

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 24-400

NECS – John Snow House
Durham University Science Park
Durham
DH1 3YG

Tel: 0191 301 1300
E-mail: necsu.icbfoi@nhs.net

By Email

23 January 2025

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 20 January 2025 for information held by NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (the ICB) under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The ICB covers the areas of County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Cumbria, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside, Sunderland, and Tees Valley (which covers the five local authorities of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees).

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

Your Request

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding referral criteria for elective hip and knee arthroplasty services within the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB). Specifically, I would like to request:

1. A copy of any current or most up-to-date policies, guidelines, or documents outlining referral criteria for hip and knee arthroplasty within the ICB.
2. Confirmation of whether the following factors are included in the referral criteria:
 - Pain severity as a key criterion.
 - Functional deficit as a key criterion.
 - Smoking status or Body Mass Index (BMI) as eligibility factors.
 - Patient-Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) and their role in the referral process.
 - Other specific criteria, such as minimum symptom duration, prior use of analgesics, or trials of conservative treatments like steroid injections or physiotherapy.

3. Clarification on whether the Value Based Clinical Commissioning Policy (Version 13.0) is still the most recent document or if an updated version has been published since October 2024.

Our Response

We can confirm, as per Section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the ICB does hold the information requested.

1. 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. However, this is available within the NENC ICB publication scheme which can be accessed on the ICB website: [icp040-value-based-clinical-commissioning-policy-v13-0.pdf](#)

For reference, the link to NENC ICB's current corporate policies is [Corporate policies | North East and North Cumbria NHS](#)

In accordance with s.21 of the FOIA, we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is reasonably accessible to you by other means.

2. There are several policies within the Value Based Clinical Commissioning Policy (VBCCP) v13 relating to arthroscopy; Hip Arthroscopy and Knee Arthroscopy, Arthroscopic Surgery for Meniscal Tears.
 - Pain severity as a key criterion – please refer to the response to question 1 for the link to the policy.
 - Functional deficit as a key criterion– please refer to the policies link provided in response to question 1.
 - Smoking status or Body Mass Index (BMI) as eligibility factors -not specific, local criteria will be managed by the service themselves.
 - Patient-Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) and their role in the referral process – please refer to the policies link provided in response to question 1.
 - Other specific criteria, such as minimum symptom duration, prior use of analgesics, or trials of conservative treatments like steroid injections or physiotherapy – please refer to the policies link provided in response to question 1.
3. The ICB can confirm that VBCCP Version 13.0 is the most recent policy.

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