

Launch of a revised national online fraud reporting tool

On the 1st July 2015 NHS Protect launched its revised online reporting tool to continue to enable NHS employees, patients and third parties to report allegations of fraud and corruption directly to NHS Protect. NHS Protect ensures that allegations of fraud that are suitable for investigation at a local level are disseminated to the relevant health body's Anti-Fraud Specialist.

<https://www.reportnhsfraud.nhs.uk/>

The revised online reporting tool provides the following benefits and enhancements:

- It is a national service which is independent of the rest of the NHS
- The tool offers a simple and intuitive way to report NHS fraud matters, at the same time enabling us to form the best possible understanding of reported concerns.
- It provides enhanced protection of users' rights by giving them a choice of reporting options. All information is treated confidentially but additionally a user can now choose a 'reporting status' that further defines exactly how NHS Protect will process their information.
- The tool enables users to update reports they have made by providing new information. It is seamlessly integrated with NHS Protect's secure intelligence database, enabling us to form a national intelligence picture.

Good intelligence on local or national crime threats enables more efficient and effective action. NHS Protect supports the provision of better intelligence on economic crime risks facing the NHS by providing a secure national fraud reporting service both online and via the telephone. All NHS bodies are therefore encouraged to promote and support NHS Protect's national fraud reporting options, so that, together, we can better protect the NHS.

There is no change in the telephone reporting line. Reports of fraud can still be made free of charge on 0800 028 4060.

To assist with promoting the enhanced online reporting tool and the phone line, NHS Protect has produced two new leaflets which staff can download and print for display within your department areas.

The following **Questions and answers** have been designed to provide some further information in relation to reporting any fraud or bribery related concerns;

Why do we need a national fraud and corruption reporting system for the NHS?

If fraud and corruption reporting were not done centrally, this would both reduce the NHS's ability to identify crime risks at national level, and increase the likelihood of intelligence failures. Intelligence failures can lead to duplication of investigations, the carrying out of limited or unnecessary investigations and a failure to correctly identify and investigate serious concerns. Intelligence failures can damage reputation and lead to both physical and financial harm.

Why does the system allow for users to report in a number of ways other than anonymously?

While there are clear benefits to anonymous fraud reporting, there are also a few drawbacks. When a report of fraud is made anonymously, NHS Protect is unable to contact the source of the original information to seek further information or clarification. This can mean that we are left with an incomplete understanding of the alleged offence, and as a consequence, effective investigation may be more difficult or even impossible. To tackle this problem, NHS Protect offers the sources of fraud

and corruption allegations the choice to report to us as a 'linked' or 'separated' reporter, as well as anonymously.

What does reporting as a 'separated reporter' mean?

This means that an extra level of confidentiality is applied. The source name and contact details are separated from the information on receipt and these are held in a secure central register. Measures are also taken to ensure that the information provided cannot, in itself, reveal the identity of the source. The information itself will be dealt with as normal, but personal details identifying the source will not be disclosed to anyone without their permission, unless we are obliged by law, or it is in the wider public interest. Only where serious crime, abuse or serious harm to others is involved would NHS Protect be permitted to disclose personal information without consent. NHS Protect must judge that the public good that would be achieved by the disclosing of the information would far outweigh our obligation of confidentiality. This is very rare and we would have to robustly justify our decision to disclose the information. Wherever possible, the matter would be discussed with the individual concerned and consent sought.

Should an investigator wish to contact a source whose details are held in confidence, this would take place via a third party within NHS Protect who would seek the source's consent.

What does reporting as a 'linked reporter' mean?

This means that source name and contact details will remain with the information provided. Investigative staff can then see where the information came from, and contact the source if they need to, which may assist the investigation. Anyone who is happy to be contacted by NHS Protect should feel comfortable to use this route. It is expected that someone reporting as part of their official duties in the NHS or from another government agency would use this route but it is equally available to any other individuals to choose to make their details available.

Are changes in the online system reflected in the telephone reporting service operated by NHS Protect?

Yes, the same levels of information security and personal information protection are applied, no matter whether a fraud is reported to NHS Protect online or via the telephone.

What intelligence can the NHS get through the national collation of fraud reporting information?

NHS Protect's understanding of fraud and corruption risks affecting the NHS is not uniform. There are also higher levels of reporting for some types of fraud and corruption than for others, and there are some for which we suspect fraud is significantly underreported. NHS Protect will be collating fraud reporting statistics on a quarterly basis to determine trends and anomalies in reporting. Quarterly statistics on national fraud reporting activity will be made available to LCFSS.

Is the new system secure?

Our enhanced online fraud reporting system has been independently tested by professionals to ensure that any information reported to NHS Protect remains secure.

How long on average does it take for a user to report a fraud?

It will take about 20 to 30 minutes to complete a report depending upon complexity.

How can a user link a new report to an old one?

Users who submit a report online are provided with a unique reference number. When a user goes into the system to submit a new report, they are asked 'Does the report you are making relate to one you made previously?'. The reports are subsequently linked within NHS Protect's intelligence database by a unique reference number.

Has the system been tested?

We have tested our enhanced online fraud reporting tool with a number LCFs, clinical staff, non-clinical staff and members of the public. These tests have included people with good IT skills and people with almost none. While we have made every effort to deliver an effective on-line fraud reporting tool, we obviously expect that some improvements will need to be made as the system is used. The reporting tool allows users to provide feedback via an 'Is there anything wrong with this page?' button which appears on each page.