

Our Reference      North East and North Cumbria ICB\  
FOI ICB 26–122

**North East and North Cumbria ICB**  
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By Email

16 June 2026

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 on 10 June 2026 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, Newcastle Gateshead, North Cumbria, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside, Sunderland, and Tees Valley.

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 the ICB's regional oversight of elective urology productivity and the harmonisation of High-Volume, Low-Complexity (HVLC) surgical pathways.

A recent benchmark audit of member trusts within the ICB footprint has revealed a significant lack of operational standardisation. In response to a formal inquiry (Ref: FoI 2026-27.064), Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust explicitly admitted that despite sharing a consultant workforce across sites, there is no standardised regional policy for adopting HVLC surgical devices between Gateshead and The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust due to "different service models at both sites."

Consequently, Gateshead continues to capture 100% of adult circumcisions (Procedure Code N30.3) within premium operating theatre suites—experiencing a routine 63% scheduling time overrun per case (49 minutes actual vs. 30 minutes booked)—rather than utilising 10-minute automated outpatient stapler alternatives (e.g., ZSR/CircCurer).

To understand how the ICB is fulfilling its strategic mandate to drive regional efficiency, eliminate post-pandemic backlogs, and enforce national HVLC procurement targets, please provide the following:

[www.northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk](http://www.northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk) 

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1. *Regional HVLC Pathway Harmonisation*: Please provide copies of any regional frameworks, strategy documents, or meeting minutes from the last 12 months addressing the lack of standardised procurement and operational policies for HVLC surgical devices between Gateshead Health and Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals.
2. *Oversight of Theatre Scheduling Discrepancies*: Does the ICB monitor or benchmark the disparity between scheduled theatre booking slots and actual procedural elapsed times for minor urological surgeries across its member trusts?
3. *Outpatient and Multi-Disciplinary Care Directives*: Has the ICB formally evaluated or issued guidance regarding the transition of minor urological procedures out of main acute theatre suites and into community or primary care settings, specifically utilising a workforce model led by specialised GPs/doctors and supported by Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANPs)?
4. *Capital and Innovation Funding*: Has the ICB allocated any targeted transformation funding or capital over the last 24 months to support member trusts in transitioning from traditional, time-intensive hand-sutured pathways to automated, disposable stapler-assisted models?

To avoid the application of Section 12 (Cost Limit) exemptions, please note that this request is focused strictly on high-level strategic governance, policy directives, and aggregated regional benchmarking reports, and does not require a review of individual patient-level data.

I look forward to your response within the statutory 20-working-day timeframe.

## Our Response

1. The ICB does not hold any information regarding HVLC surgical devices between Gateshead Health and Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals.
2. NENC ICB does not monitor or benchmark the disparity between scheduled theatre booking slots and actual procedural elapsed times for minor urological surgeries across its member trusts.
3. No, NENC ICB has not formally evaluated or issued guidance regarding the transition of minor urological procedures out of main acute theatre suites and into community or primary care settings, specifically utilising a workforce model led by specialised GPs/doctors and supported by Advanced Nurse Practitioners.
4. No, the ICB does not allocate capital funding, this is a process between NHS England and Trusts.

In accordance with our duty under s.16 of the FOIA to provide reasonable advice and assistance to an individual requesting information, we have provided the FOI contacts for foundation trusts within the NENC region and NHS England, should you wish to redirect your request.

| NENC Acute Hospital FTs                  | Email/Online portal                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| County Durham and Darlington NHS FT      | <a href="mailto:cdda-tr.cddftfoi@nhs.net">cdda-tr.cddftfoi@nhs.net</a>                                          |
| Gateshead Health NHS FT                  | <a href="mailto:ghnt.foi.enquiries@nhs.net">ghnt.foi.enquiries@nhs.net</a>                                      |
| North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS FT     | <a href="mailto:foirequest@cumbria.nhs.uk">foirequest@cumbria.nhs.uk</a>                                        |
| North Tees and Hartlepool NHS FT         | <a href="mailto:nth-tr.foi@nhs.net">nth-tr.foi@nhs.net</a>                                                      |
| Northumbria Healthcare NHS FT            | <a href="mailto:foi@northumbria.nhs.uk">foi@northumbria.nhs.uk</a>                                              |
| South Tees Hospitals NHS FT              | <a href="mailto:stees.foi.admin@nhs.net">stees.foi.admin@nhs.net</a>                                            |
| South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS FT     | <a href="mailto:stsft@infreemation.co.uk">stsft@infreemation.co.uk</a>                                          |
| The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS FT | <a href="https://www.newcastle-hospitals.nhs.uk/help/foi/">https://www.newcastle-hospitals.nhs.uk/help/foi/</a> |

| NHS England | Email                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NHS England | <a href="mailto:england.contactus@nhs.net">england.contactus@nhs.net</a><br>Please write "Freedom of Information" in the subject line. |

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 Information 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 ICB's complaints procedure.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or [www.ico.org.uk](http://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](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). This will not affect your initial information request.

Yours faithfully

*Information Governance Support Officer*

**Information Governance Support Officer  
North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board**