



North East London
Integrated Care Board

Anti Fraud and Bribery Policy

VERSION CONTROL

Scope	NHS North East London ICB
Version	1.1 Updates included changes to legislation and best practice.
Effective date	16 October 2024
Approved by	Audit and Risk Committee
Approved on	16 October 2024
Review	On publication of new or revised statutory guidance, due to policy change or organisational change, where a significant breach arises, or by 1 April 2026, whichever is sooner.
Document Owner	Head of Governance
Dissemination of this Policy	This policy will be: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contained in the ICB's Governance Handbook, published on the ICB's Website.• Referred to in terms of reference.• Published on the staff intranet.• Circulated by email to Board, Committee and Sub-Committee members and participants.• Proactively communicated to all staff in accordance with NHS England (NHSE) Requirements

Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Scope	2
3.0	Policy	2
4.0	Facilitation Payments	4
5.0	Gifts and Hospitality	4
6.0	Political and Charitable Contributions	4
7.0	Sponsored events	5
8.0	Definitions	5
9.0	Public Service Values	6
10.0	Roles and Responsibilities	7
11.0	Reporting Fraud, Bribery or other Illegal Acts	12
12.0	Disciplinary Action	13
13.0	Police Involvement	13
14.0	Sanctions and Recovery of Losses Incurred by Fraud or Bribery	13
15.0	Monitoring Effectiveness	14
16.0	Additional Information	15
17.0	Related Policies	15
	Appendices	
	Appendix A: What to do	16
	Appendix B: Equality Impact Assessment	17

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1.** This document sets out the North East London Integrated Care Board's (NEL ICB) policy and advice to employees in dealing with fraud or suspected fraud. This policy details the arrangements made by the ICB for such concerns to be raised by employees or members of the public.
- 1.2.** This policy applies to all ICB employees, members of the board and its committees, sub-committees and working groups, any person working on behalf of the ICB, employees and committee members of organisations funded by the ICB, employees and principals of partner organisations and agency staff. It also applies to consultants, vendors, contractors and any other parties who have a business relationship with the ICB and its service users.
- 1.3.** It will be brought to the attention of all employees and form part of the induction process for new staff. It is incumbent on all those above to report any concerns they may have concerning fraud and bribery.
- 1.4.** The ICB does not tolerate fraud and bribery. The intention is to eliminate all NHS fraud and bribery as far as possible. The aim of the policy and procedure is to protect the reputation of the ICB, the safety of staff and patients, property and finances of the NHS and of patients in our care.
- 1.5.** The ICB is committed to taking all necessary steps to counter fraud and bribery. To meet this objective, the ICB adheres to the 12 requirements as set out by the NHSCFA Government Functional Standard 013 Counter Fraud:
 1. Accountable Individual
 2. Counter fraud, bribery and corruption strategy
 3. Fraud bribery and corruption risk assessment
 4. Policy and response plan
 5. Annual action plan
 6. Outcome based metrics
 7. Reporting routes for staff, contractors and members of the public
 8. Report identified loss
 9. Access to trained investigators
 10. Undertake detection activity
 11. Access to and completion of training
 12. Policies and registers for gifts and hospitality and conflicts of interest.
- 1.6.** The ICB will take all necessary steps to counter fraud and bribery in accordance with this policy, the NHS Counter Fraud and Bribery Manual and any other relevant guidance or advice issued by the NHS Counter Fraud Authority.
- 1.7.** This document sets out the ICB's policy for dealing with detected or suspected fraud and bribery, incorporated in the NHSCFA Government Functional Standard 013: Counter Fraud.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1.** This policy relates to all forms of fraud and bribery and is intended to provide direction and help to individuals who may identify suspected fraud. It provides a framework for responding to suspicions of fraud, advice and information on various aspects of fraud and implications of an investigation. It is not intended to provide a comprehensive approach to preventing and detecting fraud and bribery. The overall aims of this policy are to:
- improve the knowledge and understanding of everyone in the ICB, irrespective of their position, about the risk of fraud and bribery within the organisation and its unacceptability
 - assist in promoting a climate of openness and a culture and environment where staff feel able to raise concerns sensibly and responsibly
 - set out the ICB's responsibilities in terms of the deterrence, prevention, detection and investigation of fraud and bribery
 - ensure the appropriate sanctions are considered following an investigation, which may include any or all of the following:
 - criminal prosecution
 - civil proceedings
 - internal/external disciplinary action (including professional/regulatory bodies)
 - dismissal
- 2.2.** In implementing this policy, managers must ensure that all staff are treated fairly and within the provisions and spirit of the ICB's equal opportunities arrangements. Special attention should be paid to ensuring the policy is understood where there may be barriers to understanding caused by the individual's circumstances, where the individual's literacy or use of English is weak, or where the individual has little experience of working life. The policy will be referenced within fraud awareness material, presentations and induction. The policy will be available to all staff via the intranet and ICB website.

