraphs 3.15 to 3.17, it is disappointing that the majority (86.5%) of respondents advised that they had not had any awareness training in the last 12 months. However, given that 125 council employees and one from STG are known to have attended training and this is the lowest response level we have received, it is reasonable to assume that those people simply have not responded to the survey.

3.21 Generic awareness sessions continue to be available on a monthly basis and the team continue to proactively try and engage with services to arrange specific sessions for their areas of risk. A large number of respondents have indicated that their team/service may benefit from awareness training, so the team will make contact with those teams to follow up on this, as they did following the 2023 survey.

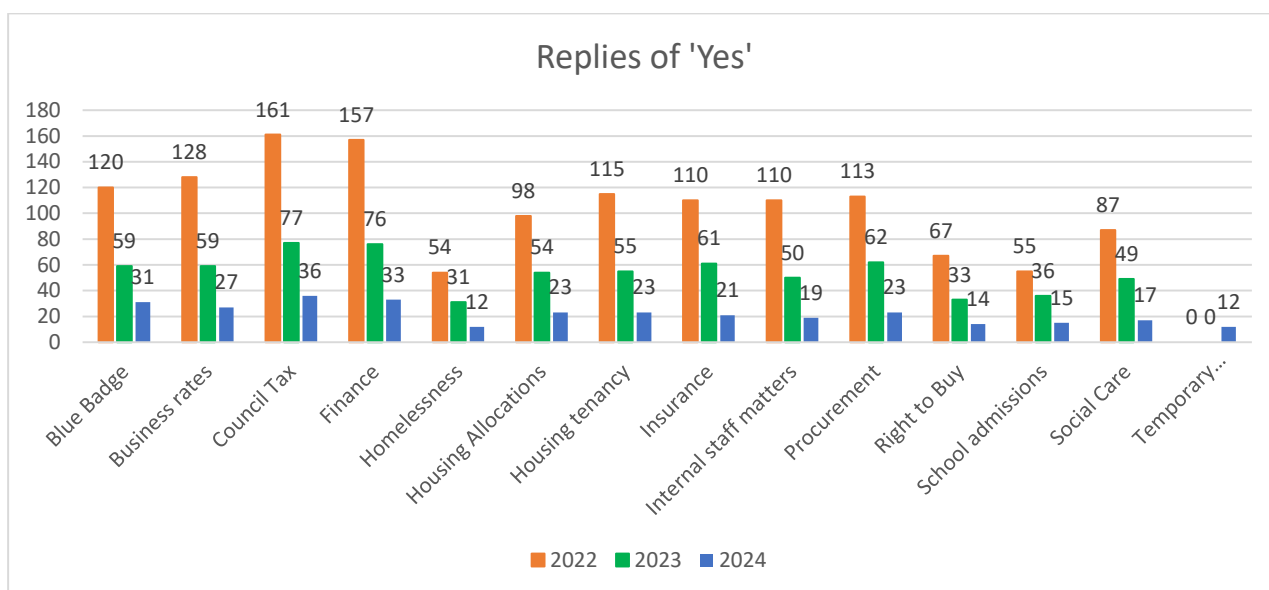
Counter Fraud Activity

3.22 The vigilance of staff is key to identifying potential fraud and concerns should be reported to the Counter Fraud Team for consideration of investigation. A series of questions were asked to establish the level of understanding around what could be reported, and for those that had reported concerns in the past, whether feedback had been received.

3.23 Respondents were first asked questions to determine their understanding of what concerns could be reported.

Question: Are you satisfied that you know what type of concerns can be reported to the Counter Fraud Team?	Number of respondents 2022	Number of respondents 2023	Number of respondents 2024
Yes	85	52	21
No	115	36	16

3.24 Respondents were then provided with a list of areas that the Counter Fraud Team may be called upon to investigate fraud / irregularity and asked to indicate which, if any, of them they were aware of prior to the survey.



