

Our Reference      North East and North Cumbria ICB\  
FOI ICB 24-489

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By Email

4 April 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 13 March 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 would like to request information regarding the services your Integrated Care System (ICS) provides for the diagnosis and treatment of polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). Please provide responses to the following:

1. PCOS Diagnosis and Treatment Services
  - a. What services does your ICS currently provide for the diagnosis and treatment of PCOS?
  - b. Are these services delivered through primary care, secondary care, or specialist clinics?
2. Diagnostic Pathway
  - a. What is the diagnostic pathway for PCOS within your ICS?
  - b. Are there specific tests, assessments, or criteria mandated for a PCOS diagnosis?
3. Training and Guidance for Healthcare Professionals
  - a. What training or guidance is provided to healthcare professionals within your ICS regarding the diagnosis and management of PCOS?
  - b. How are healthcare professionals trained to understand the long-term implications of PCOS, such as its association with infertility, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease?
4. Management and Treatment Options

- a. What management and treatment options are available for individuals diagnosed with PCOS in your ICS?
  - b. Do these options include non-pharmaceutical interventions such as lifestyle or mental health support?
5. Long-Term Care and Specialist Services
  - a. Are long-term care plans available for patients with PCOS, and how are these structured?
  - b. Are there any specialist PCOS clinics or dedicated services within your ICS? If so, what is the average waiting time for referrals?
6. Integration with Women's Health Hubs
  - a. How does PCOS diagnosis and treatment fit within the remit of your ICS Women's Health Hubs?
  - b. How are these hubs integrated into the broader PCOS care pathways?
  - c. Given discussions around funding, how does your ICS plan to sustain or expand these services in the future?
7. Patient Data and Outcomes
  - a. How many patients have been diagnosed with PCOS within your ICS over the last five years?
  - b. What proportion of these patients were referred for specialist care, and at what ages?
  - c. Does your ICS collect data on patient outcomes or satisfaction regarding PCOS treatment pathways?
8. Barriers to Care and Health Inequalities
  - a. Has your ICS conducted any assessments or received feedback about barriers to accessing PCOS services?
  - b. What steps have been taken to address any identified barriers?
  - c. Has your ICS identified any disparities in PCOS diagnosis, treatment, or care outcomes for specific ethnic or socio-economic groups?
9. Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) Involvement
  - a. Are multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs) involved in PCOS care within your ICS?
  - b. Which healthcare professionals typically form part of these teams?
  - c. How are MDTs coordinated to ensure holistic and patient-centred care for PCOS patients?
10. Public Awareness and Patient Information
  - a. Does your ICS engage in public awareness campaigns or community education regarding PCOS?
  - b. Are there any ongoing initiatives to improve understanding of PCOS among patients and the general public?
  - c. Does your ICS provide specific information on PCOS for both healthcare professionals and patients?
11. Primary Care Involvement
  - a. Does each GP surgery within your ICS have a GP with a special interest (GPSWI) in women's health?

## **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.

North East ICB places (County Durham, Newcastle Gateshead, Northumberland and North Tyneside, Sunderland and South Tyneside and Tees Valley

1. 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.

However, we have determined that the information is held by the acute hospital NHS foundation trusts (FTs) and individual GP surgeries within the North East region.

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 email addresses for all NENC foundation trusts to make your request.

<b>NENC Acute Hospital FTs</b>	<b>Email</b>
County Durham and Darlington NHS FT	cdda-tr.cddftfoi@nhs.net
Gateshead Health NHS FT	ghnt.foi.enquiries@nhs.net
North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS FT	foirequest@cumbria.nhs.uk
North Tees and Hartlepool NHS FT	foi@nth.nhs.uk
Northumbria Healthcare NHS FT	foi@northumbria.nhs.uk
South Tees Hospitals NHS FT	foi@stees.nhs.uk
South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS FT	stsft.freedomofinformation@nhs.net
The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS FT	nuth.freedom.information@nhs.net

A list of practices is available on the NHS Digital website: [GP and GP practice related data – NHS England Digital](#) The GP Practices full file name is **epraccur** and for your reference, NENC ICB's Organisation Data Service (ODS) code is **QMH**.

2. Please refer to the response to question 1.
3. Please refer to the response to question 1.
4. Please refer to the response to question 1.
5. Please refer to the response to question 1.
6. Menstrual problems assessment and treatment, including but not limited to care for heavy, painful, or irregular menstrual bleeding, and care for conditions such as endometriosis and polycystic ovary syndrome is a core service which WHH pilots within NENC ICB are delivering.
7. Please refer to the response to question 1.
8. Please refer to the response to question 1.
9. Please refer to the response to question 1.
10. Please refer to the response to question 1.
11. No, each GP surgery within the ICS does not have a GP with a special interest (GPSwl) in women's health.

#### North Cumbria ICB place

1. Routine diagnosis is made in Primary Care taking into account history and symptoms. Further diagnostic tests may be required which would be arranged via GPwSI services or secondary care. Further specialist care would be via the local acute trust (gynaecology / endocrinology / dermatology). On-going treatment would be provided by Primary Care.
2. Routine diagnosis takes place in primary care based on local guidelines (Heath pathways) and NICE Clinical Knowledge Summaries (CKS) – [Polycystic Ovary Syndrome](#) Ultrasound may be required for confirmation of diagnosis.
3. NENC ICB follows NICE and Healthpathways guidance.
4. See attached PDF of Health Pathways PCOS guidelines used in North Cumbria
5. This information is not held in North Cumbria ICB place.
6. North Cumbria Women's hub does not currently offer services specifically for PCOS. If a patient presented with symptoms, they would be referred to their GP Practice for diagnosis

7. Please refer to the response to question 5.
8. Please refer to the response to question 5.
9. Please refer to the response to question 5.
10. Information can be accessed using the links <https://patient.info/womens-health/polycystic-ovary-syndrome-leaflet> and <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/polycystic-ovary-syndrome-pcos/treatment/>
11. No, practices are likely to have a GP who specialises in women's health but not trained to GPwSI level.

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**