

Notice fraud

March 2018



This edition of Notice Fraud is designed to bring recent cases, emerging risks and scams to your attention to help you recognise the signs of fraud in the NHS.

RECRUITMENT FRAUD

Fraud in the recruitment process can take place in many ways, for example:

- the use of fake identities, or hijacking another person's identity, and using it as if it was their own;
- attempting to work within the NHS with no current legal right to work in the UK. Failure to conduct right to work checks could result in NHS employers being issued with a civil penalty (fine) of up to £20,000 per illegal worker, or up to five years' imprisonment and / or an unlimited fine where the employer is found to have knowingly employed an illegal worker;
- attempting to work within the NHS without the required professional registration or essential qualifications for the position;
- providing false or misleading employment history, or providing unsuitable or false employment referees and references to support this; and
- attempting to hide or disguise a criminal record in order to gain employment. They may also use false identity details so that the criminal record does not appear on any checks.

Altered passport

A discharge coordinator at an NHS Trust was seeking employment at another NHS Trust when concerns were raised about the validity of their passport. The concerns were passed to the individual's current employer who launched a counter fraud investigation. The investigation identified that the passport presented to both organisations had been altered and did not belong to the individual concerned. An immigration check revealed that the individual had no right to work in the UK and had no leave to remain.

The individual was sentenced, having entered a guilty plea to possession of an identity document with improper intention, contrary to section 4(1) and (2) of the Identity Documents Act 2010. The individual was sentenced to 23 weeks' imprisonment.

The individual's employment with the NHS Trust was terminated. NHS Pensions returned both employee and employer contributions for the period of illegal working. The total amount returned to the NHS Trust was £25,994.65 (employee £8,472.97 and employer £17,521.68).

Consultant lied about his experience

A consultant surgeon was jailed for six years for lying about his experience of conducting keyhole procedures. When the surgeon was interviewed for his post he told the NHS Trust he had conducted 85 keyhole procedures but he had only performed six.

How to prevent recruitment fraud

The first line of defence against the different forms of recruitment fraud is strong pre-employment checks and controls. These help to prevent applicants from securing employment based upon false or misleading information. It would also stop dishonest individuals from entering the NHS and potentially committing further fraud.

Have you thought about a recruitment fraud workshop for your team? The workshops are interactive and help participants to recognise fraudulent documents and what can be done to prevent fraud in the recruitment process. Talk to your Local Counter Fraud Specialist to find out more.



PROCUREMENT FRAUD

Recent publications have estimated the level of procurement fraud in the NHS in 2017 is anywhere between £1.7bn (Annual Fraud Indicator Review 2017, UK Fraud Costs Measurement Committee) and £252m (Operational Strategy 2017–2020, NHS Counter Fraud Authority).

Whilst the methodologies behind these estimates may differ, it is clear procurement fraud is deemed to be a key fraud risk for the NHS.

At times of austerity, and with staff facing financial pressures, the following controls should be considered, in addition to those existing controls already in place:

- regular assurances over the procurement processes and ensuring the assurance is focused on the areas of greatest risk;
- robustness of the gifts and hospitality and declarations of interest processes and consider comparisons against the suppliers listing;
- the use of a data analysis tools to review procurement transactions; and
- comparisons of top supplier payments per quarter against the procurement and contracts register to ensure compliance with your own procurement and contract management arrangements.



CURRENT EMAIL SCAMS

Email scams, also called phishing scams, are becoming increasingly common as fraudsters come up with new ways to try and trick you into clicking on a link or stealing personal information. We have listed below the current scams that you should be aware of.

Remember, if you are in any doubt about the origin of an email, do not open it.

NHS.net

Several NHS.net users have reported receiving an email alerting them that they need to click on a link to 'Upgrade/protect your valid NHS account!'. Do not click on the link and delete the email.

HMRC business support

Emails are being sent to organisations about a payment from HMRC business support. Recipients are asked to click on the PDF attachment. Do not open any attachments or click on any links within the email, as it may contain malicious software or direct you to a bogus website.



REPORTING CONCERNS

If you have suspicions that fraud may be occurring or wish to receive further information about any of the above, please contact your Local Counter Fraud Specialist (LCFS).

Alternatively, you can report any concerns to NHSCFA on 0800 028 40 60 (between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday) or via the online reporting form: www.cfa.nhs.uk/reportfraud. All information provided via this secure website is completely confidential.

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 and when and where the fraud has taken place. How long the fraud has been going on and any details you have to substantiate your suspicion.

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