

PUBLIC SECTOR

## The Royal Borough of Greenwich fights back against fraud with GBG Investigate



- Increasing productivity
- Reducing the need for more expensive searches
- Nearby council subcontracted its fraud investigations to them

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### The challenge



### The solution



### The outcome



## The customer

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is a local authority based in south-east London. It provides hundreds of different services for a community of over a quarter of a million people. Its responsibilities run from housing, schools, and rubbish collection to administering council tax, business rates and parking enforcement.

## The challenge

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations, the council is legally obliged to take measures to prevent and detect fraud. Its Internal Audit and Anti-Fraud Team works with multiple council services to conduct investigations and build cases against criminals. The team's activities ensure council taxpayers get the best value, preserving resources available for genuine cases and protect funds from activities like illegal subletting.

Cases range from fraudulent right-to-buy business rates discount and benefits applications to identifying non-resident tenants and blue badge misuse. In its work, the team employs a range of systems, but one solution stands out as a "multipurpose tool" of counter-fraud work: GBG Investigate.

## The solution

New cases usually begin when council services or members of the public refer information on possible fraudsters, so the main challenges for the Audit and Anti-Fraud Team members lie in verifying the information provided and tracing individuals. This is when GBG Investigate's range of over 1.5 billion enhanced, interlinked records and its sophisticated searching and visualisation options come to the fore.

"I've had excellent results from GBG Investigate and it's definitely the tracing tool I choose first," says Investigator Kevin Kolendo. "It's the go-to system to get an investigation rolling, especially if the person is likely to be living outside the borough. The visualisation tools make it very easy to spot the most important information, it's very intuitive, certainly compared to other text-based tools we use, and the phone number searches are extremely powerful."

If an investigation starts with a name and address or an email, GBG Investigate immediately shows possible ways forward by displaying any linked addresses, names, aliases, co-habitants, relatives, businesses, and many other types of information. Access to this wide range of data has led directly to numerous recent successful prosecutions.

In one recent case of blue badge fraud, entering a single mobile number into GBG Investigate immediately traced the driver's name and address, indicating the wrong person was using the badge. If car owners claim someone else was driving their car, the team can usually quickly verify whether they are telling the truth or not.

GBG Investigate is particularly effective in finding other addresses for residents in cases of non-occupation and subletting. Other key uses include verifying details provided for housing applications or benefits. All right-to-buy applications are checked and, if there's any indication of fraud, investigated by the team.



“GBG Investigate has the widest range of linked information of any system we use. The phone number searches are extremely powerful.”

Kevin Kolendo, Investigator, Internal Audit and Anti-Fraud Team  
Greenwich London Borough Council

## The outcome

During the National Fraud Initiative bulk matching exercises, GBG Investigate helps the team rapidly locate council residents likely living at other addresses, increasing their productivity. It also saves money by reducing the need for more expensive searches.

Proving that someone who claims to be living in their council property, but in fact isn't, then means the council can free that social housing up for those in genuine need. That prevents losses to the public purse and also makes best use of scarce, expensive assets. Criminals can also be forced to repay the cost of temporary accommodation or return any income from illegal subletting. The team is so effective that since 2002, nearby Bromley Council has subcontracted its fraud investigations to them.



“GBG Investigate gives us a wide selection of very useful linked information that we can't always find on other systems,” says Kevin. “In fact, we've successfully traced people starting with just with a name. It's been 100% reliable and GBG's support is excellent. It just works and makes our investigations easier and more productive.”

Kevin Kolendo, Investigator, Internal Audit and Anti-Fraud Team  
Greenwich London Borough Council

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