Area	Yes - 2022	Yes - 2023	Yes - 2024
Blue Badge	60.0%	67.0% ↑	83.8% ↑
Business rates	64.0%	67.0% ↑	73.0% ↑
Council Tax	80.5%	87.5% ↑	97.3% ↑
Finance	78.5%	86.4% ↑	89.2% ↑
Homelessness	27.0%	35.2% ↑	32.4% ↓
Housing Allocations	49.0%	61.4% ↑	62.2% ↑
Housing tenancy	57.5%	62.5% ↑	62.2% ↓
Insurance	55.0%	69.3% ↑	56.8% ↓
Internal staff matters	55.0%	56.8% ↑	51.4% ↓
Procurement	56.5%	70.5% ↑	62.2% ↓
Right to Buy	33.5%	37.5% ↑	37.8% ↑
School admissions	27.5%	40.9% ↑	40.5% ↓
Social Care	43.5%	55.7% ↑	45.9% ↓
Temporary Accommodation (new for 2024)	N/A	N/A	32.4%

- 3.25 Only 56.8% feel satisfied they know what type of concerns can be reported to the Counter Fraud Team, and when asked about knowledge of areas where the Counter Fraud Team investigate concerns, there has been a decrease in the percentage of people replying yes in half of the 14 areas listed; only three of those achieving a response rate above 80%.
- 3.26 While this may be attributed in part to the fact that the number of respondents is significantly lower than in previous years, thereby influencing percentage figures; given the limited number of respondents who have attended awareness training, the apparent lack of understanding of what can be investigated is concerning.
- 3.27 As identified in previous years, it is possible that many have a good understanding of what can be reported in their own area of business but not the wider council. Fraud awareness training is likely to improve this but as stated earlier in this report, it would appear that very few responses have been received from those who attended the various training sessions that have been run.

Question: Do you know how to report concerns / suspicions of fraud / irregularity to the Counter Fraud Team?	Number of respondents 2022	Number of respondents 2023	Number of respondents 2024
Yes	65	39	22
No	135	49	15

Question: Over the last twelve months have you reported any concerns / suspicions of fraud / irregularity to the Counter Fraud Team? *	Number of respondents 2022	Number of respondents 2023	Number of respondents 2024
Yes	10	9	11
No	190	79	26

*In 2022 this question focused on the previous two-year period.

- 3.28 Only 59.5% of respondents confirmed that they knew how to report their concerns, compared with 44.3% in 2023 and 32.5% in 2022, while the number of people who have reported concerns remains fairly consistent. While the continued increase in awareness of how to report is good, given the number of respondents who do not appear to know what can be reported to the team does leave a concern that some potential fraud may be going unreported.
- 3.29 As mentioned in the previous section relating to fraud awareness, there has been a significant volume of fraud awareness training made available throughout 2023-24, so these results are again somewhat disappointing as they are not necessarily reflective of the resource and effort that has been dedicated to that area of work. The team will continue their efforts to increase awareness.
- 3.30 For those that had reported concerns further questions were asked about how they did so, and the feedback received.

Question: Did you receive feedback in relation to your referral? (Within the limits of what is permitted to be disclosed)	Number of respondents 2022	Number of respondents 2023	Number of respondents 2024
Yes	5	5	7
No	5	4	4

Question: If Yes, had you specifically requested such feedback?	Number of respondents 2022	Number of respondents 2023	Number of respondents 2024
Yes	1	2	5
No	4	3	2

