Fighting Economic Crime Together

FRAUDSCAPE 2026

6 MONTH UPDATE

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Fighting Fraud and Financial Crime Together

Protecting organisations and individuals from fraud and financial crime through the sharing of data, intelligence, and learning.

Data

Intelligence

Learning

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1 OVERVIEW

SECTOR	2025	2026	VOLUME CHANGE	% CHANGE	PROPORTION 2025	PROPORTION 2026
ASSET CONVERSION	354	278	-76	-21%	0%	0%
FALSE APPLICATION	8,576	6,368	-2,208	-26%	4%	3%
FALSE INSURANCE CLAIM	423	612	189	45%	0%	0%
FACILITY TAKEOVER	38,149	39,878	1,729	5%	18%	18%
IDENTITY FRAUD	118,740	129,490	10,750	9%	55%	59%
MISUSE OF FACILITY	51,175	43,415	-7,760	-15%	24%	20%
TOTAL	217,417	220,041	2,624	1%	-	-

220,041
CASES FILED

+1%
INCREASE FROM 2025

RECORD FILINGS CONTINUE INTO 2026 UNDERPINNED BY SHIFTING CRIMINAL TACTICS AND FOCUS

The Fraudscape six-month update is a comprehensive analysis of cases recorded by Cifas members to the National Fraud Database (NFD) and Insider Threat Database (ITD) in the first half of 2026, with comparisons to the same period in 2025.

More than 220,000 cases were filed to the NFD between January and June 2026. While this represents a modest 1% increase (+2,624 cases), it is the highest number ever recorded during the first six months of a year and suggests filing levels are on track to surpass the record volumes seen in 2025.

The underlying movements and filing patterns point to continued changes in criminal tactics and focus against different products and sectors.

Sustained increases in identity fraud (+9%) and account (facility) takeover (+5%) are likely to be key drivers of another record year for fraud risk filings in 2026. Growth in both categories was particularly evident across online retail and plastic card products, highlighting the continued exploitation of compromised personal and account data.

Criminals are also using increasingly sophisticated social engineering techniques to target UK individuals and businesses, harvest personal information and gain access to accounts. One example is SIM swap fraud, which reached record levels in the first half of 2026, increasing by 402%.

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IDENTITY FRAUD

129,490
IDENTITY FRAUD CASES

+9%
INCREASE FROM 2025

RESURGENCE IN LEVELS OF IDENTITY FRAUD

Over 129,000 identity fraud cases were reported to the NFD in the first six months of 2026, a 9% increase on the same period in 2025. The increase was primarily driven by the plastic cards sector, which saw a 33% rise in filings (+14,955), largely linked to personal credit cards.

Plastic cards and bank accounts continue to account for the majority of identity fraud filings, collectively representing 68% (88,129) of cases (previously 64%).

The loans sector saw a 49% (+3,484) increase in filings and now accounts for 8% of identity fraud cases (previously 6%). This uplift was largely driven by personal loans with deferred credit (+133%), which allow customers to access credit immediately while delaying repayments until a later date.

Telecoms sector filings decreased by 28%, down to 9,055 cases, primarily due to lower volumes recorded against mobile phone products. However, previous analysis suggests reductions in telecoms filings may, in part, reflect a shift towards account takeover activity rather than a genuine reduction in the threat.

Impersonation, using the victim's current address, remains the leading filing reason and increased by 12% compared to the same period in 2025. This aligns with wider intelligence showing that criminals have access to large volumes of personal information and are using increasingly convincing social engineering tactics to exploit targets.

False identity filings decreased by 35%, largely across telecoms and bank account sectors. Despite this, intelligence continues to indicate growing concerns around synthetic identities, AI-enabled impersonation and digitally manipulated documentation.

Victims aged 21–30 recorded the largest increase in identity fraud cases (+32%), largely linked to personal credit cards.

