

Fraud matters

Local Counter Fraud Specialists (LCFS) | 2018/19 Q4

Welcome to this edition of *Fraud Matters*, providing an update on the latest NHS fraud news. While the majority of people who work in or use the NHS are honest, fraud remains a serious issue. Fraud in the NHS diverts resources away from patient care, salaries and services. Your LCFS team aims to make people aware that fraud is being tackled.

UK's most wanted fraudster jailed

Seven years after fleeing the UK, Bayo Awonorin has been jailed for nine and a half years on multiple counts of fraud against public institutions including Lincolnshire Partnership NHS foundation trust.

Between 2012 and 2013 Mr Awonorin targeted 22 public institutions alleging to be a currently employed contractor. He then encouraged them to change their bank account details to his own. He targeted such worthy ventures as a new mental health unit at Lincoln's St George Hospital. This high profile mandate fraud is a reminder of how important good informational controls are.

Awonorin is the last of his 14 co-conspirators to receive a prison sentence after the others were jailed for up to 10 years in 2010. Originally he fled to the US in 2012 but was extradited in September last year. The court heard that Awonorin had been involved in the scheme for "cradle to grave."

Awonorin's conviction brings to a close the largest and most successful fraud investigation undertaken by Lincolnshire police. "Operation Tarlac" has so far secured over 60 years in prison sentences and use confiscation orders to reclaim £4million.

His conviction is a testament to the hard work of Lincolnshire Police, the NHS Counter Fraud team, and Leicester Crown court. Even the US is no place to hide for fraudsters.

Source: BBC, January 2019

"Evill plan" uncovered by NHS Counter Fraud Team

Following an investigation by the NHS Counter Fraud Service Wales, Mark Evill, Robert Howells and Michael Cope were found guilty of committing fraud against the NHS and were sentenced to a total of 14 years imprisonment.

Evill used his powers to appoint contractors, pay invoices and approve tenders to award his own firm contracts for NHS improvement and maintenance. Cope and Howells accepted bribes to cover up Evill's actions.

Evill's fraudulent firm accepted £822,000 in contracts, including a water and electrical supply contract worth £342,000. The work was then performed cheaply, to a low standard, ensuring the NHS had to pay for it to be fixed afterwards.

The Judge commended lead investigator Cheryl Hill, Deputy Manager of NHS CFS Wales, noting that her investigation and case preparation had greatly assisted the judicial process.

The fraud was uncovered after an anonymous tip-off to the NHS Fraud and Corruption Reporting Line. Cheryl Hill, said "All referrals will be professionally investigated by CFS Wales and appropriate criminal, civil and disciplinary action will be pursued."

This case serves as a reminder that the hard work of NHS counter fraud specialists requires the courage of NHS staff to report it in the first place.

Source: NHSCFA, November 2018

Secure your
email account
in two minutes

Use a strong,
separate password



Enable two-factor
authentication



Met Police ActionFraud CYBER AWARD @cyberprotectuk

Why are email accounts so important?

We know from research that people's inboxes can be a "treasure trove" for hackers – with access to bank details, passport photos and home addresses. Hackers are able to exploit a weak email password leaving people vulnerable to the risk of identity theft.



Spotlight on: "Chief Exec" email fraud

What is Chief Exec email fraud?

Chief Exec or 'CEO' Email fraud occurs when an email is sent to an NHS organisation, claiming to be from its Chief Exec or Chief Officer and requiring funds to be transferred urgently. These emails are designed to exploit the pressure of both the sender's "seniority" and the urgency of the request. They may also rely on victims feeling too embarrassed to report or challenge what they have received.

Case study: An accountant in the Finance team of a Trust received an email that seemed to be from the Chief Exec, requiring an urgent payment of £250k to a professional services firm. The email claimed that the Chief Exec had already agreed this with the Finance Director and would provide backing documentation for the records later that day. The accountant was concerned for a number of reasons, not having been asked for this before. He mentioned his concerns to the Finance Director who said she knew nothing about the payment. They contacted the Chief Exec who was on holiday and confirmed it must be a scam. If the accountant had not been brave enough to challenge "his chief exec", the NHS could easily have lost this money.

Here are some examples of what you can do to help prevent CEO Email fraud:

- Always exercise professional scepticism regardless of the seniority of the staff involved. Good management appreciates cautious staff.
- Check the email address against existing contact details, check for small differences in spelling, logo or domain.
- Be aware of "social engineering" techniques: is the email written to shock you into urgent action?
- Ensure there are clear written instructions and procedures for all staff involved, detailing access levels and responsibilities

The CCGs are taking part in the National Fraud Initiative ("NFI"), a data-matching process that compares data held by many organisations to look for potential fraud. Previous NFI exercises have identified £millions in fraud, including suppliers deliberately charging for goods and services more than once and employed people claiming benefits to which they are not entitled. Any matches relating to the CCGs are now available.

Meet your counter fraud team

Contact your local counter fraud specialist team in absolute confidence:



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"We're here to talk about any concerns you may have about fraud and corruption, or just happy to discuss why fraud is a big issue for the NHS. Never be afraid to give us a call."

Neil Mohan

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Report fraud
confidentially
here

or call
0800 028 4060



NHS fraud.
Spot it. Report it.
Together we stop it.