3.0 Policy

- 3.1.** All employees have a personal responsibility to protect the reputation of the ICB, safety of staff and patients and assets of the ICB, including all buildings, equipment and monies from conflicts of interest, fraud, theft, or bribery.
- 3.2.** The ICB is absolutely committed to maintaining an honest, open and well-intentioned atmosphere, so as to best fulfil the objectives of the ICB and of the NHS. It is, therefore, also committed to the elimination of fraud within the ICB, to the rigorous investigation of any such allegations and to taking appropriate action against wrong doers, including possible criminal prosecution, as well as undertaking steps to recover any assets lost as a result of fraud. The ICB wishes to encourage anyone having reasonable suspicions of fraud to report them.
- 3.3.** The ICB's policy, which will be rigorously enforced, is that no individual will suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of reporting reasonably held suspicions. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives statutory protection, within defined parameters, to staff who make disclosures about a range of subjects, including fraud and bribery, which they believe to be happening within the ICB. Within this context, 'reasonably held belief' means suspicions other than those which are raised maliciously and are subsequently found to be groundless.

- 3.4.** Any allegation found to be malicious will be subject to a full investigation and appropriate disciplinary action.
- 3.5.** The ICB expects anyone having reasonable suspicions of fraud to report them. It recognises that, while cases of theft are usually obvious, there may initially only be a suspicion regarding potential fraud and, thus, individuals should report the matter to their Local Counter Fraud Specialist (LCFS) who will then ensure that procedures are followed.
- 3.6.** Bribing anybody or accepting a bribe is absolutely prohibited. ICB employees will not pay a bribe to anybody, nor will they accept a bribe. This means that you will not accept, offer, promise, reward in any way or give a financial or other advantage to any person in order to induce that person to perform his/her function or activities improperly. It does not matter whether the other person is a UK or foreign public official, political candidate, party official, private individual, private or public sector employee or any other person (including creating the appearance of an effort to improperly influence another person).
- 3.7.** Off-the-book accounts and false or deceptive booking entries are strictly prohibited. All hospitality, gifts, payments or any other contribution made or received under the Anti-fraud and Bribery policy and these guidelines, whether in cash or in kind, shall be documented, regularly reviewed, and properly accounted for on the books of the ICB. Record retention and archival policy must be consistent with the ICB's accounting standards, tax and other applicable laws and regulations.
- 3.8.** The ICB procures goods and services ethically and transparently with the quality, price and value for money determining the successful supplier/contractor, not by receiving (or offering) improper benefits. The ICB will not engage in any form of bribery, neither in the UK nor abroad. ICB employees, independent of their grade and position, shall at all times comply with the Bribery Act 2010 and with this policy.
- 3.9.** The ICB may, in certain circumstances, be held responsible for acts of bribery committed by intermediaries acting on its behalf such as subsidiaries, clients, business partners, contractors, suppliers, agents, advisors, consultants or other third parties. The use of intermediaries for the purpose of committing acts of bribery is prohibited.
- 3.10.** All intermediaries shall be selected with care, and all agreements with intermediaries shall be concluded under terms that are in line with this policy. The ICB will contractually require its agents and other intermediaries to comply with the Anti-fraud and Bribery policy and to keep proper books and records available for inspection by the ICB's, auditors or investigating authorities. Agreements with agents and other intermediaries shall at all times provide for the necessary contractual mechanisms to enforce compliance with the anti-bribery regime. The Procurement Strategy is available to staff and published on the ICB's website. The ICB will monitor performance and, in case of non-compliance, require the correction of deficiencies, apply sanctions, or eventually terminate the agreement even if this may result in a loss of business.

- 3.11.** Where the ICB is engaged in commercial activity (irrespective as to what happens to the profit) it could be considered guilty of a corporate bribery offence if an employee, agent, subsidiary or any other person acting on its behalf bribes or accepts a bribe from another person intending to obtain or retain business or an advantage in the conduct of business for the ICB and it cannot demonstrate that it has adequate procedures in place to prevent such. The ICB does not tolerate any bribery on its behalf, even if this might result in a loss of business for it. Criminal liability must be prevented at all times.
- 3.12.** Recovery of any losses will always be sought – see section 14.

4.0 Facilitation Payments

- 4.1.** Facilitation payments are small payments made to secure or expedite the performance of a routine action, typically by a government official or agency (e.g. issuing licenses or permits, installation of a telephone line, processing goods through customs, etc.) to which the payer (or the company) has legal or other entitlement.
- 4.2.** Facilitation payments are prohibited under the Bribery Act like any other form of bribe. They shall not be given by the ICB in the UK or any other country.

