

The NHS Counter Fraud Authority:

Fighting fraud in the NHS

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

Who we are

The NHS Counter Fraud Authority (NHSCFA) is a special health authority tasked to lead the fight against fraud, bribery and corruption in the NHS. Focused entirely on counter fraud work, the NHSCFA is independent from other NHS bodies and is directly accountable to the Department of Health and Social Care.

Our mission is to lead the fight against fraud affecting the NHS and wider health service, and protect vital resources intended for patient care.

Our vision is for an NHS that can protect its valuable resources from fraud.

Our purpose is to lead the NHS in protecting its resources by using intelligence to understand the nature of fraud risks, investigate serious and complex fraud, reduce its impact and drive improvements.

The NHSCFA's remit covers the NHS and the wider health service in England. In Wales we provide specialist counter fraud support functions to the Welsh Government under section 83 of the Government of Wales Act 2006.

Fighting NHS fraud

According to our latest estimate, fraud costs the NHS £1.29 billion a year – enough money to pay for over 40,000 staff nurses, 5,000 frontline ambulances or 116,000 hip replacements. This is taxpayers' money that is taken away from patient care and falls into the hands of criminals.

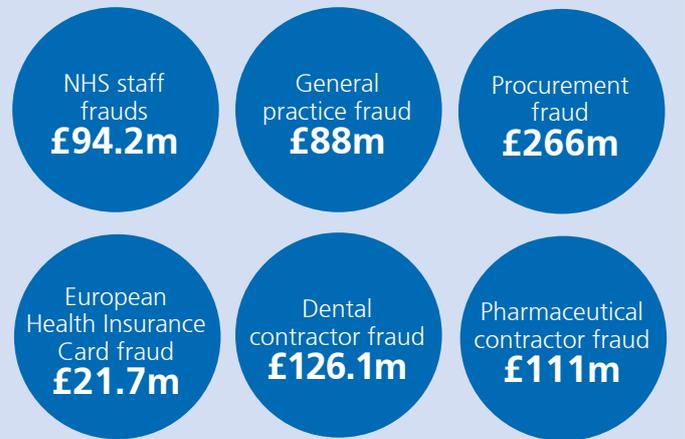
When we say 'fraud', we refer to a range of economic crimes, such as fraud, bribery and corruption or any other illegal acts committed by an individual or group of individuals to obtain a financial or professional gain.

While those who commit fraud against the NHS are a minority, they are having a serious impact on us all. Experience shows that this minority can include all kinds of people, from patients to NHS staff, from contractors to members of the public and organised criminals. It is important to recognise the diversity of people who commit fraud. They look no different to anyone else.

Fraud against the NHS takes many forms; here are just a few examples:

- **False claims.** This can range from patients claiming for free treatment when they are not entitled to it, to NHS professionals claiming money for services they have not provided.
- **Payment diversion fraud.** This happens when fraudsters trick an NHS organisation into paying money to them, for example by pretending to be from one of the organisation's regular suppliers.
- **Procurement fraud.** This relates to the purchasing of goods and services by an NHS organisation. An example is bid rigging, when bidders agree between themselves to eliminate competition, denying the organisation a fair price or delivering poor quality goods or services.
- **Misrepresentation of qualifications or experience.** This occurs when someone applying for a job claims to have qualifications or experience they do not actually have. This is particularly serious if it occurs in senior and medical positions.
- **Timesheet fraud.** This happens when staff falsify their timesheets, for example to obtain payment for hours they have not actually worked.

Estimated losses to fraud in some key areas of NHS spend in 2016-17



Fraud has been identified as the crime that people are most likely to experience in the UK, and no individual or organisation is immune from the risk. Fraud against the NHS has a direct impact on the resources available for patient care. The NHSCFA is equipped and determined to lead the fight against NHS fraud, working closely with our stakeholders in the NHS and beyond.

Our objectives

Our vision is for an NHS which can protect its valuable resources from fraud.

To help us achieve this, our strategy for 2017-2020 sets out five key objectives:

1. Deliver the DHSC strategy, vision and strategic plan and lead counter fraud activity in the NHS in England
2. Be the single, expert, intelligence-led organisation providing a centralised investigation capacity for complex economic crime matters in the NHS
3. Lead, guide and influence the improvement of standards in counter fraud work
4. Take the lead and encourage fraud reporting across the NHS and wider health group
5. Invest in and develop NHSCFA staff

Our expertise

The NHSCFA is the centre of excellence for combating fraud, bribery and corruption against the NHS. Our experienced and committed staff include specialists in intelligence, fraud prevention, computer forensics, fraud investigation, financial investigation, data analysis and communications.

We provide a range of specialised services to tackle NHS fraud.

Intelligence – As an intelligence-led organisation, the NHSCFA uses the latest in intelligence and information gathering techniques to build an accurate picture of the fraud risks facing the NHS, to inform preventative action and to support investigations.

Investigations – We are experts in investigating the most serious, complex and high-profile cases of fraud, and work closely with the police and the Crown Prosecution Service to bring offenders to justice. Our specialist financial investigators have powers to recover NHS money lost to fraud, and we have a forensic computing team who collect and analyse digital evidence.

Fraud prevention – We develop a range of targeted fraud prevention solutions to address identified fraud risks. This may include reviewing and redesigning whole systems or developing tailored guidance or other solutions.

Information analytics – We use complex algorithms and data mining tools to identify both normal behaviour and outliers in NHS data, within which fraudulent behaviour can be found. The resulting analyses are used to support ongoing investigations, inform the intelligence picture and guide fraud prevention steps.

Standards – We set standards for counter fraud work across the NHS. We assess commissioners and providers of NHS services for compliance with the standards through our quality assurance programme.

Staff and organisational development – Our staff are the NHSCFA's most important asset. We are committed to developing a skilled workforce, in line with the government's counter fraud professional standards. We ensure continued compliance with legislation and professional standards.

Communications – By raising awareness of fraud against the NHS and publicising the work of the NHSCFA, we encourage NHS staff, other stakeholders and the public to join the fight against NHS fraud.

Digitalisation and technology – We strive to be a digital by default organisation, using technology to make our work quicker, smarter and more data-driven.

Working in partnership

While it is the NHSCFA's responsibility to fight fraud against the NHS, we can't do this on our own. We work with a wide range of partner organisations, including the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and NHS Improvement. We also work with local counter fraud specialists, directors of finance and audit committee chairs in NHS health bodies to develop and further strengthen counter fraud work across the NHS.

Sharing information is an increasingly important part of the fight against fraud and we have data

sharing agreements in place with other regulatory and law enforcement agencies. This is vital as criminals often operate in multiple sectors and across geographical boundaries.

We actively support the development of a counter fraud community across government and have worked closely with the Cabinet Office on the development of the Government Counter Fraud Profession and counter fraud professional standards. NHSCFA investigators are among the founding members of the profession.

How you can help

Everyone has a part to play in fighting fraud. Being aware of the risk and remaining vigilant are the most important first steps, followed by knowing how to report any suspicions or concerns you may have about fraud.

It is easy to report fraud, bribery or corruption affecting the NHS. You can call our anonymous, 24-hour reporting line on **0800 028 40 60** (powered by Crimestoppers) or you can report online, completely confidentially, at www.cfa.nhs.uk/reportfraud.

By reporting fraud you can help the NHSCFA to ensure offenders are brought to justice and that money is returned to the NHS to care for patients. Reporting fraud will also help us to form a better picture of the ongoing fraud risks and trends so that the NHS is better equipped to prevent it.

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

