

£38,766 Direct Payment Fraud



A Paignton Mum who defrauded the NHS of £38,766 has been sentenced to 9 months imprisonment suspended for 18-months.

It concludes a joint fraud investigation by Sandra Bell, Local Counter Fraud Specialist at Torbay and South Devon Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and DC Lisa Stiddard, from Devon and Cornwall Police.

Susan Rennolds, 70 from Paignton admitted to submitting forged invoices over a period of 7 years for respite care. During this period she organised care for her son at a hospice in Oxford, claiming they charged £300 a night rather than the true amount of £100. She also submitted false invoices to the NHS for overnight stays at the hospice that never took place.

Rennolds claimed to have spent this money on night time care for her son, which the NHS did not fund.

She pleaded guilty to one charge of Fraud by False Representation, contrary to Section 2 of the Fraud Act, 2006, at Exeter Crown Court (July , 2016). The Recorder commented on the loss to the taxpayer.

The Five Most Common NHS Employee Frauds:

Sickness – NHS Staff working elsewhere whilst receiving sick pay.

Timesheet/overtime – False and manipulated records of hours worked.

Bursary/training – Improperly obtaining a bursary or training course.

Travel/subsistence – False or inflated claims for expenses.

CV Issues – Gaining employment through false qualifications or experience.

(Each of these Fraud Areas feature in this issue of our Fraud Counts Newsletter)

Cornwall Agency Nurse Struck Off Register

Melanie Gray, an agency nurse working in Cornwall forged authorising signatures on her timesheets on several occasions between January and April 2015. During her time at the Trust, she submitted four timesheets with forged authorising signatures.

Some shifts which were authorised by forged signatures were found to be correct, however others were entirely false, with Gray not working at all within the claimed hours.

The Trust recovered its losses from the agency concerned and terminated Gray's services.

This matter was then referred to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) in May 2016 who resolved that the only appropriate remedy was a striking off order.

Fraud Alert – Beware Email Phishing Scams

'Phishing' is the name given to a process of scamming where bogus emails are sent to individuals at random. These are often disguised as an email sent by a person or organisation who would normally be known to the recipient, for example banks, online shopping sites and employers login pages.

Emails may include a link that needs to be clicked in order to perform an urgent action addressed in the subject line. When clicked, this link may take you to a fake website which is similar to that of the individual or organisation being imitated. However, the information entered into the websites can be tracked by fraudsters, enabling them to steal money from bank accounts or use personal information to commit fraud.

To avoid becoming a victim of email phishing scams, you should be suspicious of any unexpected emails, even if they look genuine. The following actions will greatly reduce the risk of falling foul to these scams:

- Check that emails are personalised;
- Use the organisation's own website (and not the link) to perform any alleged outstanding actions;
- Do not give away personal information or passwords; and most importantly
- Ignore and delete phishing emails without clicking any links within them.



Gynaecologist Told to Repay Over £75k or Face Prison



Dr Anthony Madu, 47, from London has been told to repay £75,620 within 6 months by Cardiff Crown Court. If he fails to pay, he has been told to expect a 2 year prison sentence.

Madu worked in three other hospitals while he was on paid suspension and sick leave from Cardiff and Vale University Health Board between August 2009 and June 2010. In October 2009, he was suspended due to concerns over his professional conduct. In March 2010 he supplied the Health Board with a medical certificate suggesting that he had not been fit for work from 23 January, and would not be fit for work until the 2 June. His employment was terminated on 10 June.

However, it was later discovered that Dr Madu had been working as a locum at Scarborough District Hospital, as well as at Sandwell General Hospital and the Royal Oldham Hospital throughout his sick period. None of this secondary employment had been declared to his employer, as was required, and Madu was arrested in November 2011.

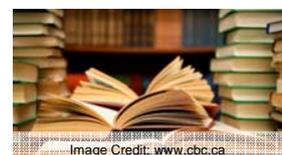
It was thought that Dr Madu earned an extra £69,000 at these other hospitals, in addition to his Cardiff and Vale University Health Board salary.