5.0 Gifts and Hospitality

- 5.1.** Courtesy gifts and hospitality must not be given or received in return for services provided or to obtain or retain business but shall be handled openly and unconditionally as a gesture of esteem and goodwill only. Gifts and hospitality shall always be of symbolic value, appropriate and proportionate in the circumstances, and consistent with local customs and practices. They shall not be made in cash. All instances of gifts and hospitality (eg gifts from suppliers and contractors worth over £6 and hospitality over £25) will be recorded in the ICB register of gifts and hospitality. Please refer to the ICB's Standards of Business Conduct and Conflicts of Interest policy for further details which incorporates gifts & hospitality and sponsorship.

6.0 Political and Charitable Contributions

- 6.1.** The ICB does not make any contributions to politicians, political parties or election campaigns.
- 6.2.** As a responsible member of society, the ICB may make charitable donations. However, these payments shall not be provided to any organisation upon suggestion of any person of the public or private sector in order to induce that person to perform improperly the function or activities which he or she is expected to perform in good faith, impartially or in a position of trust or to reward that person for the improper performance of such function or activities.
- 6.3.** Any donations and contributions must be ethical and transparent. The recipient's identity and planned use of the donation must be clear, and the reason and purpose for the donation must be justifiable and documented. All charitable donations will be publicly disclosed.
- 6.4.** Donations to individuals and for-profit organisations and donations paid to private accounts are incompatible with the ICB's ethical standards and are prohibited.

7.0 Sponsored events

- 7.1. Sponsoring means any contribution in money or in kind by the ICB towards an event organised by a third party in return for the opportunity to raise the ICBs' profile.
- 7.2. There is potential for conflicts of interests between the organisation and the sponsor, particularly regarding the ability to market commercial products or services. Proper safeguards must be in place to prevent conflicts occurring. The ICB has decided that as an organisation, offers of sponsorship from any provider, or potential provider of health goods or services, will not be accepted and this will be referred to as commercial sponsorship.

8.0 Definitions

- 8.1. Fraud - any person who dishonestly, and in order to make a gain for himself or another, or by so acting inflicts loss or the risk of loss on another:
- makes a false representation;
 - fails to disclose to another person, information which he is under a legal duty to disclose; or
 - abuses their position,
 - commits an offence as defined in the Fraud Act 2006.
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/35/contents>
- 8.2. NHS Counter Fraud Authority (NHSCFA) - the NHSCFA has the responsibility for the detection, investigation and prevention of fraud and economic crime within the NHS. Its aim is to lead the fight against fraud affecting the NHS and wider health service, by using intelligence to understand the nature of fraud risks, investigate serious and complex fraud, reduce its impact and drive forward improvements.
- A copy of the NHSCFA strategy: Leading the fight against NHS fraud: Organisational strategy 2023 - 2026 is available at: [NHSCFA Strategy 2023-26 | corporate publications | NHS Counter Fraud Authority](#)
- 8.3. Government Functional Standard 013–The ICB adheres to the requirements set out by the NHS Counter Fraud Authority (NHSCFA) in order to adhere to Government Functional Standard Gov013: Counter Fraud. The NHSCFA counter fraud requirements support NHS organisations in implementing appropriate measures to tackle fraud, bribery and corruption. The requirements protect NHS resources against crime and ensures they are used for their intended purpose – the delivery of patient care. The requirements are as follows:
- Planning and governance
 - Training, awareness and reporting
 - Proactive detection
 - Investigations
- 8.4. Bribery and corruption - “giving or receiving a financial or other advantage in connections with the improper performance of a position of trust, or a function that is expected to be performed impartially or in good faith”. Bribery does not have to involve cash or an actual payment exchanging hands and can take many forms such as a gift, lavish treatment during a business trip or tickets to an event. Bribery does not always result in a loss. The corrupt person may not benefit directly from their deeds; however, they may be unreasonably using their position to give some advantage to another.

- 8.5.** It is a common law offence of bribery to bribe the holder of a public office and it is similarly an offence for the office holder to accept a bribe.
- 8.6.** An organisation is guilty of a corporate bribery offence if an employee, agent of subsidiary or any other person acting on its behalf bribes another person intending to obtain or retain business or an advantage in the conduct of business for the organisation. It is a statutory defence for the ICB to demonstrate that, despite a particular case of bribery, the ICB had adequate procedures in place to prevent persons associated with it from bribery.
- 8.7.** Procedures to be put in place by the ICB to prevent bribery should be informed by six principles proportionate procedures, top-level commitment, risk assessment, due diligence, communication (including training) monitoring and review. For more information please refer to <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/legislation/bribery-act-2010-guidance.pdf>.
- 8.8.** Bribery prosecutions tend to be most commonly brought using specific pieces of legislation dealing with bribery, i.e. under the following:
- The Bribery Act 2010 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/23/contents>
 - The Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2001/24/contents>
 - The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/29/contents>
- 8.9.** The ICB has procedures in place that reduce the likelihood of fraud occurring. These include prime financial policies, documented procedures, a system of internal control (including Internal and External Audit) and a system of risk assessment. In addition, the ICB seeks to ensure that a comprehensive anti-fraud and bribery culture exists throughout the ICB via the appointment of a dedicated LCFS, in accordance with the NHS Counter Fraud Authority's Government Functional Standards.
- 8.10.** It is expected that board members and staff at all levels will lead by example in acting with the utmost integrity and ensuring adherence to all relevant regulations, policies and procedures.

