

Notice Fraud

March 2019



The BBC recently launched a documentary series of 'Fraud in the NHS'. This new series followed the work of investigators in the NHS Counter Fraud Authority, which tracks down the criminals who steal £1.25 billion every year from the NHS.

Fraud squad NHS (BBC)

Each episode included a variety of cases which detailed the frauds that took place and more importantly, the sanctions that were applied to those criminals involved in perpetrating the frauds and diverting valuable NHS funds from patients.

Some of the cases;

- Hospital worker stole vital surgical equipment worth over £1 million to sell online.
- A global scam that conned a series of NHS hospitals out of over £12.5 million.
- A hospital cashier led the high life - taking over £600k of money meant for patients and putting it in to her own bank account.
- An NHS locksmith defrauded nearly £500k through over inflating costs of products that were purchased from the company his partner owned.
- NHS Manager and friends conspire to take £250k from the NHS.

NHS counter fraud referrals

The NHS Counter Fraud Authority's report of economic crime in the NHS showed over 45 per cent of the referrals to date related to NHS employee fraud. One common area of employee fraud is where salary overpayments occur.

Salary overpayments

Overpayments can arise as a result of a mistake of fact, for example; incorrect details inserted on to the administrative paperwork or an incorrect figure or sum of money has been input into the payroll system.

Other causes could be records not be updated in a timely manner resulting in salary payments being made when they are not due. It could also be a result of the employee intentionally misrepresenting facts or relevant data.

One recent example of an employee fraud is where an ex-nurse admitted theft and was sentenced to six months in prison, suspended for 12 months.

The court heard that for a year and a half, she knowingly received the monthly salary and spent it. She failed to inform NHS staff about the overpayments that were being paid to her every month and it only came to light during a review of salary payments.

Preventative measures

- All staff are responsible for checking the accuracy of their monthly salary payments and have a duty to report any matters or inconsistencies to their manager or payroll team.
- The main reason for overpayments occurring within organisations is where managers and supervisors submit notification information late. Change notifications should be submitted in a timely manner to enable the required action to be taken and ensure that over/underpayments do not arise as a consequence of information being provided late.
- A policy should be in place which clearly outlines the process for recovery of any overpayments (or payment of any underpayments) to reduce the related financial risk.
- Change of circumstances forms should include a statement which advises the employee that if, as a result of the change of circumstances one is over/under paid, these will be recovered/rectified in line with the policy in place.
- If you require any further information regarding overpayments of salary in particular assistance with recovery or implementing preventative measures please contact your LCFS.

What can you do?

- Be responsible for checking the accuracy of your monthly salary payments.
- Notify your payroll team and/or manager if you identify any inconsistencies in the payments received.
- If you are a budget holder, ensure any areas of overspend are expected and all can be justified.

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.

Spot it. Report it. Together we stop it.

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