

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 26–218

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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By Email

14 August 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 29 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

I write under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information relating to your processes for assessing providers under Regulation 42B of the National Health Service Commissioning Board and Clinical Commissioning Groups (Responsibilities and Standing Rules) Regulations 2012 (the Standing Rules).

1. Please provide a copy of the assessment pack, questionnaire, application form, or criteria document currently used by the ICB when assessing providers for Choice Provider qualification under Regulation 42B of the Standing Rules. If more than one version has been in use since 1st January 2024, please provide the version currently in force and confirm the date from which it has applied.
2. Please confirm whether the ICB requests Healthcare Resource Group (HRG) codes or HRG ranges from providers as part of the Choice Provider assessment process. If so, please confirm:
 - a. at what stage of the process HRG information is requested (for example, as part of the initial application or after submission);
 - b. whether HRG breadth or coverage forms part of the pass/fail assessment criteria applied to applications; and
 - c. whether HRG information is used as a qualification criterion or for information and planning purposes only.

3. Please provide a copy of any scoring matrix, evaluation rubric, decision template, or panel briefing document used to assess Choice Provider applications. If no such document exists, please confirm this in writing.
4. Please confirm whether the ICB holds documented service specifications or pathway documents for each specialty in respect of which providers may apply for Choice Provider qualification, and if so, whether those documents are provided to applicants before or during the assessment process.

If you consider that any part of this request engages an exemption or that compliance would exceed the appropriate limit under section 12 of the Act, please contact me before issuing a refusal so that the request can be refined in line with the duty to provide advice and assistance under section 16. I am content to receive the information electronically and, if it would assist, in instalments.

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. The attached document, Appendix 1, shows the initial questions providers are asked to complete when expressing an interest in delivering patient choice services. If the service/provider is eligible to be assessed for patient choice based on their response to the initial questions, we ask them to complete a 'Form A'. Appendix 2 which provides an example of the most recent Form A. This example specifically relates to ADHD and Autism services. The questions within this Form A will be rolled out for other patient choice services going forward to include requirements under Regulation 42B of the Standing Rules.
2. For services in the scope of the NHS payment scheme and tariffs the relevant PbR tariffs will apply. For services within the choice regulations that sit outside of the NHS payment scheme and tariffs, the commissioner would determine the price for the services based on existing commissioned services.
3. Assessments are carried out in line with the 'NENC ICB Evaluation Criteria' outlined in each question within Form A (Appendix B).
4. The ICB does not have a complete, consistent, list of service specifications for all services and is undertaking work to standardise service specifications.

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**