9.0 Public Service Values

- 9.1.** High standards of corporate and personal conduct, based on the principle to do no harm, a duty of candour and recognition that patients come first, have been a requirement throughout the NHS since its inception. The three fundamental public service values are:
- Accountability - everything done by those who work in the ICB must be able to stand the tests of parliamentary scrutiny, public judgements on property and professional codes of conduct.
 - Probity - absolute honesty and integrity should be exercised in dealing with NHS patients, assets, employees, suppliers and customers.
 - Openness - the ICB's actions should be sufficiently public and transparent to promote confidence between the ICB and its patients, employees and the public.

9.2. In addition, all those who work for or are in contract with the ICB should exercise the following when undertaking their duties:

<i>Selflessness</i>	...should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family or their friends
<i>Integrity</i>	...should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties
<i>Objectivity</i>	... should, in carrying out public business, (including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits), make choices on merit
<i>Accountability</i>	...are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office
<i>Openness</i>	...should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest demands
<i>Honesty</i>	...have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest
<i>Leadership</i>	...should promote and support these principles by leadership and example

9.3. These standards are national benchmarks that inform our local policies and procedures. The arrangements made in this policy have been designed to ensure compliance with the national standards.

10.0 Roles and Responsibilities

10.1. Roles

10.1.1. The ICB has a duty to ensure that it provides a secure environment in which to work, and one where people are confident to raise concerns without worrying that it will reflect badly on them. This extends to ensuring that staff feel protected when carrying out their official duties and are not placed in a vulnerable position. If staff have concerns about any procedures or processes that they are asked to be involved in, the ICB has a duty to ensure that those concerns are listened to and addressed.

10.1.2. The Chief Finance and Performance Officer (CFPO) has the overall responsibility for funds entrusted to the organisation. This includes instances of fraud, bribery and corruption. The CFPO must ensure adequate policies and procedures are in place to protect the organisations and the public funds entrusted to it.

- 10.1.3. The CFPO is liable to be called to account for specific failures in the ICB's system of internal controls. However, responsibility for the operation and maintenance of controls falls directly to line managers and requires the involvement of all of ICB employees. The ICB therefore has a duty to ensure employees who are involved in or who are managing internal control systems receive adequate training and support in order to carry out their responsibilities. Therefore, the CFPO will monitor and ensure compliance with this policy.
- 10.1.4. The NHS Counter Fraud Authority has responsibility for all policy and operational matters relating to the prevention, detection and investigation of fraud, bribery and corruption in the NHS. All investigations will be handled in accordance with NHS Counter Fraud Authority guidance.

10.2. Employees

For the purposes of this policy, 'Employees' includes all ICB staff, board members and office holders (including co-opted members).

- 10.2.1. All employees should be aware that committing fraud and bribery (against the NHS or patients in our care) will normally, dependent upon the circumstances of the case, be regarded as gross misconduct thus warranting summary dismissal without previous warnings. However, no such action will be taken before a proper investigation and a disciplinary hearing have taken place. Such actions may be in addition to the possibility of criminal prosecution.
- 10.2.2. ICB employees will not request or receive a bribe from anybody, nor imply that such an act might be considered. This means that you will not agree to receive or accept a financial or other advantage from a former, current or future client, business partner, contractor or supplier or any other person as an incentive or reward to perform improperly your function or activities.
- 10.2.3. Employees must act in accordance with the ICB's Standards of Business Conduct and Conflicts of Interest policy and Declaration of Interest arrangements.
- 10.2.4. Employees also have a duty to protect the assets of the ICB including information, goodwill and reputation, as well as property.
- 10.2.5. Employees are expected to act in accordance with the standards laid down by their Professional Institute(s), where applicable.
- 10.2.6. The ICB's Constitution and Prime Financial Policies place an obligation on all staff and board members to act in accordance with best practice. In addition, all ICB staff and board members must declare and register any interests that might potentially conflict with those of the ICB or the wider NHS.
- 10.2.7. In addition, all employees have a responsibility to comply with all applicable laws and regulations relating to ethical business behaviour, procurement, personal expenses, conflicts of interest, confidentiality and the acceptance of gifts and hospitality. This means, in addition to maintaining the normal standards of personal honesty and integrity, all employees should always:
- act with honesty, integrity and in an ethical manner
 - behave in a way that would not give cause for others to doubt that the ICB employees deal fairly and impartially with official matters

- be alert to the possibility that others might be attempting to deceive.