IDENTITY FRAUD CASES

SECTOR	2025	2026	VOLUME CHANGE	% CHANGE	PROPORTION 2025	PROPORTION 2026
ALL IN ONE	26	93	67	258%	0%	0%
ASSET FINANCE	723	631	-92	-13%	1%	0%
BANK ACCOUNT	30,494	23,382	-2,112	-7%	26%	22%
COMMUNICATIONS	12,569	9,055	-3,514	-28%	11%	7%
CREDIT FILE/ IDENTITY SERVICES	4,851	5,690	839	17%	4%	4%
INSURANCE	7,578	5,862	-1,716	-23%	6%	5%
LOANS	7,120	10,604	3,484	49%	6%	8%
MORTGAGE	25	34	9	36%	0%	0%
ONLINE RETAIL	9,385	8,693	-692	-7%	8%	7%
OTHER	929	600	-392	-35%	1%	0%
PLASTIC CARD	44,792	59,747	14.955	33%	38%	46%
PUBLIC SECTOR SERVICES	248	99	-149	-60%	0%	0%
TOTAL	118,740	129,490	10,750	9%	-	-

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ACCOUNT TAKEOVER

39,878
ACCOUNT TAKEOVER CASES

+5%
INCREASE FROM 2025

ACCOUNT TAKEOVER CHANGES SHAPE

Filings relating to account takeover increased by 5% (+1,729) to 39,878 cases compared to the same period in 2025.

Together, the telecom and online retail sectors account for 75% of recorded account takeover cases – though levels of telecoms filings dropped by 23% compared to the same period in 2025. Online retail filings and plastic card filings increased by 84% (+4,350) and 59% (+2,188), respectively.

Despite the reduction in filings, the telecoms sector continues to account for 51% (20,214) of all account takeover cases.

Previous analysis assessed that mobile phone-related takeover activity remains a significant threat, particularly through organised mobile dealer fraud and SIM swap activity. The reduction may reflect changes in reporting patterns, prevention controls, or focus into other targeted products rather than a substantive reduction in threat.

Online retail filings now account for 24% of all cases (previously 14%). This increase is consistent with intelligence highlighting the growing value of compromised online retail accounts.

The plastic cards sector rise is driven largely by personal credit cards (+66%). This supports wider intelligence that threat actors continue to prioritise products such as credit cards offering immediate spending power, with compromised card accounts remaining a valuable commodity for organised groups.

'Unauthorised SIM swap' cases increased by 402% (+4,109) and now represent 10% of all filings (previously 2%). This reflects a trend repeatedly identified where SIM swaps are used to intercept authentication codes, bypass security measures, and facilitate wider account compromise.

'Unauthorised facility delivery instruction' filings increased by 111% (+3,948), driven primarily by the online retail sector (+114%).

This increase may indicate the continued targeting of customer accounts to redirect deliveries and obtain high-value goods.

Individuals aged 61+ remained the most targeted, accounting for 29% of cases despite a 7% decline overall. Increases in online retail (+93%), plastic cards (+29%) and bank accounts (+11%) suggest older consumers remain particularly vulnerable to social engineering attacks and account compromise. The 41–50 age group rose following a 17% increase in filings, driven by growth in online retail (+104%), plastic cards (+85%).

ACCOUNT TAKEOVER CASES

SECTOR	2025	2026	VOLUME CHANGE	% CHANGE	PROPORTION 2025	PROPORTION 2026
ALL IN ONE	402	232	-170	-42%	1%	1%
ASSET FINANCE	4	25	21	525%	0%	0%
BANK ACCOUNT	2,189	2,199	10	0%	6%	6%
COMMUNICATIONS	26,166	20,214	-5,952	-23%	69%	51%
CREDIT FILE/ IDENTITY SERVICES	47	1,061	1,014	2,157%	0%	3%
INSURANCE	23	70	47	204%	0%	0%
LOANS	242	414	172	71%	1%	1%
MORTGAGE	1	27	26	2600%	0%	0%
ONLINE RETAIL	5,176	9,526	4,350	84%	14%	24%
OTHER	172	199	27	16%	0%	0%
PLASTIC CARD	3,723	5,911	2,188	59%	10%	15%
PUBLIC SECTOR SERVICES	4	0	-4	-100%	0%	0%
TOTAL	38,149	39,878	1,729	5%	-	-

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MISUSE FACILITY

43,415
MISUSE OF FACILITY CASES

-15%
DECREASE FROM 2025

DECREASE IN MISUSE OF FACILITY FILINGS

More than 43,000 misuse of facility cases were recorded to the NFD in the first half of 2026 – a 15% decrease compared to the same period in 2025.

