

Fraudulent Times

A newsletter from your Counter Fraud Specialist.

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If you wish to report any concerns regarding fraud, bribery or corruption, please contact a member of our team (details can be found on the back page), email

360assurance.counterfraud@nhs.net,
contact the NHS Counter Fraud Authority
Reporting Line on 0800 028 4060, or use
the QR code on the final page to report
anonymously.

Welcome to the latest edition of Fraudulent Times.

This newsletter has been designed to highlight areas of fraud within the NHS and to help you understand why we need to combat it effectively. By raising awareness of fraud cases, it will help you to identify what fraud is and where it is most likely to occur. As always, I hope that you will find our newsletter a useful and interesting read. We value feedback on the content so if you have any comments or suggestions for topics in future editions, please email these to us at the address at the bottom of the page.

Craig Bevan-Davies and Paul Westwood - Assistant Directors of Anti-Crime Services at 360 Assurance

INTERNATIONAL FRAUD AWARENESS WEEK

International Fraud Awareness Week (IFAW) starts on Sunday 12 November 2023, running until Saturday 16 November 2023. Throughout the week your Counter Fraud Specialist will be issuing awareness material such as screensavers, posters and awareness training.

Visit the 360 Assurance website, via <https://www.360assurance.co.uk/counterfraud/>, to identify your Counter Fraud Specialist, complete online awareness training, view the latest guidance on fraud in your working area, the latest fraud alerts issued and to report fraud.

Your Counter Fraud Specialist can provide face-to-face training that discusses what fraud is, identifying frauds in your working area and how to report any suspicions. Contact them to get your training booked!



PSYCHIATRIST WHO FAKED MEDICAL QUALIFICATIONS FOUND GUILTY OF 13 COUNTS OF FRAUD AND SENTENCED TO 5 YEARS IMPRISONMENT



Zholia Alemi, a doctor who worked as a psychiatrist in the NHS across the UK, has been found guilty of 13 counts of fraud and sentenced to 5 years imprisonment for providing false qualifications. Alemi worked in the NHS for 20 years across England, Scotland and Wales.

Alemi provided a forged degree certificate in addition to providing a fraudulent letter of veracity from the University of Auckland which falsely confirmed the completion of medical training to a satisfactory level.

For more details on the story go to this [BBC news article](#)

This highlights the need for all organisations to have processes in place for:

- establishing the veracity of qualifications for staff (in particular medical and patient facing staff)
- ensuring pre-employment checks are completed in line with NHS employment standards and that any discrepancies are investigated.

For more information about fraud against the NHS, please visit the [NHSCFA's website](#), follow them on social media ([Twitter](#), [Linkedin](#), [Facebook](#)), or speak to your Local LCFS who can provide further advice and support (see contact details on the last page)

360assurance.counterfraud@nhs.net

FRAUDSTER STOLE £500K FROM NHS TO FUND HIS OWN LUXURY LIFE USING HIS DEAD WIFE'S EMAIL

Thomas Elrick was the assistant managing director for planned and unscheduled care at Harrow Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). As a part of his role, Elrick had the authority to approve invoices of up to £50,000. Over a period between August 2018 and December 2020, Elrick defrauded the NHS out of £564,484. Elrick abused his position by signing off payments to a ghost company, Tree of Andre Therapy Services Limited, which was a company that Elrick had set up and registered in Scotland under his husband's name. No services had been provided to the Harrow CCG by Tree of Andre.



Elrick splurged the extra income on lavish holidays to the Maldives and Hong Kong (among others), travelled business class and spent excessively at retailers such as Apple, Amazon and Curry's. Elrick was living the life of luxury whilst the Harrow CCG was facing an ever-increasing deficit.

To mask the fraud, in June 2020, Elrick sent an email to Harrow CCG from an email address belonging to his late wife, who had passed away eight years prior. The email claimed to be from the Tree of Andre and was an attempt to evidence where care had been provided to NHS patients using anonymised data.

