

Counter Fraud Newsletter

Welcome to this month's edition of the Counter Fraud Newsletter for NHS staff. You will find contact details for your Local Counter Fraud Specialist in your organisation's Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy.




Unwrapping Festive Scams


The festive season should be a time of joy, but unfortunately, it's also one of the busiest times of year for fraudsters.


With the rush of shopping, travel, and festive generosity, criminals exploit distractions and emotions to trick people into handing over money or personal information.


Recent reports show a rise in identity fraud and online scams during Christmas seasons, with tactics becoming more sophisticated – thanks to AI-powered phishing and fake websites.


Common Scams in the Festive Season

 **Fake delivery notifications:** Texts or emails claiming a parcel is delayed or requires a fee. Clicking links can install malware or steal payment details.


 **Bogus online deals:** Fraudsters set up convincing websites offering “too good to be true” discounts, especially around Christmas and Boxing Day sales.

 **Charity scams:** Criminals exploit festive generosity by creating fake appeals or impersonating real charities.


 **Gift card fraud:** Scammers trick victims into buying gift cards and sharing codes, often under the guise of urgent requests from “managers” or “friends”.


 **Identity theft:** Experian reports a 9% rise in identity fraud this season, with criminals using stolen details to open accounts or make purchases.

Practical Tips for Staff

 **Verify before clicking:** Don't trust unsolicited emails or texts. Go directly to the retailer's official site.

 **Shop securely:** Use trusted websites, avoid public Wi-Fi, and ensure payment pages are secure.

 **Protect your identity:** Use strong, unique passwords and enable two-factor authentication.

 **If you donate to charity:** Make sure this is done through official channels and check registration details. You can check here: <https://www.gov.uk/find-charity-information>.

Christmas should be about celebration, not stress. By staying vigilant and sharing awareness, we can protect ourselves and each other from fraud.

Let's enjoy the festive period – after all, “tis the season to be jolly”.

Increase in Phishing Emails at Work

The NHS Cyber Security Operations Centre (CSOC) and the NHS Counter Fraud Authority (NHSCFA) have detected an increase in emails pretending to be from GPs and other senior NHS staff.

These emails use “freemium” addresses – services that allow you to quickly create a free email account. This includes platforms like Gmail.

The emails are aimed at getting recipients to send payments for fake invoices. Sometimes the email address being used will be designed to mimic a real member of staff’s name – e.g. dr.joe.bloggs@gmail.com. In other cases they might use a job title and a string of numbers such as doctor.89358963135463@startmail.com.

Because the email accounts which are being created come from genuine services, the CSOC are not able to block them.



What to do

- If you get an email and do not recognise the sender, please do not click on any links or attachments.
- If you receive a request for payment, please verify this first using an established contact number or Teams call (don't rely on contact information from the email).
- You can report suspicious emails to spamreports@nhs.net
- Contact your Local Counter Fraud Specialist for advice if you are unsure.

Action Fraud Relaunches as “Report Fraud”

The UK’s official fraud reporting service has undergone a major transformation. Action Fraud has now been replaced by **Report Fraud**.

The new service is designed to improve accessibility and efficiency, ensuring victims receive better support and guidance. If you experience fraud outside of work, you should now report it through the new portal:

 www.reportfraud.police.uk

Or by calling the usual phone number (this has not changed) : 0300 123 2040

This change marks a significant step forward in tackling fraud nationally, with enhanced digital tools and clearer processes for reporting incidents.



For more details on what’s new and why this matters, you can read a useful overview from TechUK here:

[Report Fraud Service Replaces Action Fraud](#)

Remember: This service is for personal fraud cases only.

For any fraud concerns within the NHS, please continue to follow your local fraud reporting procedures (see your organisation’s Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy for more information).





Thank you for taking the time to read our Counter Fraud Newsletter. As a break from our usual content, here's a quiz all about fraud.

You'll find the answers at the bottom of the next page. Good luck!

Question 1 – When was the earliest recorded fraud attempt documented?

- A. 300 BC
- B. 1821
- C. 1920

Question 2 – What percentage of reported crime in England and Wales is Fraud?

