NHS
North East and North Cumbria

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\ FOI ICB 26–311

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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By Email

24 September 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 19 September 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 researching how breathwork services are commissioned, referred to, or funded through social prescribing and community wellbeing schemes in the NHS. Specifically, I would be grateful for the following:

1. Whether the ICB/Trust, or any social prescribing link worker service it commissions or oversees, has referred patients to, funded, or maintained an approved-provider list including any breathwork provider, practitioner, or organisation, from January 2019 to date.
2. If so, the name(s) of the provider(s), the nature of the activity commissioned or referred to (e.g. relaxation/breathing classes vs Conscious Connected Breathing or Holotropic-style sessions), and the total spend, if any.
3. Any safeguarding, DBS, insurance, or accreditation checks required of breathwork providers before referral or commissioning, and the policy document setting these out.
4. Any recorded patient complaints or safety concerns relating to a breathwork referral or commissioned service.

I am requesting this information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. If any part of this request is unclear, please contact me so that I may clarify before you decide to refuse it. If any of the requested information is exempt, please specify the exemption relied upon and disclose the remainder.

If you do not hold some or all of this information, please confirm this and, where possible, direct me to the public authority that does. If compliance would exceed the appropriate cost limit, please advise how the request could be narrowed to fall within it, and treat the narrowed request as this request.

If satisfying this request in full would exceed the appropriate cost limit under section 12 of FOIA (Option B):

Please treat item 1 alone, without the further detail sought at items 2 to 4, as a reduced, fallback version of this request, and answer that fallback in place of declining the request outright.

Our Response

1. We can confirm, as per Section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the ICB on this occasion is not able 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 GP Federations and/or PCNs within the North East and North Cumbria region as detailed below:

    - In North Tyneside, Northumberland and North Cumbria social prescribers may be employed by either the PCNs or GP Federations.
    - In Newcastle and Gateshead, social prescribers may be employed by either the PCNs or GP Federations.
    - In South Tyneside and Sunderland, it is the GP Federations who employee the Social Prescribers on behalf of the PCNs however in Durham it varies between the PCNs and Federations as to who employs them.
    - In Tees Valley, social prescribing employment arrangements vary by PCN through a mixture of:
        - GP Federations
        - Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations
        - Primary Care Networks (via a lead practice model)
        - Local Authorities
        - Mixed models using more than one employer

    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 a link to the list of Primary Care Networks available on the NHS Digital website: GP and GP practice related data – NHS England Digital The PCN full file name is **epcn** 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.

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