When interviewed following his arrest, Elrick admitted all counts of fraud, and later jailed for three years and six months.

NHS scientist suspended after scamming John Lewis out of over £1,600 by swapping price tags.

Maureen Bennie was a biomedical scientist who was working in the Haematology Department for Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS trust. Ms Bennie carried out a sophisticated scam to defraud John Lewis of more than £1,600. Ms Bennie committed the fraud by swapping the price tags of expensive products to cheaper ones, prior to making purchases. In one instance, Ms Bennie also returned a watch to the store, the watch had been placed into the box of a more expensive watch, Ms Bennie then claimed a refund of almost double what she had paid for the item. The panel later stated that Ms Bennie's actions were dishonest, and it was clear that Ms Bennie had tried to obtain benefits discounts and refunds, to which she knew she was not entitled.

Ms Bennie accepted her guilt, admitting the criminal charges and was granted 'absolute discharge' by Glasgow Sheriff Court after repaying less than the total value of her fraud. At the medical worker's disciplinary hearing, Ms Bennie admitted misconduct and stated that she had not been herself at the time of the incidents. Ms Bennie was subsequently suspended from her profession for 12 months after admitting to misconduct at her Health and Care Professions Tribunal Panel.

NHS Worker to pay £26,000 back for failing to disclose criminal convictions

Narinder Rayat has been ordered to repay £26,000 to the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust for failing to disclose their criminal convictions. Rayat was found guilty of fraud by false representation and failure to disclose information to make a gain for self/ another or cause/ expose other to a loss. She had applied for 34 jobs at the Trust between 2015 and 2016 but had failed to disclose previous convictions on her applications.

For more details on the story go to this [West Mercia Police article](#)

This highlights the need for all organisations to:

- undertake DBS checking prior to employing individuals at the Trust
- ensure pre-employment checks are completed in line with NHS employment standards and that any discrepancies are investigated.

The latest scams for you to be aware of:

Looking for a Loan... Beware of Suspicious Subscriptions!

People searching for loans online have reported being signed up for monthly subscriptions inadvertently. The subscriptions are to many different company names (most variants include the word 'Saving') and customer accounts are being debited around £30 per month. In most cases, they had been asked to approve a charge of 12p or 14p to "verify" their bank account when using a loan broker website.

If you have any concerns about subscriptions which you do not recognise, then you should in the first instance speak to your bank.

[Suspicious subscriptions: borrowers targeted by £30-a-month 'savings' sites after searching for loans - Which? News](#)

Large Religious & Community Groups on WhatsApp are being targeted by scammers.

Action Fraud have warned of scammers posing as members of large religious or community groups who aim to infiltrate the groups and gain members' trust. The scammer then asks individuals to share a passcode 'to allow access to an upcoming conference call'.

The passcode allows the scammer to take over the WhatsApp account, which can then be used for scams including 'Friend in Need' scams. Where scammers contact and individuals' friends and family and ask them for money to help them. You could also add extra protection to your account using two step verification.

[Action Fraud warn of recent WhatsApp scam hitting community and religious groups | Action Fraud](#)

Warning: Fraudsters are increasingly targeting consumers over the telephone.

There has been several reports of fraudsters impersonating trusted organisations i.e. police officers, banks, HMRC, and NHS.

The criminal uses spoofing to make the number appear genuine on the consumer's phone. The caller then asks for the target's personal and sensitive information or banking information. Any information gathered can then be used for criminal purposes.

If you think you may have been affected, you should report your experience to action fraud.

[Impersonation Scam | Take Five \(takefive-stopfraud.org.uk\)](#)

Email Scams – Top Tips for Staying Safe...

Following a recent increase in email phishing scams, please use the tips below to help you stay safe:

- Always check who sent the email. Was the email from a recognised email address or is there a slight discrepancy i.e. a spelling mistake?
- Is the email asking for personal information such as banking information... or is there a short timeframe to respond?

