

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria
ICB\FOI ICB834

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By Email

16 April 2024

Dear Applicant

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information – NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB)

Thank you for your request received by North of England Commissioning Support (NECS) on 24 March 2024 for information held by NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB) under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

NENC ICB covers the areas of County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Cumbria, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside, Sunderland, and Tees Valley (which covers the 5 councils that make it up – Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees).

Please find the information you requested on behalf of the ICB as follows.

Your Request

I would like to request the following information under the 2000 Freedom of Information Act.

Concerning Social Prescribing Link Workers (SPLWs), or other workers who undertake the role of a SPLW with different role titles, please could you tell me:

1. How many SPLWs are employed by Primary Care Networks (PCNs) in your Integrated Care System (ICS)? Please give the number of heads and WTE if possible.
2. Does each PCN in your ICS employ a SPLW?
3. Do any PCNs share a SPLW (or employ the same SPLW as another PCN)?
4. Are there any SPLWs in your ICS who are employed by organisations other than PCNs? If so, do you know how many and who employs them?
5. Please tell me how many patients/clients were referred to (a) PCN-employed SPLWs and (b) other SPLWs based in your ICS during the financial year 2022-23 or calendar year 23, whichever is easier.
6. Which body is responsible for monitoring the activities of SPLWs (e.g., ICB, PCN)?

Our Response

We can confirm, as per Section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the ICB holds some of the information you have requested.

County Durham place

This information is not held by NENC ICB at County Durham place. Please redirect your queries to PCNs in County Durham ICB place.

Gateshead place

1. 49 staff, 39.01 wte
2. Yes, all five PCNs have SPLW
3. No
4. Four of the 5 PCNs subcontract the employment of SPLW to Edberts House
5. The ICB do not have access to this information, it goes directly to PCNs
6. PCNs

Newcastle place

1. There are 63 SPLWs which sum up to 55.1 WTE
2. Yes, all PCNs employ at least one SPLW
3. Yes – 2 PCNs share a number of SPLWs
4. Yes – a number are employed by organisations such as Healthworks and Mental Health Concern.

Healthworks – 11

MHC – 10

Search – 1

Skills for People – 1

Streetwise – 7

Newcastle is currently running a pilot which employs 1.0 WTE SPLW via Tyneside and Northumberland Mind. Please note this is the most up to date information we have from the ARRS portal but is subject to change.

5. This data is not available
6. If commissioned by the ICB, the ICB monitor however most Social Prescribers are employed by PCN's in which case the PCN monitors activities

North Cumbria place

This information is not held by NENC ICB at North Cumbria place. Please redirect your queries to PCNs in North Cumbria ICB place.

North Tyneside place

This information is not held by NENC ICB at North Tyneside place. Please redirect your queries to PCNs in North Tyneside ICB place.

Northumberland place

1. Northumberland – 30.19wte and 33 x head.
2. Yes, however some are employed via VCSE organisations on behalf of a PCN.
3. Would need to request information from PCNs directly.
4. Please redirect your queries to PCNs in Northumberland ICB place.
5. Would need to request information from PCNs directly.
6. PCNs, as roles are employed by PCNs/VCSE organisation, not commissioned by ICB.

South Tyneside place

1. PCNs hold the ultimate perspective on this – please redirect your request to PCNs in South Tyneside ICB place.
2. Each PCN in your ICS employs a SPLW.
3. South Tyneside PCNs hold this information.
4. There are SPLWs in your ICS who are employed by organisations other than PCNs. Others employed by First Contact Clinical, but it is a 'service' that is commissioned. First Contact Clinical would need to be asked about exact WTE etc. In addition there are 10 SPLWs employed in the field of mental health and they are employed by a variety of 3rd sector employers.
5. Please redirect your request to PCNs in South Tyneside ICB place.
6. PCNs are responsible for monitoring the activities of SPLWs.

Sunderland place

1. This information is not held by NENC ICB at Sunderland place.
2. This information is not held by NENC ICB at Sunderland place.
3. This information is not held by NENC ICB at Sunderland place.
4. Yes. Age UK Sunderland.
5. a) This information is not held by NENC ICB at Sunderland place.
b) Age UK Sunderland 2022/23 – 891 clients were referred into the service.
6. NENC ICB are responsible for monitoring the activities of SPLWs when they are commissioned by the ICB, i.e. Age UK Sunderland.

Tees Valley place

1. As at the end of Q3 of 2023/24 there were 67.24 WTE SPLW employed/ engaged across PCNs within Tees Valley.
2. Yes, each PCN in Tees Valley ICB place employs a SPLW. The 2023/24 DES contract requires each PCN to employ at least 1 WTE SPLW. The 2024/25 contract is not yet published, however, the contract arrangements letter of 28th February 2024 published by NHS England set out that there will be greater flexibilities in relation to ARRS in 2024/25 and the social prescribing specification will no longer be a separate specification. Details are awaited.
3. Yes, there are a range of employment/ engagement models.
4. This information is not held by the ICB. Please redirect your query to the PCNs in Tees Valley place.
5. This information is not held by the ICB. The PCNs responsible for employing/ engaging the PCNs would need to respond to this via a separate FOI. The PCN DES contract for 2022/23 advises SPLWs manage their own caseload. The maximum safe caseload is 200-250 per year and may be less, based on the complexity of cases and the maturity of the social prescribing service. Workloads should be set based on this maximum rather than other targets.
6. The PCNs are responsible for monitoring the activities of the SPLW. The ICB [Tees Valley Sub ICP] monitors the PCNs to ensure they are employing the roles in line with the DES role requirements and that the PCN are delivering the existing specification requirements [which will

expire on 31st March 2024]. The approach in Tees Valley has historically been undertaken via a self- assessment and assurance approach. This will change in 2024/25 in line with the removal of the social prescribing specification. The contract is not yet published therefore the approach is not yet designed.

In accordance with the Information Commissioner's directive on the disclosure of information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 your request will form part of our disclosure log. Therefore, a version of our response which will protect your anonymity will be posted on the NHS ICB website <https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/>.

If you have any queries or wish to discuss the information supplied, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above telephone number or at the above address.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to request a review of our decision, you should write to the Senior Governance Manager using the contact details at the top of this letter quoting the appropriate reference number.

If you are not content with the outcome your review, you do have the right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Generally, the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the North of England Commissioning Support Unit.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

www.ico.org.uk

Any information we provide following your request under the Freedom of Information Act will not confer an automatic right for you to re-use that information, for example to publish it. If you wish to re-use the information that we provide and you do not specify this in your initial application for information then you must make a further request for its re-use as per the Re-Use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 www.legislation.gov.uk . This will not affect your initial information request.

Yours sincerely

S Davies

S Davies
Information Governance Officer