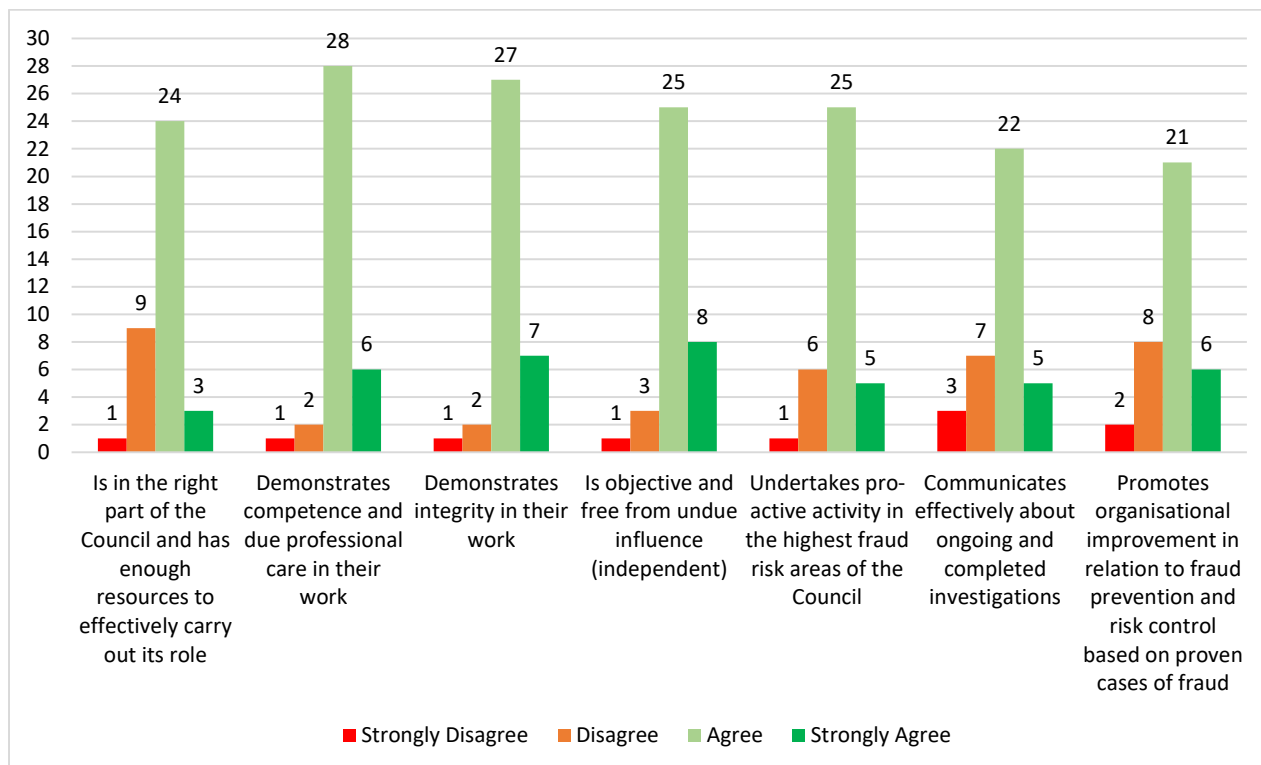
Question: Even if you hadn't specifically requested it, would you have expected to receive feedback in relation to your referral? (Within the limits of what is permitted to be disclosed)?	Number of respondents 2022	Number of respondents 2023	Number of respondents 2024
Yes	8	7	10
No	2	2	1

- 3.31 We have made improvements relating to communication about referrals and this is reflected in the results from this year's survey, however, it is acknowledged that there is still room for improvement. We have already identified a weakness in the way referral information is recorded, which is now being addressed and should enable feedback in relation to referrals from members of staff in more cases as we move forward. However, it should be noted that any referrals relating to suspected housing benefit fraud have to be passed to the Department for Work and Pensions, and we do not have access to their systems to be able to provide feedback in those instances.

Compliance with Core Principles

- 3.32 The Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) specify ten core principles that internal audit teams must comply with at all times. While these are not directly applicable to the Counter Fraud Team, a number of those principles have been adopted (with some minor change as necessary) by the Counter Fraud Team.

3.33 These principles were expressed as statements in the 2022 and 2023 surveys and respondents were asked to confirm to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each statement. For the 2024 survey, the same statements were provided, and respondents were again asked to confirm to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each statement. However, respondents who disagreed, or strongly disagreed, with any of the statements were asked to explain why, so that the service can better understand what action they may need to take in order to improve.



3.34 As they did in 2023, the vast majority of respondents provided positive responses in relation to all seven statements. However, there were still negative responses in relation to all seven statements, so a further analysis has been undertaken, which is detailed in the table below.

