

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 26–165

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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By Email

14 July 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 3 July 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

1. What has the money saved from what was allocated in the previous financial year's GP SMS budget been allocated to in the current financial year?
2. Is it intended that this money support the transition from SMS spend to NHS App use and if so, how will this be achieved?
3. What the budget and actual spend on SMS has been for each month of the financial year which has already been closed?
4. What the total cost chargeable to GP practices is predicted to be for the full financial year based on the data so far?

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.

1. As this change was only implemented recently, on 1st July 2026, the ICB has not yet realised any savings. The full annual recurrent SMS budget of £857k has been allocated to practices, and therefore no savings from recurrent budgets are anticipated.
2. The ICB continues to support NHS App development and promotion alongside all national NHS App campaign activity. In 2026/27, the ICB has also continued to allocate funding to a Primary

Care Digital Support Hub, which supports primary care with all aspects of the NHS App, Modern General Practice, and SMS optimisation.

3. The ICB previously funded SMS on an unlimited basis using non-recurrent budgets. This relied on securing funding from other digital priorities and programmes, which is not sustainable.

The budget, expenditure and over/(under) spend for 2025/26 are detailed in the table below:

Month	Budget	Expenditure (excl. VAT)	Over/(under) spend
Apr-25	£71,421.00	£134,461.00	£63,040.00
May-25	£71,421.00	£133,979.00	£62,558.00
Jun-25	£71,421.00	£135,783.00	£64,362.00
Jul-25	£71,421.00	£137,523.00	£66,102.00
Aug-25	£71,421.00	£122,915.00	£51,494.00
Sep-25	£71,421.00	£182,487.00	£111,066.00
Oct-25	£71,421.00	£182,771.00	£111,350.00
Nov-25	£71,421.00	£138,378.00	£66,958.00
Dec-25	£71,421.00	£127,591.00	£56,171.00
Jan-26	£71,421.00	£144,581.00	£73,160.00
Feb-26	£71,421.00	£134,553.00	£63,132.00
Mar-26	£71,421.00	£151,347.00	£79,926.00
Total	£857,049.00	£1,726,368.00	£869,319.00

4. On this occasion it is not possible to provide the requested information. In line with your rights under section 1(1)(a) of the Act to be informed whether information is held, we confirm the ICB does not hold any of the information requested.

SMS billing runs one month in arrears and the ICB does not yet have sufficient data to make a prediction. There has not yet been a full month of implementation under the fair share allocation. In addition, the first three months of the financial year are fully ICB-funded and are therefore unlikely to provide a fair or accurate representation of typical practice spend under a co-funded model.

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.

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 faithfully

Information Governance Support Officer

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