Despite this decline, misuse of facility remains a significant contributor to the NFD, accounting for around one-fifth of all cases filed, meaning it ranks in second place behind identity fraud.

The bank account sector continues to represent the highest proportion of filings (77%, previously 82%). However, when combined with payment fraud, these categories still declined by 28% overall.

Despite the overall reduction in bank account filings, this product had noteworthy increases in 'falsely reporting a loss' (+189%) and 'fraudulent direct debit guarantee claims'.

Against a backdrop of growing evidence around the normalisation of first-party fraud, these increases may indicate a rising willingness to misuse banking products.

Misuse of company accounts increased by 20%, with several members reporting heightened levels of behaviours indicative of money muling (+85%) and payment fraud (+223%). Members continue to express concern around the use of corporate structures to obtain business banking facilities which can then be misused.

Around one in twelve (8%) misuse of facility cases now relate to the plastic card sector which recorded more than 3,500 filings (+13%). The vast majority (90%) involved personal credit cards, with volumes increasing by over a third.

This growth was driven by higher levels of payment fraud, evasion of payment, and 'funds received – money muling'. Increases in 'theft of asset' filings (+35%) were apparent, relating to asset finance products (+35%).

These trends raise concerns of an enduring threat of individuals intentionally acquiring high-value products (for example mobile phones and vehicles), with no intention of paying. This presents a major challenge for institutions to predict when a product is likely to be misused.

MISUSE OF FACILITY CASES

SECTOR	2025	2026	VOLUME CHANGE	% CHANGE	PROPORTION 2025	PROPORTION 2026
ALL IN ONE	32	442	410	1281%	0%	1%
ASSET FINANCE	771	813	42	5%	2%	2%
BANK ACCOUNT	42,129	33,641	-8,488	-20%	82%	77%
COMMUNICATIONS	880	1,017	137	16%	2%	2%
INSURANCE	12	18	6	50%	0%	0%
LOANS	2,252	2,149	-103	-5%	4%	5%
MORTGAGE	3	9	6	200%	0%	0%
ONLINE RETAIL	233	136	-97	-42%	0%	0%
OTHER	1,628	1,562	-66	-4%	3%	4%
PLASTIC CARD	3,184	3,589	405	13%	6%	8%
PUBLIC SECTOR SERVICES	51	39	-12	-24%	0%	0%
TOTAL	51,175	43,415	-7,760	-15%	-	-

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MONEY MULES

12,817
CASES USING NEW FILING TYPE

30%
OF MISUSE FILINGS RELATE TO MULES

NEW FILING REASON DEMONSTRATES ITS VALUE

Between January and June 2026, nearly 13,000 cases were filed to the NFD indicative of money mule activity – a rise of 70% compared to 2025. Money mule cases now account for 30% of all misuse of facility cases (previously 15%) with over 40 unique members filing cases.

This increase is likely to reflect greater adoption of the newly introduced filing reason released in 2025 – 'funds received – money muling', alongside members using enhanced detection capabilities. Both have led to greater visibility and tracking of mule activity with over 14 different products filed by members. Overall, this helps to demonstrate that money muling is not confined to traditional bank accounts and is increasingly impacting a wider range of financial facilities.

Notable increases also occurred in company current accounts (+67%) and personal credit cards (+146%). There were also consistent volumes across pre-paid cards, personal money transfer accounts and savings accounts.

Further increases in mule-related cases are expected throughout 2026 as adoption of the new filing category continues to grow.

This enhanced visibility will also enable a more accurate assessment of how the threat is evolving, and which age groups are most susceptible to recruitment.

Overall, the highest proportion of subjects fell within the 21–30yrs age category, accounting for 40% of filings, unchanged from 2025. This age group also recorded the largest rise in volume (+73%), followed by 31-40yrs (+75%) which accounts for one-quarter of cases (24%) overall.

These trends highlight the continued vulnerability of younger individuals to exploitation by criminal networks engaged in money mule activity.

Importantly, increases in filings were observed across all age groups, showing the threat is not confined to younger demographics alone.

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FALSE APPLICATION

6,368
FALSE APP CASES

-26%
DECREASE FROM 2025

FALSE APPLICATION LEVELS CONTINUE TO DROP

The first six months of 2026 saw a 26% decrease in false application filings compared to the same period in 2025, with just over 6,300 cases reported.