10.2.8. All employees have a duty to ensure that public funds are safeguarded, whether or not they are involved with cash or payment systems, receipts or dealing with contractors or suppliers.

10.2.9. When an employee suspects that there has been fraud or bribery, they must report the matter to the nominated Local Counter Fraud Specialist and/or the NHS Counter Fraud Authority. See section 10.4.

10.3. Managers

10.3.1. Line managers at all levels have a responsibility to ensure that an adequate system of internal control- exists within their areas of responsibility and that controls operate effectively. The responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud and bribery therefore primarily rests with managers but requires the co-operation of all employees.

10.3.2. As part of that responsibility, line managers need to:

- inform staff of the ICB's Standards of Business Conduct and Conflicts of Interest policy, declarations of interest and counter fraud and bribery arrangements as part of their induction process, paying particular attention to the need for accurate completion of personal records and forms
- ensure that all employees for whom they are accountable are made aware of the requirements of the policy
- assess the types of risk involved in the operations for which they are responsible
- ensure that adequate control measures are put in place to minimise the risks. This must include clear roles and responsibilities, supervisory checks, staff rotation (particularly in key posts), separation of duties wherever possible so that control of a key function is not invested in one individual, and regular reviews, reconciliations and test checks to ensure that control measures continue to operate effectively
- be aware of the ICB's Anti-fraud and Bribery policy and the rules and guidance covering the control of specific items of expenditure and receipts
- identify financially sensitive posts
- ensure that controls are being complied with
- contribute to their director's assessment of the risks and controls within their business area, which feeds into the ICB's and the Department of Health Accounting Officer's overall statements of accountability and internal control.

10.3.3. All instances of actual or suspected fraud or bribery, which come to the attention of a manager, must be reported immediately. It is appreciated that some employees will initially raise concerns with their manager, however, in such cases managers must not attempt to investigate the allegation themselves, and they have the clear responsibility to refer the concerns to the LCFS as soon as possible. See section 10.4.

10.4. Local Counter Fraud Specialist (LCFS)

- 10.4.1. The NHS Counter Fraud Authority's Government Functional Standard 013 Counter Fraud requires the ICB to appoint and nominate an accredited and appropriately trained Local Counter Fraud Specialist (LCFS). Part of the LCFS's role is to ensure that all cases of actual or suspected fraud and bribery are notified to the CFPO and recorded on the NHSCFA case management system in accordance with the required reporting procedures.
- 10.4.2. The LCFS is responsible for taking forward all anti-fraud work locally in accordance with NHS Counter Fraud Authority Government Functional Standards and reports directly to the CFPO (or equivalent).
- 10.4.3. The LCFS works with key colleagues and stakeholders to promote anti-fraud work and effectively respond to system weaknesses and investigate allegations of fraud and corruption. This will include the undertaking of risk assessments to identify fraud, bribery and corruption risks within the ICB.
- 10.4.4. Investigation of the majority cases of alleged fraud within the ICB will be the responsibility of the LCFS. The NHS Counter Fraud Authority will only investigate cases which should not be dealt with by the ICB. Following receipt of all referrals, the NHS Counter Fraud Authority will add any known information or intelligence and based on this case acceptance criteria determine if a case should be investigated by the NHS Counter Fraud Authority.
- 10.4.5. The LCFS and the CFPO (or equivalent), in conjunction with the NHS Counter Fraud Authority, will decide who will conduct the investigation and when/if referral to the police is required. Cases, for instance, where more than £100,000 possible loss is identified or where possible bribery is involved, may be investigated by the NHS Counter Fraud Authority (though the LCFS may assist); otherwise the investigation will normally be undertaken by the ICB's own LCFS directly.
- 10.4.6. The LCFS will regularly report to the Chief Finance and Performance Officer on the progress of the investigation and when/if referral to the police is required.
- 10.4.7. The LCFS in consultation with the Chief Finance and Performance Officer will review the strategic objectives contained within the assurance framework to determine any potential fraud or bribery risks. Where risks are identified these will be included on the ICB's risk register so the risk can be proactively addressed.

10.5. Chief Finance and Performance Officer (CFPO)

- 10.5.1. The CFPO is provided with powers to approve financial transactions initiated by directorates across the ICB. As part of this role the CFPO is responsible for the maintenance and implementation of detailed financial procedures and systems which incorporate the principles of separation of duties and internal checks.
- 10.5.2. The CFPO will report annually to the ICB board on the adequacy of internal financial control and risk management as part of the board's overall responsibility to prepare a statement of internal control for inclusion in the ICB's annual report.
- 10.5.3. The CFPO, in conjunction with the Chief Executive Officer, monitors and ensures compliance with the NHS Counter Fraud Authority's Government Functional Standards regarding fraud and bribery.

