

# Housing Fraud Awareness Campaign

RAISING THE AWARENESS OF HOUSING FRAUD THROUGHOUT KENT

# Key amnesty – June 2018

## **Objectives of this plan**

- To raise awareness of the key amnesty campaign across Kent and tenancy fraud generally
- To encourage residents to report suspected tenancy fraud
- To shame those committing tenancy fraud into handing back the keys to their property

# Key amnesty – June 2018

## Target audience

- Tenants generally
- Those renting from someone committing tenancy fraud
- Media outlets including social media

# Key amnesty – June 2018

## Key Messages

- Sub-letting your housing association home is illegal, if you are found out you will be prosecuted and could go to prison
- Tenancy fraud deprives the people that most need it of a home
- The key amnesty campaign is a one- off opportunity to come clean if you are committing tenancy fraud, you may avoid prison

# Key amnesty – June 2018

## Factsheet

### What is tenancy fraud?

- Tenancy Fraud (also known as social housing fraud) occurs when a local authority or housing association home is occupied by someone who is either not legally entitled to be there, has obtained use of the property fraudulently or leaves the property empty while living elsewhere.
- Tenancy fraud causes significant social harm and can lead to antisocial behaviour. It deprives legitimate and deserving tenants access to affordable homes and has a direct impact on local people, their families and communities.
- There are approximately 1.15 million households on social housing waiting lists in England and The Audit Commission's final Protecting the Public Purse Report in 2014 estimated the total loss to tenancy fraud for local authorities and housing associations to be £1.8 billion.

# Key amnesty – June 2018

## Types of tenancy fraud

- Subletting: A tenant rents out all or part of their property to someone else without the permission or knowledge of the landlord.
- Application fraud: A prospective tenant knowingly provides false information on their housing application in order to gain or property or applies for multiple properties in different locations and through different landlords.
- Right to buy/Right to acquire fraud: A tenant knowingly provides false information when applying to but the house they live in under the scheme.
- Succession fraud: A person moves into a property when the legal tenant either dies or moves away without the right to do so or misrepresents the amount of time they have been there.
- Key-selling: A tenant or an employee of a local authority or housing association receives a one off payment to give the keys of a property to someone who is not entitled to live there.
- Abandonment/non-occupation: A tenant moves out of their property without informing the landlord.

# Key amnesty – June 2018

## Offences

- Under criminal law fraud is mainly dealt with under the **Fraud Act 2006**. Tenancy fraudsters can also be prosecuted under the **Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013**. Convictions can result in a fine, imprisonment or both. The courts also have the power to make the tenant pay back any profits made from the fraud.
- Civil law allows local authorities and housing associations to re-gain possession of properties that are not be used in accordance with the terms of the tenancy agreement and remedies are also available to recover money lost through fraud.

# Key amnesty poster



The poster features a white top section with the Kent Housing Group logo and a set of keys with a yellow tag that says 'ILLEGALLY SUB-LET'. Below this is a photograph of a person lying on a bench, with their legs and feet visible. The bottom section is green and contains contact information and a warning about prosecution.

**Kent Housing Group**  
The Voice of Housing in Kent

**Do the right thing  
hand your keys in!**

Illegally subletting your home could unfairly deprive someone of a place to live.  
Hand in your keys, avoid prosecution.

**KEY AMNESTY MONTH**

**AVOID PROSECUTION  
AND 2 YEARS IN PRISON  
AND A £50,000 FINE**

0800 0213 262  
fraud@ashford.gov.uk

**ASHFORD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



# Key amnesty banner

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## New awareness campaign – 2023?

### **Time frame**

- How long do we run it for?
- Tie in with any resident newsletters/publication deadlines
- Best time of year for maximum effectiveness

# New awareness campaign – 2023?

## Promotion methods

- Posters
- Email banners
- Press release/fact sheet
- Social media
- Video
- Radio
- Organisation specific publications/emails

## New awareness campaign – 2023?

### Visuals

- Does anyone have the facilities/department that could assist with design?
- Type of message – focus on the effects of housing fraud or the punishment?
- How much information to include?