Statement	Disagree 2022	Disagree 2023	Disagree 2024	Strongly Disagree 2022	Strongly Disagree 2023	Strongly Disagree 2024
Is in the right part of the Council and has enough resources to effectively carry out its role	4	18 ↑	9 ↓	6	2 ↓	1 ↓
Demonstrates competence and due professional care in their work	2	6 ↑	2 ↓	2	0 ↓	1 ↑
Demonstrates integrity in their work	2	6 ↑	2 ↓	2	0 ↓	1 ↑
Is objective and free from undue influence (independent)	4	8 ↑	3 ↓	3	0 ↓	1 ↑
Undertakes pro-active activity in the highest fraud risk areas of the Council	3	12 ↑	6 ↓	4	0 ↓	1 ↑

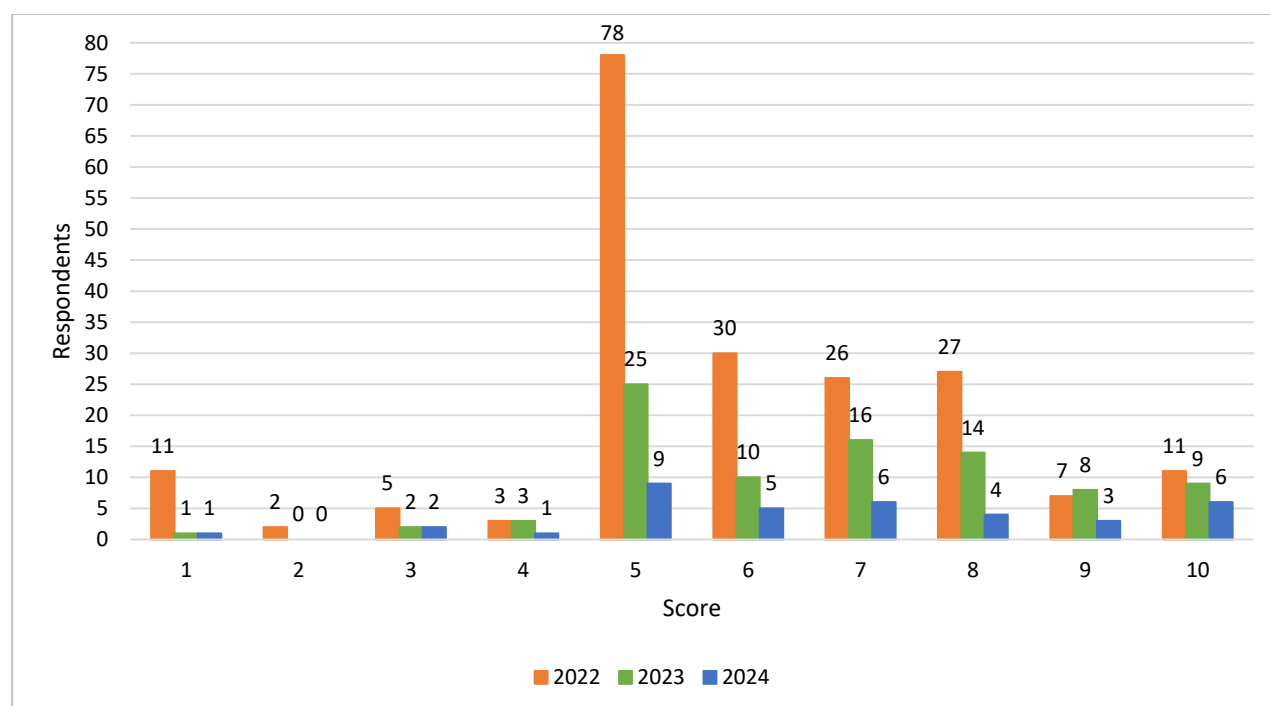
Communicates effectively about ongoing and completed investigations	18	27 ↑	7 ↓	10	3 ↓	3 ↔
Promotes organisational improvement in relation to fraud prevention and risk control based on proven cases of fraud	15	22 ↑	8 ↓	5	1 ↓	2 ↑

