



News Release:

NHS finance chief sentenced for triple job fraud

After investigations by NHS Counter Fraud Authority and Greater Manchester Police

Date: 15/04/2021

A former NHS Director of Finance was sentenced today to 11 years and 5 months' imprisonment following his conviction for a series of serious fraud offences, which included significant offences against the NHS. The NHSCFA investigated the case in partnership with Greater Manchester Police, and have been responsible for investigating the fact that Day was fraudulently occupying three full time senior NHS positions at once (Leeds Crown Court, 15 April 2021).

Stephen Day (age 51, of Queich Mill, Blairgowrie) obtained the positions through two employment agencies which were both unaware of his deception - Axon Resourcing Limited and Hays Specialist Recruitment Limited.

From November 2012 to January 2013, Day simultaneously held full time interim Director of Finance or equivalent posts with Merseyside Commissioning Support Unit (CSU); South East Staffordshire and Seisdon Peninsula Clinical Commissioning Group (SESSP CCG); and Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Trust (CWPT). He failed to disclose his employment to all three organisations.

Day worked as a full time Director of Finance for both Merseyside CSU and SESSP CCG between 1st November 2012 and 14th January 2013. This enabled him to fraudulently earn a combined salary of £2000 a day. During this period, in December 2012 he accepted a third simultaneous NHS Director of Finance position, with CWPT. The total loss to the NHS amounted to £88,000.

What started in May 2013 as a locally-led NHS investigation was tasked to the NHSCFA's National Investigation Service in September that year. Its investigators uncovered that Day had spared no effort to maintain the illusion of carrying out his multiple responsibilities. To cover his tracks, he would contact his NHS employers with a range of excuses for his numerous absences - from needing to "work from home", to having to receive "cancer treatment". On one occasion, when he needed to attend an NHS job interview in London, he said that his father had died.

On top of his NHS posts, he had extensive private business interests to run. Day declined to use NHS mobile phones and laptops and was only available through the personal assistant at his private business.

At the start of his employment at CWPT he commenced a two-day handover with the outgoing Director of Finance. Day was still employed at SESSG CCG and unbeknown to him, the outgoing Director of Finance at CWPT was taking up a new role over seeing all the Directors of Finance in the Staffordshire area including the role at SESSG CCG, which Day occupied.

This was the start of his undoing and it was quickly ascertained that Day had held the position of Director of Finance at Merseyside CSU and Director of Finance at SESSG CCG at the same time for a period of about nine weeks with neither NHS organisation aware of the matter.

During his interview under caution, he tried to defend his criminal actions by saying that it did not stipulate in his contracts that he had to declare other employment.

The NHSCFA were assisted by Greater Manchester Police with the arrest of Stephen Day and subsequent property searches. Greater Manchester Police later launched their own investigation into Day after receiving four separate allegations against Stephen Day which amounted to over £1.3 million in suspected fraudulent activity.

Day pleaded guilty to 12 charges of fraud and theft, including three counts relating to the NHS, but disputed the amounts he had stolen for the Greater Manchester Police investigation. Day was sentenced on all 12 counts, with all sentences to run consecutively, totalling 11 years and 5 months. Day is to serve a minimum of half of the sentence in prison, with the remainder on licence.

HHJ Batiste, commended the “exceptional police and investigative work” by “Detective Sergeant, Donoghue of Greater Manchester Police, Ben Evans, FI Manager of Greater Manchester Police and Mr Mick Meade, Senior Fraud Investigator of the NHSCFA.” The Judge also added that “it was an exceptionally complex case requiring much hard work which was to a high standard”.

Richard Rippin, Head of Operations of the NHSCFA, said today:

“Stephen Day carried out a calculated fraud against the NHS. Any money lost to fraud affects the amount of resources the NHS has available for front line care. The money stolen by Day would have been enough to fund the annual salaries of three nurses. We are pleased that through joint working with Greater Manchester Police we were able to show the court the full extent of his offending. The NHSCFA believe that multi-agency working such as this is the best way to stamp out fraud against the public sector. If you suspect NHS fraud, please report it to us either through our online reporting form or by calling our fraud and corruption reporting line.”

Detective Sergeant Stuart Donohue from Greater Manchester Police's Specialist Fraud Investigation team, said today:

“Day was a career-criminal. He built his life on cheating and stealing. He was very meticulous in what he did and would often move money to and from so many accounts that it was difficult to distinguish the route it had taken. He did this to try and confuse us,

but we never doubted that we, alongside NHS investigators, would uncover the extent of his deceit and greed.

“Every step of the way he has lied and tried to find any way to avoid going to prison. He has created numerous deliberate delays to the prosecution, which the Police and CPS have tirelessly dealt with, and has been unwilling to fully accept his actions. But, as with all crimes, it has caught up with him today.

“I would like to thank the victims in this case for their unwavering patience over the last six years, and assure them that although the investigation has closed, we'll continue to work to try and recompense them, and recoup some of the funds he stole.”

Ben Reid, of the Crown Prosecution Service, said today:

“Stephen Day was a financial consultant who was trusted by many to look after their money – but instead he took the money and spent it on holidays and houses for himself.

“He acted in a despicable manner when he stole from the taxpayer’s much needed funding of the NHS, companies and individuals he tricked through romance frauds.

“The CPS worked closely with Police and NHS investigators to evidence Mr Day’s lies and we are pleased that he has now been imprisoned which hopefully brings some comfort to his victims.”

(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 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.govv.uk.

Notes to Editors

1. NHS investigators were the first to launch an investigation into Day. Then in September 2014 they met with Greater Manchester Police (GMP), who had received separate allegations of fraud involving private companies in which Day held positions. A simultaneous investigation by GMP was being conducted into Day due to a number of reports received about his behaviour at work in all three NHS organisations. The NHSCFA and GMP then joined their efforts.

2. Stephen Day worked for Merseyside CSU (now Cheshire and Merseyside CSU) from July 2012 until January 2013 (through Axon Resourcing Limited). He worked for South East Staffordshire and Seisdon Peninsula CCG from November 2012 until January 2013 (through Hays Specialist Recruitment). He worked for Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Trust during January 2013 (through Axon Resourcing Limited).
3. 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).
4. The NHSCFA assess that the NHS vulnerability to fraud, bribery and corruption leads to an estimated loss of £1.21 billion (2018-19).
5. When 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.
6. NHSCFA also supports the work of the NHS Counter Fraud Service (Wales).
7. 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.
8. NHSCFA works collaboratively with NHS Scotland Counter Fraud Services on fraud issues.
9. There are some 300 professionally trained and accredited Local Counter Fraud Specialists in place within health bodies across England and Wales.