Loan filings increased by 33%, driven by rises in 'personal unsecured loans' and 'company unsecured loans', particularly where altered or false documents were supplied. This correlates with reports from members who highlight the increasing sophistication and quality of documents submitted that support applications, and are facilitated by AI.

Those aged 21–30 accounted for the majority of false application filings (34%, previously 36%), followed by those aged 31–40 (33%, previously 32%). Changes within these age groups are linked to reductions in motor insurance filings, although 'personal unsecured loan' cases increased.

Most sectors saw a decrease, including insurance (down 58%), bank accounts (down 23%) and asset finance (down 28%). Altered or false documents accounted for the largest reductions across these sectors.

Despite the decreases, bank accounts, loans and asset finance continue to experience issues involving false documents, including false bank statements, wage slips and identity documents that support applications.

FALSE APPLICATION CASES

SECTOR	2025	2026	VOLUME CHANGE	% CHANGE	PROPORTION 2025	PROPORTION 2026
ALL IN ONE	1	2	1	100%	0%	0%
ASSET FINANCE	843	608	-235	-28%	10%	10%
BANK ACCOUNT	3,501	2,688	-813	-23%	41%	42%
COMMUNICATIONS	146	129	-17	-12%	2%	2%
CREDIT FILE/ IDENTITY SERVICES	1	1	0	0%	0%	0%
INSURANCE	1,985	832	-1,153	-58%	23%	13%
LOANS	674	895	221	33%	8%	14%
MORTGAGE	663	691	28	4%	8%	11%
ONLINE RETAIL	7	1	-6	-86%	0%	0%
OTHER	595	405	-190	-32%	7%	6%
PLASTIC CARD	94	61	-33	-35%	1%	1%
PUBLIC SECTOR SERVICES	66	55	-11	-17%	1%	1%
TOTAL	8,576	6,368	-2,208	-26%	-	-

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INSIDER THREAT

143
INSIDER THREAT CASES

-3%
DECREASE FROM 2025

INSIDER THREAT LEVELS DIP

Cases filed to the ITD dropped by 3% to 143 cases in 2026, compared to 148 in the same period in 2025.

‘Dishonest action by staff to obtain a benefit by theft or deception’ is the dominant case type, increasing from 68 cases to 76 in 2026 (+12%). It now accounts for 53% of all filings, up from 46% in 2025.

Within the ‘dishonest action’ case type, there are a variety of filing reasons, including abuse of company time/privilege, false expenses, false overtime, falsifying documents, account manipulation and theft-related behaviours. This supports the wider assessment that employees may be seeking to supplement their income through dishonest conduct.

Cases of ‘false employment application – successful’ more than doubled, increasing from nine cases in 2025 to 19 in 2026 (+111%). Although volumes remain lower than unsuccessful applications, this rise is important as it indicates a greater number of individuals with concealed or false information may have progressed into employment, before being identified.

‘False employment application – unsuccessful’ cases decreased from 49 in 2025 to 36 in 2026 (-27%). This could be an indication of improved pre-employment detection or lower reporting volumes. However, it should not be interpreted as a reduced threat given the increase in successful false employment application cases overall.

INSIDER THREAT CASES

SECTOR	2025	2026	VOLUME CHANGE	% CHANGE	PROPORTION 2025	PROPORTION 2026
ACCOUNT MISCONDUCT	11	4	-7	-64%	7%	3%
BEING BRIBED	1	0	-1	-100%	1%	0%
BRIBING ANOTHER PERSON	2	0	-2	-100%	1%	0%
DISHONEST ACTION BY STAFF TO OBTAIN A BENEFIT BY THEFT OR DECEPTION	68	76	8	12%	46%	53%
FALSE EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION (SUCCESSFUL)	9	19	10	111%	6%	13%
FALSE EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION (UNSUCCESSFUL)	49	36	-13	-27%	33%	25%
UNLAWFUL OBTAINING OR DISCLOSURE OF COMMERCIAL DATA	2	1	-1	-50%	1%	1%
UNLAWFUL OBTAINING OR DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL DATA	6	7	1	17%	4%	5%
TOTAL	148	143	-5	-3%	-	-

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Version -29.07.2026