- 10.5.4. The CFPO, in consultation with the LCFS, will decide whether there is sufficient cause to conduct an investigation and whether the Police and External Audit need to be informed.
- 10.5.5. The CFPO or the LCFS will consult and take advice from the Head of HR if a member of staff is to be interviewed or disciplined. The CFPO or LCFS will not conduct a disciplinary investigation, but the employee may be the subject of a separate investigation by HR.
- 10.5.6. The CFPO will, depending on the outcome of investigations (whether on an interim/on-going or a concluding basis) and/or the potential significance of suspicions that have been raised, inform the Chair of the ICB and the Chair of the Audit Committee of cases, as may be deemed appropriate or necessary.
- 10.5.7. The CFPO is also responsible for informing the Audit Committee of all categories of loss.

10.6. Senior Compliance Officer (SCO)

- 10.6.1. The ICB has appointed the CFPO who will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the requirements of the Bribery Act 2010, implementing anti-bribery guidelines and monitoring compliance. There is an anti-bribery programme at senior level supported by periodical reviews. The CFPO will review annually the suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the ICB's anti-bribery arrangements and implement improvements as and when appropriate.
- 10.6.2. The CFPO directly reports to the Chief Executive Officer and once a year, the CFPO reports the results of the reviews to the ICB board.
- 10.6.3. Any incident or suspicion that comes to the attention of the SCO will be passed immediately to the LCFS.

10.7. Internal and External Audit

- 10.7.1. The main function of internal and external audit is to review controls and systems, ensuring compliance with financial instructions. It is their duty to bring any incident or suspicion to the attention of the LCFS immediately.

10.8. Human Resources (HR)

- 10.8.1. HR will liaise closely with managers and the LCFS, from the outset, where an employee is suspected of being involved in fraud in accordance with agreed liaison protocols. HR is responsible for ensuring the appropriate use of the ICB's Disciplinary Procedure. The HR advisors shall advise those involved in the investigation in matters of employment law and in other procedural matters, such as disciplinary and complaints procedures. Close liaison between the LCFS and HR will be essential to ensure that any parallel sanctions (i.e. criminal and disciplinary) are applied effectively and in a coordinated manner.
- 10.8.2. HR will take steps at the recruitment stage to establish, as far as possible, the previous record of potential employees as well as the veracity of required qualifications and memberships of professional bodies, in terms of their propriety and integrity. In this regard, temporary and fixed term contract employees are treated in the same manner as permanent employees.

10.9. Information Management & Technology

- 10.9.1. The Director with responsibility for IT will contact the LCFS immediately in all cases where there is suspicion that IT is being used for fraudulent purposes. This includes inappropriate internet/intranet, e-mail, telephone and PDA use. HR will be informed if there is a suspicion that an employee is involved. For further reference see the Information Security and Access Control Policy the NEL IT Acceptable Use Policy and the NHS mail Acceptable Use Policy.

10.10. External Communications

- 10.10.1. Individuals (be they employees, agency staff, locums, contractors or suppliers) must not communicate with any member of the press, media or another third party about a suspected fraud as this may seriously damage the investigation and any subsequent actions to be taken. Anyone who wishes to raise such issues should discuss the matter with either the CFPO or the Accountable Officer.

10.11. External Parties

- 10.11.1. External organisations, contractors and sub-contractors working on behalf of the ICB are expected to maintain strong anti-fraud principles and have adequate controls in place to prevent fraud and bribery when handling public funds and dealing with customers/patients.

10.12. Training

- 10.12.1. The ICB will provide anti-fraud and anti-bribery training to all relevant employees on a regular basis to make them aware of our Anti-fraud and Bribery Policy and guidelines, including possible types of fraud and bribery, the risks of engaging in fraud and bribery related activity, and how employees may report suspicions of fraud and bribery.

11.0 Reporting Fraud, Bribery or other Illegal Acts

- 11.1. This section outlines the action to be taken where fraud, bribery or other illegal acts involving dishonesty, inappropriate Internet use, or damage to property are discovered or suspected. For completeness, it also deals with the action to be taken where theft is discovered or suspected.
- 11.2. If any of the concerns mentioned in this document come to the attention of an individual, they must inform the Local Counter Fraud Specialist or the CFPO immediately. Employees can also call the NHS Counter Fraud Authority Fraud Reporting Line on Freephone 0800 028 40 60 or using their online reporting tool at <https://cfa.nhs.uk/reportfraud> as an alternative to internal reporting procedures should staff wish to remain anonymous. This provides an easily accessible route for the reporting of genuine suspicions of fraud within or affecting the NHS. It allows NHS staff who are unsure of internal reporting procedures, to report their concerns in the strictest confidence. All calls are dealt with by experienced caller handlers.

Contact information for the above is listed in **Appendix A**.

- 11.3. Appendix A is designed to be a reminder of the key “what to do” steps - as well as contact details - to be taken where fraud or other illegal acts are discovered or suspected.