- 3.35 The analysis shows mixed results with quite a significant drop in the number of people disagreeing with the statements but a slight increase in the numbers strongly disagreeing.
- 3.36 As noted in paragraph 3.33, those responding with disagree or strongly disagree were asked to explain their reasons and the following comments were received.
- I have marked agree because the form does not let me leave it blank, but a middle ground or "do not know" would have been useful here. We never received any feedback from referrals, so I don't feel like I can answer these questions. The referral is made, and then no further conversations held. This has been the case with the 3 referrals I have made in the past 5 years.
 - The fact we don't know what it does shows a lack of communication - previously when I have reported an issue there has been no feedback at all.
 - I am not aware of any communication.
 - I have never received any feedback about the numerous referrals I have made.
 - Limited comms or updates issued.
 - It would be useful to have 'don't know' option. I have never had any dealings with the team, have had no awareness about it and have no opinion on the subject.
 - Difficult to answer as not had communication with the Service.
 - I didn't know you have a set of core principles/values governing all activities and work undertaken.
 - I don't know enough about the service to answer fully.
 - Not enough support or access to information from IT.
 - Need to encourage Deaf to be aware of the fraud.... this would be better for us all.
 - Getting fraud involved in internal disc and grievance procedures has failed to address the drift and delay causing additional stress to employees.
- 3.37 The comments received are linked communication, an inability to answer the statements, a lack of access to IT, encouraging deaf people to be aware of fraud, and concern around delays in our handling of internal cases.
- 3.38 As has already been noted in this report, we are aware of the need to improve feedback on referrals and have made some progress. Given that we have made changes to how referral information is recorded, this should improve further. As most of these respondents have not provided their names, we are unable to follow up directly in relation to the referrals they have submitted.
- 3.39 Inability to answer the statements was flagged during the 2023 survey as we had removed the 'neither agree nor disagree' option. In future, we will have a 'don't know' or 'unable to answer' response to cater for those who may not have had dealings with the service.
- 3.40 In respect of access to IT, it is not clear what the driver for this comment would be as the team has access to the majority of council systems. In terms of encouraging deaf people to be aware of fraud, our aim is to increase awareness amongst all staff, and we continue to offer fraud awareness training, although we may need to consider how we can better cater for those with hearing or visual impairments.
- 3.41 The last comment received suggests that the work undertaken by the team in relation to internal disciplinary and grievance cases has not addressed delays in these investigations being undertaken.

- 3.42 It must first be acknowledged that the length of time for any investigation will be entirely dependent upon the circumstances of the case. For example, some disciplinary matters that are very evidence based may be relatively straightforward and quick to deal with, while a complex grievance involving multiple witnesses and opinions as well as facts, is likely to take a lot longer.
- 3.43 The data from HR in 2022 indicated that investigations were averaging around 18.5 weeks and was part of the basis for increasing resource within the Counter Fraud Team to have professionally trained officers undertake internal investigations. The team has been the main source of investigators for internal disciplinary and grievance investigations since around April 2023, and analysis of the 19 investigations completed in 2023-24 shows the average time per case (from the start of the enquiry to a report being submitted to HR) to be nine weeks.
- 3.44 The individual leaving the comment may only have experience of a case that has unfortunately taken a long time due to the circumstances involved but the analysis suggests that having dedicated resource has led to a significant increase in the efficiency of the investigations. We are already looking at additional training for the officers and other digital tools that may provide further efficiencies to reduce these timescales further.