Bristol NHS Worker Jailed for False Identity Fraud

Adaku Okafor, 32, of Downend Road, Bristol, was found guilty of committing fraud by false representation by using a false residence permit and false passport in order to obtain a £13,000 student grant, and to gain work in several NHS Trusts.

Stolen, forged and fake documents, as well as false employment references secured Okafor NHS employment for eight years in several Trusts after her leave to remain in the UK had expired.

Okafor was jailed for 16 months and was ordered to pay a victim surcharge. Her deportation was also recommended by Judge Harrington of Bristol Crown Court.



Fraud may be reported anonymously by telephoning the NHS Protect confidential phone line 0800 028 40 60 or online at <http://www.reportnhsfraud.nhs.uk>

Staff Overpayment Responsibilities

Are you being overpaid?

If you think you are being overpaid, you have a duty to report this to your manager and payroll both verbally and in writing.

The main reason for errors in payment to employees is a change in circumstances. Here are some examples:

- Termination of employment.
- Reduction in working hours.
- No longer entitled to unsocial hours payment and on-call allowances.
- Failure to reduce mileage expense rate after 3500 miles travelled.
- Failure to reduce sick pay entitlement from full pay to half pay.

Although the employee may not be at fault, substantial overpayments occurring over a long period may be investigated to establish what went wrong.

It is therefore important to ensure all changes of circumstance are reported to payroll in a timely manner, and that staff check their payslips thoroughly and report any discrepancies.



Fraud Awareness Events

An important part of Counter Fraud work is creating an anti-fraud culture within our NHS organisations.

Fraud awareness for all staff is crucial in helping to prevent fraud and we hold events such as Fraud Awareness Presentations and Fraud Stands at corporate events.

Fraud Stands can be arranged to be held on certain dates to capture as many staff as possible. Fraud Awareness Presentations can be tailored to meet varying requirements, based on the service that you offer, your location, the number of staff and the time that you have available.

Presentations will normally cover:

- What is Fraud?
- Important legislation
- Recent national and local case studies
- The role of the Local Counter Fraud Specialist (LCFS)
- How Fraud can be reported.



Please contact your LCFS (see next page) to arrange a Fraud Awareness Event in your department.

Gifts and Hospitality

The Bribery Act 2010, which has been law since July 2011, was implemented to combat bribery and corruption in the public and private sector. The Act explains offences such as giving a bribe, accepting a bribe, bribing a foreign public official and the corporate offence of failing to prevent bribery.

In response to the threat of bribery, NHS organisations have introduced policies and procedures which must be adhered to, such as the Standards of Business Conduct Policy, which should include each organisation's stance on high risk areas such as Declarations of Conflicts of Interest, Gifts and Hospitality.

Gifts and Hospitality Policy:

This states that staff must report any offers or receipt of gifts, hospitality or sponsorship using an official declaration form which must be reviewed by a line manager and recorded on the Organisation's register, which is publically available upon request.

This process ensures transparency, and protects the organisation and its employees should claims of bribery or corruption arise. In order to further protect themselves, staff should ask themselves:

- Do I, or would a third party, see what I am being offered as reasonable and proportionate?
- Am I being offered this because of the influence that I may have on a decision?

If you have any questions or concerns, you should contact your LCFS immediately.

Contact the Counter Fraud Team

Audit South West has a team of Local Counter Fraud Specialists fully accredited with the University of Portsmouth. We are based in Devon, Cornwall and Bristol.

The immediate aim of our Counter Fraud work is to prevent and deter fraud and hold to account those who commit fraud against the NHS.

Fraud investigations show how the vigilance of employees often leads to the discovery of high value fraud committed against the NHS. If you would like to know more about our Counter Fraud work or arrange for your team to receive a presentation from your Local Counter Fraud Specialist (LCFS) then please contact us.

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