- 11.4.** Managers are encouraged to copy this to staff and to place it on staff notice boards in their department.
- 11.5.** Anonymous letters, telephone calls etc. are received from time to time from individuals who wish to raise matters of concern, but not through official channels. While the allegations may be erroneous or unsubstantiated, they may also reflect a genuine cause for concern and should always be taken seriously.
- 11.6.** Sufficient enquiries will be made by the LCFS to establish whether or not there is any foundation to the allegations. If the allegations are found to be malicious, they will also be considered for further investigation as to their source.
- 11.7.** To support the reporting of fraud using the NHSCFA fraud reporting process (as outlined above) all employees should be aware of NHS Improvement and NHS England's: [Freedom to speak up: raising concern's \(whistleblowing\) policy for the NHS](#), [NHS England's Guidance Freedom to speak up in primary care: Guidance to primary care providers on supporting whistleblowing in the NHS, November 2017](#) and [Guidance for boards on Freedom to Speak Up for NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts](#). These all form the minimum standards for raising of concerns in the NHS for the benefit of all patients in England.

12.0 Disciplinary Action

- 12.1.** The disciplinary procedures of the ICB must be followed where an employee is suspected of being involved in a fraudulent or other illegal act. Disciplinary action will be initiated where negligent action has led to fraud being perpetrated.
- 12.2.** It should be noted, however, that the duty to follow disciplinary procedures will not override the need for legal action to be taken (e.g. consideration of criminal action). In the event of doubt, legal statute shall prevail. [NEL Disciplinary Policy](#)

13.0 Police Involvement

- 13.1.** In accordance with the NHS Counter Fraud Manual, the CFPO in conjunction with the LCFS and the NHS Counter Fraud Authority, will decide whether a case should be referred to the police. HR and line managers will be involved as necessary. Any referral to the police will not prohibit action being taken under the ICB's disciplinary procedures.

14.0 Sanctions and recovery of losses incurred by fraud or bribery

- 14.1.** In cases of serious fraud and bribery, parallel sanctions may be applied. For example: disciplinary action relating to the status of the employee in the NHS; use of civil law to recover lost funds; and use of criminal law to apply an appropriate criminal penalty upon the individual(s), and/or a possible referral of information and evidence to external bodies – for example, professional/regulatory bodies – if appropriate.
- 14.2.** While multiple sanctions may be pursued at the same time in relation to the same incident, the processes involved should be run separately, to maintain their integrity and ensure that all decision making is impartial and independent. This is because the purposes, rules of evidence, standards of proof and outcomes for different types of sanction differ significantly.

- 14.3.** Criminal investigations are primarily used for dealing with any criminal activity. The main purpose is to determine if activity was undertaken with criminal intent. Following such an investigation, it may be necessary to bring this activity to the attention of the criminal courts (magistrates' court and Crown court). Outcomes can range from a criminal conviction to fines and imprisonment.
- 14.4.** The civil recovery route is also available to the ICB if this is cost-effective and desirable for deterrence purposes. This could involve a number of options such as applying through the Small Claims Court and/or recovery through debt collection agencies. Each case needs to be discussed with the CFPO to determine the most appropriate action.
- 14.5.** Disciplinary procedures will be initiated where an employee is suspected of being involved in a fraudulent or illegal act. The appropriate senior manager, in conjunction with the HR department, will be responsible for initiating any necessary disciplinary action. Arrangements may be made to recover losses via payroll if the subject is still employed by the ICB. In all cases, current legislation must be complied with.
- 14.6.** The seeking of financial redress or recovery of losses will always be considered in cases of fraud or bribery that are investigated by the LCFS or the NHS Counter Fraud Authority where a loss is identified. Redress can take the form of confiscation and compensation orders, a civil order for repayment, or a local agreement between the organisation and the offender to repay monies lost. The decisions for redress will be taken in the light of the particular circumstances of each case.
- 14.7.** Redress allows resources that are lost to fraud and bribery to be returned to the NHS for use as intended, for provision of high-quality patient care and services. Depending on the extent of the loss and the proceedings in the case, it may be suitable for the recovery of losses to be considered under Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA). This means that a person's money or assets are taken away from them if it is believed that the person benefited from the crime. It could also include restraining assets during the course of the investigation. When considering seeking redress recovery may also be sought from on-going salary payments or pensions.
- 14.8.** In some cases (taking into consideration all the facts of a case), it may be that the ICB, under guidance from the LCFS and with the approval of CFPO, decides that no further recovery action is taken.
- 14.9.** Action to recover losses should be commenced as soon as practicable after the loss has been identified. Given the various options open to the ICB, it may be necessary for various departments to liaise about the most appropriate option.
- 14.10.** In order to provide assurance that policies were adhered to, the CFPO will maintain a record highlighting when recovery action was required and issued and when action taken. This will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