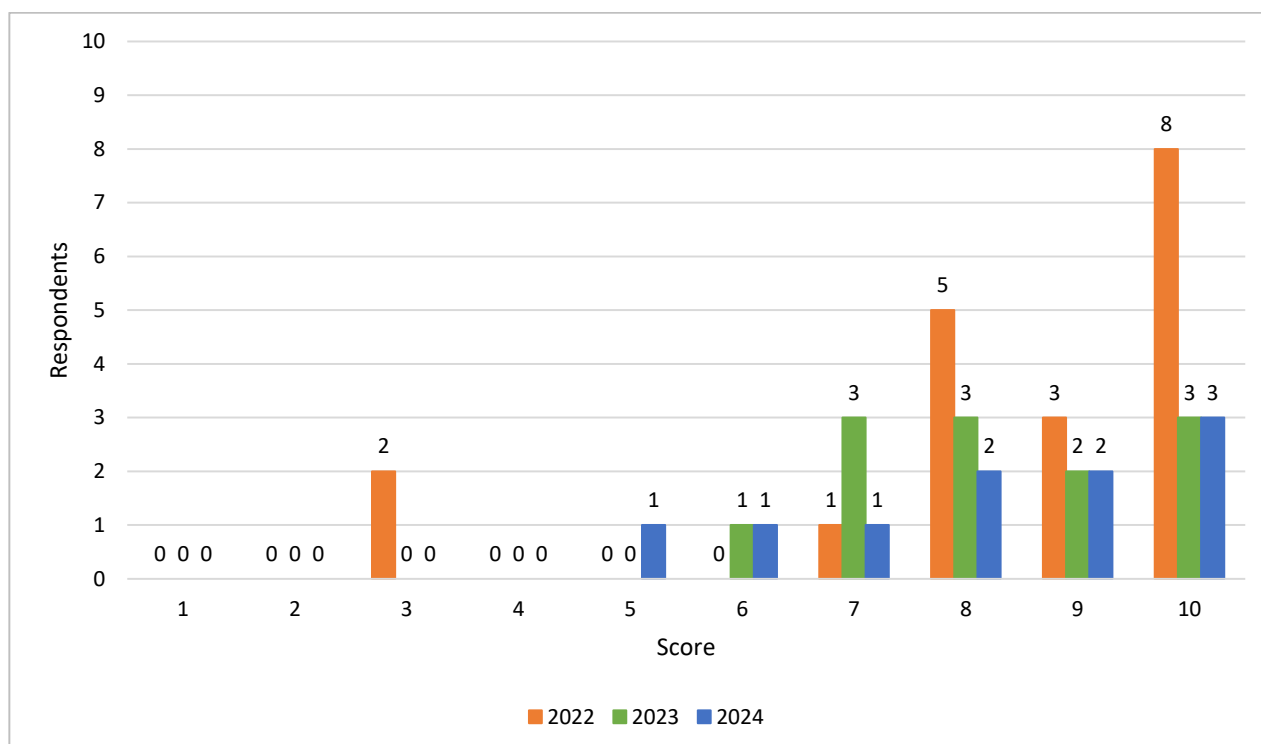
Overall Satisfaction with Counter Fraud

- 3.45 Questions relating to overall satisfaction asked respondents to score from one (completely dissatisfied) to ten (completely satisfied). Any scores of eight or above are considered to be positive satisfaction.
- 3.46 As it was possible that not all respondents would have interacted with counter fraud during the previous 12 months, respondents were first asked to provide a satisfaction score in relation to the support and services that are available from counter fraud. The scores from 2022, 2023 and 2024 have been provided for comparison.



- 3.47 The average score across the 37 respondents was 6.68 and represents positive satisfaction from 35.1% of the responses received. This is in comparison to an average score of 6.70 and positive satisfaction of 35% from the 88 responses received in 2023, and an average score of 5.92 and positive satisfaction of 22.5% from the 200 responses received in 2022.

3.48 The ten respondents who confirmed having received services from counter fraud in the last 12 months were asked to score their overall satisfaction with the service received.



3.49 Scores ranged from five to ten, giving an average score of 8.20 and representing positive satisfaction from 70% of the responses received. This is compared to an average of 8.25 out of ten and positive satisfaction of 66.7% from the 12 responses received in 2023 and an average score of 8.42 out of ten and positive satisfaction of 84% from the 19 responses received in 2022.

3.50 A new question was added for 2024 asking respondents to identify which area of work the service they received related to, in order to assess where improvements may be required in the event low scores were received.

Area of Work	Number of respondents	Average Score
Introductory Session (CF team attending your team meeting)	0	N/A
Fraud Awareness Session	1	8
Fraud Risk Assessment	0	N/A
Fraud Investigation	5	8.4
Grievance/Disciplinary Investigation	4	8

3.51 The lowest score of five related to a fraud investigation and was provided by the person who has left comments about IT access, although as mentioned previously, they have not left their name, so it is not possible to gain further insight on this matter. The one score of six (provided by the respondent who has commented on the team's involvement in internal matters), and one of seven, were both linked to disciplinary and grievance investigations.

3.52 While the overall satisfaction is lower than we would like, the average scores in each of the four areas where respondents have received services are positive. The team always strive for continuous improvement and this feedback will be used to look at potential changes that may help to improve perceptions with the services available and provided.

