

Data matching statement

Inverclyde Council has a legal duty to protect the public funds it manages. To prevent and detect fraud, it will share information provided to it with other bodies responsible for auditing or managing public funds, such as Audit Scotland.

Audit Scotland appoints an auditor to audit the accounts of the council. Audit Scotland also helps appointed auditors by conducting the National Fraud Initiative. These are called 'data matching' exercises.

Data matching involves comparing computer records held by one body against other computer records held by the same or another body. This is usually personal information. Computerised data matching allows potentially fraudulent claims and payments to be identified. Where a match is found, it indicates that there is an inconsistency which needs further investigation. No assumption can be made as to whether there is fraud, error or other explanation until the investigation is carried out.

Audit Scotland currently requires all councils to take part in data matching exercises to help prevent and detect fraud. The councils provide particular sets of data to Audit Scotland for matching and these are set out in Audit Scotland's handbook. Data matching by Audit Scotland is also subject to a Code of Data Matching Practice. You can view the handbook and the code on the Audit Scotland website - www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/work/nfi.php

Audit Scotland have specific powers to carry out data matching under Section 100 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and section 53 of the Local Government Act 2003. It does not require the consent of the individuals concerned under the Data Protection Act 1998.

For more information on Audit Scotland's legal powers, and the reasons why it matches particular information, see the Level 3 fair processing notice on the Audit Scotland website www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/work/nfi.php or contact Fiona Borthwick, Inverclyde Council's Revenue & Benefits Manager on 01475 712904.