15.0 Monitoring Effectiveness

- 15.1.** Monitoring is essential to ensuring that controls are appropriate and robust enough to prevent or reduce fraud. Arrangements might include reviewing system controls on an on-going basis and identifying weaknesses in processes. Where deficiencies are identified as a result of monitoring, the ICB will ensure that appropriate recommendations and action plans are developed and progress of the implementation of recommendations is tracked.
- 15.2.** As a result of reactive and proactive work completed throughout the financial year, closure reports are prepared and issued by the LCFS. System and procedural weaknesses are identified in each report and suggested recommendations for improvement are highlighted. The ICB, together with the LCFS will track the recommendations to ensure that they have been implemented.
- 15.3.** The ICB is required to complete the NHSCFA Counter Fraud Functional Standard Return (CFFSR) and submit these annually to NHSCFA. The ICB must mark itself against each standard in the CFFSR as either Compliant (green), Partially Compliant (Amber) or Non-Compliant (Red). A management action plan is required to address all non-compliant standards which will be monitored by the Audit Committee. An assessment process may be conducted by NHSCFA Quality and Compliance which will evaluate the ICB's effectiveness in dealing with the fraud, bribery and corruption risks it faces through one of four types of assessment: full, focused, thematic or triggered.

16.0 Additional Information

- 16.1.** Any abuse or non-compliance with this policy or procedures will be subject to a full investigation and appropriate disciplinary action, and where abuse or non-compliance constitutes a criminal offence, appropriate criminal sanctions may be applied.
- 16.2.** This policy will be subject to a bi-annual review.

17.0 Related Policies

- Freedom to speak up: raising concerns (whistleblowing) Policy
- Standard of Business Conduct and Conflicts of Interests Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Constitution
- Prime Financial Policies/Standing Financial Instructions/Standing Orders

APPENDIX A-What to do		
This includes:	What to do:	DO
<p>Fraud</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any deliberate intention to make a gain for themselves or anyone else, or inflicting a loss (or a risk of loss) on another i.e. the NHS. This could be through the falsification of any records or documents or obtaining any service(s) and/or failing to disclose information. <p>Bribery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anything that induces or intends to induce improper performance. This covers offering, promising or giving a bribe, requesting, agreeing to receive or accepting a bribe, and failing to prevent bribery. Where someone is influenced by bribery, payment of benefit-in-kind to unreasonably use their position to give some advantage to another. 	<p>If any of these concerns come to light you must immediately report your suspicions and what you have discovered to one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Local Counter Fraud Specialists: Mark Kidd 07528 970 251 mark.kidd@nhs.net Chief Finance and Performance Officer Henry Black 07903 586880 The NHS Fraud Reporting Line 0800 0284060 Or online https://cfa.nhs.uk/reportfraud 0207 404 6609 <p>Confidentiality will be maintained and all matters will be dealt with in accordance with the NHSCFA standards. You will not suffer any recriminations as a result of raising concerns – You have protection under The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.</p>	<p>✓ Tell someone! <i>Confidentiality will be respected.</i> <i>Any delay might cause the organisation to suffer further financial loss.</i></p> <p>✓ Make a note of your concerns! <i>Note all relevant details, what was said, the date time and names of all parties involved.</i></p> <p>✓ Keep a record or copy any documentation that arouses your suspicion.</p> <p>DO NOT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Confront the individual(s) with your suspicions. ✗ Try to investigate the matter yourself. ✗ Contact the police directly. ✗ Convey your suspicions to anyone other than those with the proper authority as listed. ✗ Do nothing!

Appendix B - Equality Impact Assessment

Title of the change proposal or policy:

Anti Fraud and Bribery Policy

Brief description of the proposal:

This document sets out the ICB's policy and advice to employees in dealing with fraud or suspected fraud. The policy details the arrangements made by the ICB for such concerns to be raised by employees or members of the public.

Name and role of staff completing this assessment:

Anne-Marie Keliris, Head of Governance

Date of Assessment:

9 October 2024

Please answer the following questions in relation to the proposed change:

Will it affect employees, customers, and/or the public? Please state which.

This policy applies to all ICB employees, board members and its committees, sub-committees, working groups and any person working on behalf of the ICB, employees and committee members of organisations funded by the ICB, employees and principals of partner organisations and agency staff. It also applies to consultants, vendors, contractors and any other parties who have a business relationship with the ICB and service users

Is it a major change affecting how a service or policy is delivered or accessed?

No

Will it have an effect on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?

No

If you conclude that there will not be a detrimental impact on any equality group, caused by the proposed change, please state how you have reached that conclusion:

There is no anticipated detrimental impact on any equality group. The policy adheres to the NHSE current policy and organisational arrangements. It makes all reasonable provision to ensure equity to all individuals. There are no statements, conditions or requirements that disadvantage any particular group of people with a protected characteristic.