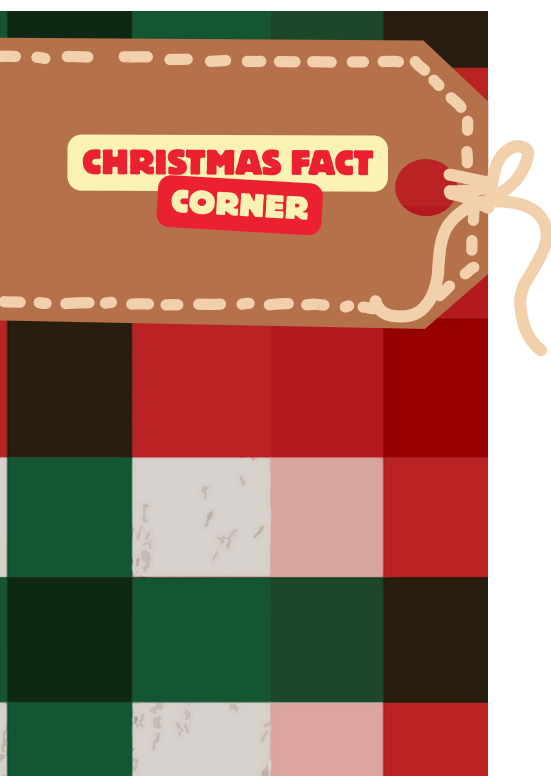
- A. 15%
- B. 33%
- C. 41%
- D. 57%

Question 3 – True or False – “Most victims of fraud are over the age of 65”

Question 4 – True or False – “Most fraud starts online”

Question 5 – You want to report a concern about fraud at work. What should you do?

- A. Send a department-wide email alerting everyone to the issue.
- B. Tell your line manager.
- C. Contact your Local Counter Fraud Specialist.



🔔 Jingle Bells wasn't written for Christmas. It was originally composed in 1857 as a Thanksgiving song called One Horse Open Sleigh.

🍗 Japan celebrates Christmas with KFC. Thanks to a 1974 marketing campaign, eating Kentucky Fried Chicken on Christmas is now a beloved tradition in Japan.

🎄 The world's tallest Christmas tree was over 220 feet. Displayed in Seattle in 1950, it towered higher than a 20-story building.

🎁 In the UK, Boxing Day was created for giving. Traditionally, the day after Christmas was when wealthy families gave boxes of gifts or leftovers to servants and tradespeople – a practice that inspired the name “Boxing Day.”

REPORTING FRAUD CONCERNS



Fraud vs the NHS

If you think that fraud may be being carried out against the NHS, please notify your Local Counter Fraud Specialist. You'll find our contact details in your organisation's Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy.

You can also report your concerns to the NHS Counter Fraud Authority using their online reporting tool or phone number: 0800 028 40 60.

If you choose to make an anonymous report, please give as much information as possible as we won't be able to get back in touch with you to clarify anything.

Suspicious texts

Do not click on any links in the suspicious text message.

You can forward suspect text messages to 7726.

Fraud against a member of the public

These concerns can be reported to **Report Fraud (0300 123 20 40)**,

If the person has lost money, it may also be appropriate to report the matter to **the police**.

If you suspect that the person's bank account has been compromised, it is important that they **speak to their bank** as a matter of urgency.

Suspicious Emails

Do not click on any links or attachments.

If you have received a suspicious email to your **@nhs.net** email account, you can forward it (as an attachment) to **spamreports@nhs.net**

If you are not sure how to forward an email as an attachment, contact the LCFS team and we will help you.

If you have been sent a suspicious email to another type of email account (not @nhs.net) you can forward it to **report@phishing.gov.uk**



I've read the options but I'm still not sure what to do

The Local Counter Fraud team will be happy to advise.

Our contact details can be found in your organisation's Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy.

Quiz Answers:

Q1 - A. Q2 - C. Q3 - False. Most fraud victims are actually aged between 35 and 44. Q4 - True. Q5 - C.