

Our Reference     North East and North Cumbria ICB\  
FOI ICB 24-448

[NECS – John Snow House](#)  
Durham University Science Park  
Durham  
DH1 3YG

Tel: 0191 301 1300  
E-mail: [necsu.icbfoi@nhs.net](mailto:necsu.icbfoi@nhs.net)

By Email

26 February 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 17 February 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 am sending this request under the Freedom of Information Act to ask for the following information. Please could you supply data for each of the ICBs you manage FOIs for, where applicable. If all questions cannot be answered in the appropriate time limit, please answer the questions in order until the time limit is reached.

1. In the following calendar years, how many referrals of any form were made to the ICB for Fast-Track Continuing Healthcare (CHC)?
  - 2022
  - 2023
  - 2024
2. How many of the referrals in question 1 were rejected as inappropriate by the ICB? Please provide figures for the following calendar years:
  - 2022
  - 2023
  - 2024

3. Please explain, in general terms, the main reasons for which referrals were deemed inappropriate
4. How many of the referrals in question 1 were withdrawn/closed by a) The referrer, or b) The patient/their family. Please provide figures for the following calendar years:
  - 2022
  - 2023
  - 2024
5. How many of the referrals in question 1 were withdrawn/closed as a result of the patient dying before any funding was put in place? Please provide figures for the following calendar years:
  - 2022
  - 2023
  - 2024
6. In the following calendar years, how many referrals were accepted for Fast-Track Continuing Healthcare?
  - 2022
  - 2023
  - 2024
7. In the following calendar years, what was the average timeframe – for Fast-Track CHC referrals that were accepted – between receipt of the completed Fast Track Pathway Tool and the care package being commissioned. Please provide the answer in hours where possible, or otherwise in days.
  - 2022
  - 2023
  - 2024

If data for calendar years cannot be provided, please instead give the average timeframe for the most relevant period for which data can be compiled (for example, December 2022, December 2023, and December 2024).

8. In the following calendar years, what was the average timeframe – for Fast-Track CHC referrals that were accepted – between receipt of the completed Fast Track Pathway Tool and the funding for the care package being put in place. Please provide the answer days.
  - 2022
  - 2023
  - 2024

If data for calendar years cannot be provided, please instead give the average timeframe for the most relevant period for which data can be compiled (for example, December 2022, December 2023, and December 2024).

9. Please can you explain the decision-making process for Fast-Track Continuing Healthcare referrals, giving details of all criteria involved in the process between receiving the referral and commissioning support?

As part of this, please could you explain:

- a) The criteria you use for who can make a Fast-Track CHC referral (for example, are non-NHS medical professionals, care home nurses and/or GPs able to do this?)
- b) Whether Fast-Track Continuing Healthcare referrals made by an appropriate clinician are subject to further checks by professionals working for, or on behalf of, the ICB before being granted? Please explain this process if so.
- c) Whether a patient referred by an appropriate clinician is required to meet further criteria, such as having a primary health need, in order to qualify for Fast-Track support?

## 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.

1. 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. However, this is available as published data on the website [Statistics » Continuing Healthcare and NHS funded Nursing Care](#). 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.
2. Please refer to the response to question 1.
3. 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. However, this is available as published data on the website [Fast-track pathway tool for NHS continuing healthcare guidance – GOV.UK](#). 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.
4. Please refer to the response to question 1.
5. Please refer to the response to question 1, however, information is not recorded as per your request, other than as this published data.
6. Please refer to the response to question 1.
7. 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. Fast Tracks are agreed within 48 hours and Funding is dependent on hospital discharge – this information is not recorded in hours. 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.
8. Please refer to the response to question 7.
9. Please refer to the response to question 3.

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**