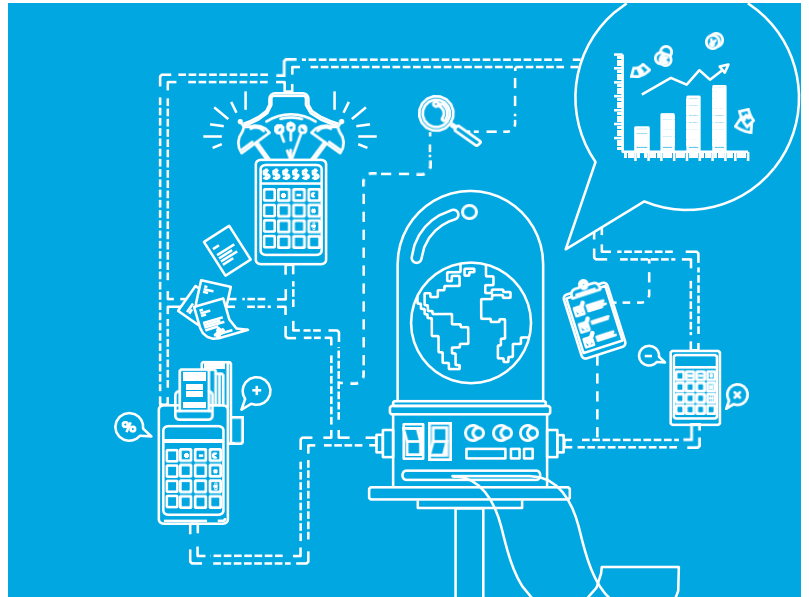


Notice Fraud October 2020



COVID-19 Fraud

As of July, A total of £11,316,266 has been reported as lost by 2,866 victims of coronavirus-related scams. There have been 13,820 reports of coronavirus-related phishing emails. Please continue to be alert and report any suspicious emails. (Source: Action Fraud).

Travel

With the increased availability to travel again there is the potential that a fraction of staff may falsify documentation from abroad to support their claim to self-isolate. There have been reports about an individual that supplied false documents to support a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 whilst abroad. The subject had failed to return to work and later reported sickness, declaring they were required to self-isolate for months due to COVID-19, much longer than the 7 to 14 days advised by the NHS. Upon failing to provide further supporting evidence, the Trust discovered the sickness certificate was fraudulent and suspended the individuals' pay; though their period of leave did cause financial loss to the Trust.

If NHS staff are unable to return to the UK, from abroad, due to quarantine, they must be paid in line with 'self-isolating' guidance. Also, if an individual is unable to return to work due to travel restrictions, then special leave for COVID-19 should be recorded and they will receive full pay. (Source: NHS Counter Fraud Authority).

Transport

The NHSCFA has received reports about the COVID-19 taxi policy being exploited for personal gain. The introduction of this policy has identified the potential for collusion between staff and management where some members of staff may have been taking unnecessary trips during the pandemic at the expense of the NHS. Please review all policies regarding this area and ensure robust authorisation of expenses and claim procedures are applied. (Source: NHSCFA)

BBC Fraud Squad

The BBC has aired a second series of "Fraud Squad", a series following the investigators tracking down the criminals who steal £1.25 billion every year from the NHS; from organised crime rings to NHS staff themselves. You can catch up on BBC iPlayer here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0c2p9wb>

International Fraud Awareness week.... Fraud Awareness Month

International fraud awareness week runs from 15-21st November, however here at RSM, we take this a step further by Fraud Awareness Month.

There will be a range of fraud awareness materials circulated and made available during the month. This year there will also be a live question and answer session with your LCFS.

During the month we will be holding virtual awareness training on procurement, recruitment and finance topics so look out for those dates and joining instructions.

Police issue warning against Coronavirus Fraudsters

The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) have issued an urgent scam warning after identifying 21 cases of fraud involving coronavirus in February. Ten of the frauds involved desperate buyers of face masks, with one person paying £15,000 for masks that were never delivered. Other frauds involve emails and texts purporting to be from research organisations affiliated with the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organisation. The NFIB said: 'They claim to be able to provide the recipient with a list of coronavirus infected people in the area. In order to access this information, the victims need to click on a link, which leads to a malicious website, or is asked to make a payment in Bitcoin'. It added that it expected to receive many more reports of fraud as the coronavirus spreads globally. The advice to consumers is not to click on links or attachments in suspicious emails, and never respond to unsolicited messages and calls that ask for personal or financial details. (Source: The Guardian)

Recent Cases

A psychiatrist who worked for the NHS for thirteen years, mainly looking after disabled adults and children, despite having no qualifications, has been found guilty of fraud offences. They were charged with two counts of making a false instrument with the intention for it be accepted as genuine. In addition, they were charged with eight counts of fraud by false representation and three counts of obtaining a pecuniary advantage. (Source: Daily Mail)

A man has appeared in court charged with making fake kits which claimed to treat Covid-19. Frank Ludlow, 59, was arrested in a Post Office near his home in West Sussex by the City of London Police's Intellectual Property Crime Unit after it was contacted by US counterparts. The kits allegedly contained harmful chemicals which people were being told to use to rinse their mouths with. Mr Ludlow has been charged with one count of fraud by false representation, one count of possession of article for use in fraud and one count of unlawfully manufacturing a medicinal product. He was arrested on the 20th April 2020 and appeared before Brighton Magistrate's Court where he received a 10 month suspended sentence and 170 hours community service. (source: Independent)

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A man has been charged with fraud after allegedly spending six free nights at a hotel by claiming to be an NHS worker. Ben Quince checked into the Casa Hotel in Lockford Lane, Chesterfield, at the end of March on a floor reserved for NHS staff. He stayed there for six nights and allegedly told staff he worked in the A&E department at Chesterfield Royal Hospital. The hotel is offering complimentary lodgings for health workers during the coronavirus pandemic. Mr Quince, of no fixed address, has been charged with fraud by false representation. He appeared at Southern Derbyshire Magistrate's Court on Monday 6th April and was bailed to appear again at a later date. (Independent, 2020)

Reporting concerns

Don't be embarrassed to report a scam. Fraudsters are cunning and clever; there is no shame in being deceived. By reporting, you will make it more difficult for them to deceive others.

It is easy to report fraud, bribery or corruption affecting the NHS.

Contact your Local Counter Fraud Specialist (LCFS) directly or call the national anonymous, 24-hour reporting line on 0800 028 4060 (powered by Crimestoppers). You can also report online, completely confidentially via <https://cfa.nhs.uk/reportfraud>.

It is the LCFS' role to take every allegation of fraud or bribery seriously and to provide anonymity and confidentiality for anyone who reports a concern. It is recommended that you refer to your organisation's policy on fraud when reporting allegations for further information on how you are protected.

When making a referral please provide as much information as possible, for example:

- the name of the person who you believe has committed a fraud;
- when and where the fraud has taken place;
- how long the fraud has been going on; and
- any details to substantiate your suspicion.

**Remain vigilant during this time.
Spot it. Report it. Together we stop it.**