

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 26-054

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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By Email

21 May 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 7 May 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 make a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please also apply this to any information held by your ICB following the ICB restructuring on April 1st, 2026.

1. Please provide a copy of the Action and Improvement Plan produced pursuant to Action 2 of the NatPSA by the 31 January 2024 deadline, or the nearest equivalent document your organisation holds.
2. Please provide any entry or entries on your corporate risk register relating to valproate-containing medicines (including those recorded as sodium valproate, valproic acid, valproate semisodium, Epilim, or Depakote), added or active at any point between 1 October 2023 and the date of this request. For each entry, please provide the risk title and description, date first added, inherent and residual risk scores, recorded controls and mitigating actions, and current status, if closed, the date of closure and reason recorded. If no such entry exists or has existed in this period, please confirm this in your response.
3. Please provide copies of any papers, reports or minutes from your Medicines Optimisation Committee or equivalent, or any sub-group or working group established to co-ordinate valproate safety, concerning valproate prescribing or patient outcomes, to address cost

concerns you can simplify by identifying documents by keyword searches for “valproate”, “VPA”, “Epilim” and “valproic acid” from October 2023 to March 2026.

If complying with all three parts of this request would exceed the appropriate cost limit, please prioritise parts 1 and 2 and respond to part 3 only to the extent that cost permits. I would appreciate confirmation of receipt of this request.

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. Please find attached the year-end report for the NatPSA ICB Medicines in Pregnancy Working Group. This contains the action plan and progress against it.
2. Please find attached the emails detailing addition to risk register on 17 December 2025 then closure of the risk on 13 April 2026.
3. The paper considered by Clinical Effectiveness Committee (CEC) was provided in response to question 1. All minutes of the Medicines Safety Group to which the NatPSA working group reported are publicly available at: <https://ntag.nhs.uk/nenc-medicines-safety-group-meetings/>. In accordance with s.21 of the FOIA, we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is reasonably accessible to you by other means.

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**