Fraudsters often use language to indicate a request is urgent – take some time to think if the email is legitimate and report any concerns which you may have. You could try and contact the individual by the phone to ensure the request is genuine (remember to use a previously known number and not to call the number on the email).

[How to spot an email scam - Which?](#)



Don't get hooked by phishing criminals

Phishing criminals may target your work email as well as your personal one. Protect yourself and your organisation - read the latest advice at cfa.nhs.uk



Security Matters

VIOLENCE PREVENTION REDUCTION STANDARD

The Violence Prevention and Reduction Standard employs a four-step management method, which is Plan, Do, Check and Act, to validate, control and achieve continuous improvement of processes.

All providers of NHS-funded services will be required to review compliance and provide board assurance twice yearly. We have developed a dashboard-based toolkit to capture and succinctly report the required information.

We are an accredited provider of Prevention and Management of Violence and Aggression (PMVA) training. If you would like any further information on PMVA training by 360 Assurance please contact Robert Purseglove (pictured on the right) via robert.purseglove@nhs.net or 07827 842 964.



Creating a Safer NHS: Uniting Against Violence and Abuse

Violence and abuse directed at our NHS colleagues are not merely statistics. They are distressing experiences that can have a lasting impact on the health and wellbeing of our dedicated professionals. The actions of a small minority can have a significant impact on the lives of our colleagues. The 2022 NHS Staff Survey presented some concerning figures:

- 14.7% of NHS staff reported at least one incident of physical violence in the past year, stemming from patients, service users, relatives, or the public. In the ambulance sector, the number rises alarmingly to 45.8%.
- 27.8% of NHS staff experienced harassment, bullying, or abuse from the same sources, echoing trends seen in previous years.

The issue of violence prevention and reduction in the NHS has taken centre stage. When the government unveiled the latest NHS pay package in March 2023, it came with a commitment to ensure that NHS staff can work in an environment free from deliberate violence, abuse, and aggression. The message was clear: *'NHS staff should work in an environment that is free from deliberate violence, abuse and aggression. The government will ask the existing groups established in the NHS Social Partnership Forum working on violence reduction to work with the NHS Staff Council to identify ways to tackle and reduce violence against NHS staff.'*

To address this, the NHS Violence Prevention and Reduction Standard complements existing health and safety legislation and equips NHS organisations with a risk-based framework to support a safe and secure working environment for NHS staff, safeguarding them against abuse, aggression and violence. All providers of NHS-funded services must review compliance with the standard and provide board assurance twice yearly. Our team of security management specialists have a wealth of experience in violence prevention and reduction and have worked extensively to achieve and exceed the requirements of the NHS England Violence Prevention and Reduction Standard. We can advise and support your organisation's compliance with the standard through:

- Risk Assessment and Mitigation
- Responding to Incidents
- Collaboration and communications
- Training and Awareness, including conflict resolution, dynamic risk assessments, physical breakaway and disengagement techniques.
- Strategy and Policy Development/ Reviews
- Board and compliance reporting
- Audit and assessments
- Technology and access controls

For an informal chat about how we can support your organisation, please contact Robert Purseglove, via robert.purseglove@nhs.net or 07827 842 964.

Your Counter Fraud Specialist

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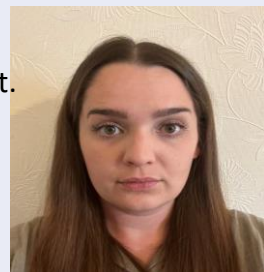
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REMEMBER:

You can also report any suspicion of fraud, bribery or corruption by using the QR Code!



Counter Fraud Authority

**Help protect your
NHS from fraud**

Like all organisations and individuals, the NHS can become a victim of fraud. If you know about it, you can help stop it
- read the latest advice at cfa.nhs.uk

