



## News Release:

# Senior IT manager sentenced for £800,000 fraud against NHS and HMRC

Following procurement fraud investigation led by the NHS Counter Fraud Authority

**Date: 30/06/2021**

Essex IT manager, Barry Stannard, was sentenced today to 5 years and 4 months' imprisonment for defrauding the NHS and HMRC of over £800,000 (Chelmsford Crown Court, 30 June 2021).

Last month he pleaded guilty to two charges of fraud by false representation and two of cheating the public revenue.

The total amount defrauded over a seven year period was £806,229.80. The sentencing comes at a time when the NHSCFA has renewed its focus on procurement fraud, and is encouraging more people to report any suspicion of it through the established reporting lines.

Barry David Stannard (53 of Chelmsford, Essex, previously of Hadleigh, Ipswich) committed the offences when he was Head of Unified Communications at Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust (MEHT). MEHT has since been merged into Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust.

As a band 8B Senior Manager, he was in a position of trust.

Concerns first arose after the trust ran a data matching exercise on its payroll and accounts payable records, alongside Companies House records.

After a comprehensive initial investigation by the Local Counter Fraud Specialist provider (RSM), the investigation was escalated to the NHSCFA's National Investigation Service when it became apparent that specialist financial investigation powers would be required.

While Stannard had submitted a 'nil return' declaration of interests form to the trust, the investigation confirmed he was actually the director of two companies that had received a large amount of money from the trust over at least seven years (2012-2019) – because he was submitting and then settling the invoices.

While the IT manager methodically siphoned NHS money into his own pocket, no products or services invoiced for by these companies were ever provided to the NHS.

The hundreds of invoices submitted by his own companies to MEHT were all individually for relatively modest amounts – meaning Stannard was authorised to sign them off without further checks.

On the invoices he submitted, he also charged for VAT which was never forwarded to the HMRC. The VAT registration number quoted was false and related to another legitimate company. The VAT he charged the NHS totalled £132,000. This is included in the total of £806,229.80 that Stannard defrauded the NHS.

The payments came from MEHT's IT budget, which inevitably meant there was less to spend on genuine IT.

The NHSCFA works closely with other enforcement agencies, in this case alerting HMRC that Stannard had appropriated a legitimate company's VAT number.

**Sue Frith, CEO of the NHSCFA, said today:**

“Barry Stannard abused his position in an outrageous way to line his pockets with money intended for NHS services. We are aware of the significant risk that procurement fraud poses for the NHS, which is why the NHS Counter Fraud Authority has been continually working to develop fraud prevention solutions over the last few years. Today's sentence shows that the NHSCFA's investigative and preventative work tackling NHS fraud is vital.

“If you suspect NHS fraud, please report your concerns to us through either our online reporting form, or by calling our fraud and corruption reporting line.”

(ends)

**If you suspect that anyone is committing fraud or another economic crime against the NHS, tell NHSCFA about it – you can visit our main website to report online: [www.cfa.nhs.uk](http://www.cfa.nhs.uk) or telephone our 24-hour reporting line 0800 028 40 60.**

**“NHS fraud. Spot it, report it, together we stop it”**

**For more information contact the NHSCFA press office on 07747 461860/  
[media@nhscfa.gov.uk](mailto:media@nhscfa.gov.uk).**

**Notes to Editors**

1. The NHS Counter Fraud Authority is a Special Health Authority established under the NHS Act 2006 as amended. It is sponsored by the Department for Health and Social Care, accountable to the department's Anti-Fraud Unit (AFU).
2. The NHSCFA assesses that the NHS vulnerability to fraud, bribery and corruption leads to an estimated loss of £1.21 billion (2018-19).
3. When the NHSCFA uses the term 'fraud', we refer to a range of economic crimes, such as fraud, bribery, corruption or any other illegal acts committed by an individual or group of individuals to obtain a financial or professional gain.

4. The NHSCFA also supports the work of the NHS Counter Fraud Service (Wales).
5. The NHSCFA works closely with NHS Local Counter Fraud Specialists across the NHS in England to ensure that healthcare crime is tackled, and a culture of fraud prevention and deterrence is in place.
6. The NHSCFA works collaboratively with NHS Scotland Counter Fraud Services on fraud issues.
7. There are some 300 professionally trained and accredited Local Counter Fraud Specialists in place within health bodies across England and Wales.