Other Feedback

- 3.53 At the conclusion of the survey respondents were asked: Do you have any other comments that may help us improve / develop the service?
- 3.54 The comments received have been grouped into compliments, which were all gratefully received, or suggestions for improvement, which have also been grouped where they relate to the same issue. A response from the Head of Internal Audit & Counter Fraud (HIACF) on behalf of the service has been included where appropriate.

Compliments

Comment received: The Investigation Team are a real benefit to the HR Consultant team. We remain in the early stages of cementing the processes between Investigation Team and HR Consultant. I feel very positive about this collaborative working.

Comment received: They are always helpful and professional.

Suggestions

Comment received: In my current role and recently the fraud team have been really helpful in providing the team with guidance and training and we have learned so much from them. In a previous role (and not in the last 12 months), any referrals made we do not see the outcome or are not asked for any further information, so it's hard to know if it's worth making the referrals or not or what action is taken. We have to continue working with the customers, even knowing we have made a referral into fraud.

Comment received: I feel if staff were given feedback, they would be more pro-active.

HIACF response: We have taken steps to improve feedback and that is reflected in this year's results, but we acknowledge there is still room for improvement. As mentioned in this report, we recently identified an issue with our referral records, that was making it difficult to identify who referred the case, but this has been addressed and should lead to further improvements in feedback. If feedback is not received, officers are able to contact the Counter Fraud Manager for information. It must be noted however that referrals relating to housing benefit fraud must be passed to the DWP. This means we are unable to provide any direct feedback and do not receive any from the DWP.

Comment received: As a client I'd like to see more fraud proofing work in my area, maybe some kind of service business partner model so my team could build a relationship with someone they know they could go to for advice on system changes etc. so we could build that advice into our change/processes more?

HIACF response: We are always happy to provide guidance/advice on fraud proofing processes and are already called upon by services to do this. You can email the team investigation.team@medway.gov.uk with details of any such requests or speak to the Counter Fraud Manager or HIACF.

While we agree that having a dedicated champion or business partner model could potentially be beneficial, the size of the team and staff changes in recent years means this simply isn't practical. But you do get the benefit of having access to the whole team, not just one individual, and all of them are happy to assist in any way they can.

Comment received: Improve access to IT and also take advice from the referring team with regards to ways of investigating in specific areas.

HIACF response: It is difficult to know how to respond to this without further context and unfortunately no name was provided.

What we can say is that all referrals go through a rigorous intelligence process, and we do contact referrers for additional information where necessary. In terms of how things are investigated, all enquiries are carried out in accordance with set legislation and compliance with the law.

Comment received: Capacity is a false economy

HIACF response: We are unable to respond to this comment without further context.

Comment received: Would be good to have time to learn about the anti-fraud system.

Comment received: I attended a course some way back.

Comment received: Some awareness of the team and their work.

Comment received: Possibly update on the team in a staff newsletter just to make everyone aware of the work you are doing.

HIACF response: As detailed in this report, a large number of awareness sessions, providing information on fraud risks and services of the team, were run over a three month period in 2023. Sessions have been available at least once a month since January 2024 and Workforce Development have been promoting these in their mail shots, but a number have been cancelled due to lack of sign up. We are doing our best to reach out to teams to deliver service specific awareness training, but we have limited resource, so this may take some time. In the meantime, we would encourage people to sign up to the available training.

As part of fraud awareness week in November 2023, the staff newsletter shined a light on the team, providing contact details and a picture to put names to faces if you bump into them in the office. We do issue press releases annually to highlight the work that has been undertaken but we will now be looking at sharing this internally as well.

Comment received: Initial Fraud staff doing Disc was an improvement, but sadly that hasn't continued.

HIACF response: We are unable to follow up on this and gain more context around the perceptions that have led to this comment as the respondent did not leave their name.

Managers are still able to appoint investigators from other services if they so choose but as noted in this report, the Counter Fraud Team have been the main source of investigators for internal disciplinary and grievance investigations since April 2023. The team completed 19 investigations in 2023-24 and have halved the average time for cases to be concluded, which we feel is a significant improvement.