



North East and North Cumbria

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 25–407

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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Sunderland Enterprise Park
Sunderland
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By Email

30 January 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 6 January 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

Please provide all internal correspondence held by NENC ICB that relates to the collapse, financial difficulties, service failure, cessation of operations, or emergency interventions involving Vocare or any subsidiaries.

This includes but is not limited to internal emails, letters, meeting minutes, briefings, communications with NHS England or other NHS bodies, risk assessments, contingency planning documents, and any service continuity plans.

Please include correspondence from 1 January 2024 to the present date.

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.

Letters, meeting minutes and internal emails, business continuity document

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. We do hold copies of letters, meeting minutes and internal emails.

www.northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk 

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However, we have estimated that to provide you with the required information, would exceed the cost limit of £450 for the NHS as specified in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004.

S.12(1) of the FOIA provides that a public authority is not obliged to respond to a request for information if the cost of locating, retrieving, and extracting information and preparing the response can be included in the costs for these purposes.

Simply for emails, it is estimated that it would averagely take one member of staff approximately 150 minutes to review their personal emails and check for relevance to this request. Allocating 150 minutes per transaction, the NENC ICB estimates that 20 staff may hold emails relates to the collapse, financial difficulties, service failure, cessation of operations, or emergency interventions involving Vocare or any subsidiaries.

On this basis, it would take 150 minutes x 20 staff = 3,000 minutes = 50 hours to extract the level of detail requested from our email system. NENC ICB is therefore unable to provide the requested information within the prescribed limit.

Based on the number of hours (50) at a rate of £25 per hour the estimated cost of providing the information is £1,250. Should you wish to proceed we will be able to comply with your request upon receipt of payment. Alternatively, you may wish to reduce the scope of your request so that it comes in under the appropriate limit.

In accordance with our duty to provide advice and assistance under s.16 FOIA 2000, we estimate that we would be able to supply you with the requested letters, meeting minutes and internal emails, business continuity document (NENC ICB holds an out-of-date copy only) within the appropriate limit, should you wish to refine and submit a revised request. We would ask you to review the time period to ensure that emails could be checked within a specified time period.

Risk assessments

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 risk assessment documentation on this subject.

Contingency planning documents, service continuity planning documents

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 provider – Vocare/PHL Group.

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 link to PHL Group's website: [PHL Group | Innovative Healthcare Solutions](#) and their email: enquiries@phlgroup.co.uk

Communications with NHS England or other NHS bodies

The ICB confirms that it did not and has not received communication from NHS England or other NHS bodies regarding the financial position of Totally PLC prior to Totally PLC going into administration or since Totally PLC went into administration.

Briefings

No correspondence was received by the ICB from Totally PLC/VoCare regarding the possibility or likelihood of Totally PLC entering administration before the press announcement by Totally PLC on 6 June 2025, followed up by official verbal notice on 9 June 2025. NENC ICB can confirm that it did not receive a briefing pack from Totally PLC.

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**