



North East and North Cumbria

Our Reference SD\North East and North
Cumbria ICB\FOI ICB347

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24 May 2023

Dear

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 27 April 2023 for information held by NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB) under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

NENC ICB covers the areas of County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Cumbria, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside, Sunderland and Tees Valley (which covers the 5 councils that make it up – Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees).

Please find the information you requested on behalf of the ICB as follows.

Your Request

We have recently been discussing the role of large private companies, such as Newmedica, in the provision of cataract surgery for NHS patients. It has come to our attention that opticians can make referrals for surgery, often bypassing local NHS Ophthalmology Departments and seemingly using different criteria for referral.

Would you please address the following questions as a Freedom of Information request:

1. What criteria are there for NHS patients qualifying for cataract surgery?
2. Are all relevant professionals required to work to the same cataract surgery qualifying criteria?
3. Do opticians receive a fee for making a referral for cataract surgery?

Our Response

County Durham place

1. Criteria can be located in NICE guideline Cataracts in adults: management [NG77] Published: 26 October 2017. This link to this document is:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng77/chapter/recommendations>

2. No. A routine GOS or private sight test will reveal the presence of cataract which the examining optometrist will discuss with the patient. If the cataract does not cause lifestyle difficulties, they will continue to be reviewed by the optometrist under normal GOS arrangements. If, however, the patient wishes to consider surgery, the patient will be referred to the Commissioned County Durham Community Optometry Cataract Referral Refinement Service for further examination and discussion. Should a referral into hospital eye services for further management be required, this will be via the patients registered GP practice.
3. The optician performing the sight test does not receive the fee, the optician that provides the cataract referral refinement will receive a fee from the Provider of the service Primary Eyecare Services, which may or may not be the same optician.

Gateshead place

In respect of question 1 and 2, this information is not held by NENC ICB within Gateshead place. Please redirect your query to the acute hospital trusts, in this case Gateshead Health NHS FT; email ghnt.foi.enquiries@nhs.net and the Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS FT using the email nuth.freedom.information@nhs.net

The response to question 3 is no, they do not receive a fee.

Newcastle place

This information is not held by NENC ICB within Newcastle place. Please redirect your query to the acute hospital trust, in this case The Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS FT using the email nuth.freedom.information@nhs.net

North Cumbria place

With respect to question 1, decision to refer is based on clinical assessment by GP and optometrist and a discussion with the patient and/or family if they would be interested in surgery. After referral, decision on whether or not to operate would then be between the consultant ophthalmologist and the patient and/or family.

Information relating to questions 2 and 3 are not held by NENC ICB within North Cumbria place. Please redirect your query to the acute hospital trust, in this case North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS FT, using the email foirequests@ncic.nhs.uk

North Tyneside place

This information is not held by NENC ICB within North Tyneside place. Please redirect your query to the acute hospital trust, in this case Northumbria Healthcare NHS FT, using the email foi@northumbria.nhs.uk

Northumberland place

This information is not held by NENC ICB within Northumberland place. Please redirect your query to the acute hospital trust, in this case Northumbria Healthcare NHS FT, using the email foi@northumbria.nhs.uk

South Tyneside place

In respect of question 1 and 2, this information is not held by NENC ICB within South Tyneside place. Please redirect your query to the acute hospital trust, in this case South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS FT using the email stsft.freedomofinformation@nhs.net

The response to question 3 is no, they do not receive a fee.

Sunderland place

1. NICE guideline Cataracts in adults: management [NG77] Published: 26 October 2017. Please refer to the link above.
2. Yes

3. No

Tees Valley place

This information is not held by NENC ICB within Tees Valley place. This should be sent to NHS England as commissioners of the Optometry service. They can be contacted via the email nhsi.foi@nhs.net

In line 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 make a complaint or 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 complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. 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.gov.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 sincerely

S Davies

S Davies
Information Governance Officer