

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\  
FOI ICB 24–392

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By Email

17 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 9 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**

We wish to formally submit a freedom of information request under the Freedom of Information Act to view any report regarding Community Health Pathways which was prepared for the ICB's consideration in making this decision, as well as meeting minutes relevant to the decision.

**Our Response**

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

The redacted report was sent separately to this response, the extract of the private executive committee minutes for 10 December are detailed below.

**CEC/2024-25/188: Agenda Item 10.3 – Clinical Portals Proposal**

The Deputy Director of the Medical Directorate introduced the report which provided the Committee with the outcomes of the independent review of the clinical portals systems (Agilio TeamNet and HealthPathways) and associated workforce across the ICB.

The Committee were informed this is a controversial proposal.

There is currently no equity within NENC ICB in terms of clinical portals. In addition, some LDTs work collaboratively with Foundation Trusts on pathways in some areas and none in others. Two IT portals are currently used across NENC ICB – Health Pathways (South Tyneside and North Cumbria) and Agilio TeamNet in (Sunderland, Newcastle, Gateshead, Northumberland, North Tyneside and County Durham).

The governance and approval of the clinical content varies across places within the ICB and is currently not via the ICB clinical effectiveness and governance structure. Guidelines are normally developed at place with local primary care clinicians and a consultant from a local trust. This can lead to unwanted variation such as when treatments or procedures are initiated at different thresholds in different areas of our ICB. This production at place causes high levels of duplication of work, variation and health inequalities.

The Deputy Director of the Medical Directorate informed the Committee following engagement with primary and secondary care it has been identified that there is no correlation with the use of the clinical portals and patient outcomes.

The current annual spend on clinical portals is £1.258m. There are three options outlined within the report, the preferred option is option three to move away from Clinical Portals and have no system in place encouraging our primary care colleagues to utilise existing national resources.

There are currently 2031 pathways available on both systems and numerous pathways have not been reviewed for years. The Medical Director informed the Committee an issue has been raised and as the result of pathways being out of date there are potentially missed cancer diagnosis' due to GPs following out of date guidance, this has resulted in a clinical safety incident investigation being undertaken.

It was noted there are a number of staff who are employed as clinical editors and these employees would potentially be required to go through a HR consultation process.

The members raised a number of points including:

- A robust communications and implementation plan will be required
- A schematic diagram would be useful to clarify what pathway will remain between providers and GPs
- The financial HR implications will need to be worked through
- This is a patient safety issue

The Committee approved the recommendation to decommission Clinical Portals across NENC ICB subject to a detailed communication, implementation, HR implication plans to be developed and a quality impact assessment to be conducted.

**ACTION:**

The Deputy Director of the Medical Directorate, the Interim Chief People Officer and finance team representative to develop HR costing implications.

**RESOLVED:**

The Committee APPROVED the recommendation to decommission Clinical Portals across NENC ICB subject to a detailed communication, implementation, HR implication plans to be developed and a quality impact assessment to be conducted.

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](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 sincerely

*S Davies*

**S Davies**  
**Information Governance Officer**