

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 26–237

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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By Email

27 August 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 August 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

This is a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. We would be grateful if the ICB could provide the information set out below.

For the purposes of this request, **"interpreting"** means the conversion of spoken or signed language between a patient or service user and staff, whether delivered face-to-face, by telephone, or by video (video remote interpreting); **"translation"** means the conversion of written documents from one language into another.

1. For each of the financial years FY22/23, FY23/24, FY24/25 and FY25/26 (or the most recent available), please state the ICB's total expenditure on directly commissioned interpreting services, broken down by delivery mode, and state expenditure on written document translation separately.

Expenditure (£)	FY22/23	FY23/24	FY24/25	FY25/26
Face-to-face interpreting				
Telephone interpreting				
Video interpreting				

Expenditure (£)	FY22/23	FY23/24	FY24/25	FY25/26
Interpreting subtotal				
Document translation				
Total				

2. For each of the same four financial years, please state the number of interpreting requests or bookings received, and the number that were fulfilled.

Interpreting requests	FY22/23	FY23/24	FY24/25	FY25/26
Requests / bookings received				
Requests / bookings fulfilled				

3. Which provider(s) deliver the Trust's interpreting services, and what was the annual expenditure with each provider for each of the four financial years? And for each current interpreting contract, please state the date the contract came into effect, its current end date, and whether there is an option to extend (and if so, until when)

Provider (please name)	FY22/23 spend (£)	FY23/24 spend (£)	FY24/25 spend (£)	FY25/26 spend (£)	Start date	End date	Extension option (Y/N and until when)
Provider 1							
Provider 2							
Provider 3							
Provider 4							
Provider 5							

4. Through which procurement framework(s) or contract(s), if any, are these services commissioned (for example a regional or ICB-level framework, or a local contract)?
5. For the most recent financial year (FY25/26 or the latest available), what proportion of interpreting expenditure fell within each of the following care settings?

Care setting	% of interpreting spend	Expenditure (£)
Secondary care		
Primary care		
Other community settings		
Total		

6. Does the ICB have any plans to further expand interpreting provision into additional care settings (for example primary care or community settings)? If so, please indicate which settings, and the projected expenditure by setting and by financial year.

Where possible, we would be grateful to receive the information in an electronic, machine-readable format (for example Excel or a searchable PDF).

If any part of this request would exceed the appropriate cost limit under section 12 of the Act, please answer the remaining parts and contact us so that we can refine the scope, rather than refusing the request in full. Where information is already published or available in an existing report, a link or reference is sufficient.

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 for financial year 2022/23. 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 NHS England

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 FOI contact for NHS England: england.contactus@nhs.net. Please write "Freedom of Information" in the subject line.

We can confirm, as per Section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the ICB does hold the requested information for financial years 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26. However, on this occasion, it is not possible to satisfy all elements of your request.

We have provided NENC ICB's total expenditure on directly commissioned interpreting services in the table below for financial years 2023/24 to 2025/26.

Expenditure (£)	FY22/23	FY23/24	FY24/25	FY25/26
Total	Information not held	£1,731,466	£1,943,610	£1,972,476

However, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000 contains a number of exemptions that allow a public authority to withhold certain information from release. Some of the requested information is exempt under s.43(2) of the FOIA2000 as disclosure is likely to prejudice the commercial interests of a person as defined by the Act.

The s.43(2) exemption applies to the breakdown of expenditure by delivery mode, detailing expenditure on written document translation separately; part of question 1.

S.43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act protects against the disclosure of information where it would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of either a third party or the public authority itself. We are of the opinion the release of the specific details would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of both the ICB and providers.

The information requested is considered commercially sensitive. Disclosure would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of both the provider and the ICB by revealing detailed commissioning, pricing or activity information that could be used to the disadvantage of either party in future commercial negotiations or procurement exercises. Therefore, the ICB considers this information exempt from disclosure under section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The Information Commissioners Office has established a multi criteria test for assessing whether a section 43(2) exemption is applicable to the requested information. The first criteria

is to determine if the information relates to or could impact on a commercial activity, the second criteria is if the commercial activity is conducted in a competitive environment, and finally if that information is commercially sensitive.

The application of this exemption requires an examination of the public interest in disclosure in comparison as opposed to that in non-disclosure.

The factors in *favour of disclosure* would include:

- Encourage and promote good competition and value for money
- Transparency of functions; procurement and services to NHS

Factors in favour of *withholding the information* are largely laid out in the explanation for the use of the exemption above but would include:

- Releasing this information may mean future contract negotiations might be impacted.
- Disclosure would prejudice the commercial interests of both the provider and ICB.

To summarise, the ICB considers that disclosing the breakdown would prejudice the commercial interests of both the provider and the ICB. After consideration of the above factors, we believe, on balance, the public interest lies in maintaining the exemption.

2. Interpreting requests and bookings received and fulfilled are noted in the table below.

Interpreting requests	FY22/23	FY23/24	FY24/25	FY25/26
Requests / bookings received	Information not held (note 1)	86,418	95,016	102,448
Requests / bookings fulfilled		77,511	85,516 (note 2)	92,826 (note 2)

Notes

(1) Please refer to NHS England, as per the redirection noted in response 1.

(2) This figure includes patient cancellations.

3. 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 acute hospital NHS foundation trusts (FTs) within the North East and North Cumbria region.

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 FOI contacts for those foundation trusts.

NENC Acute Hospital FTs	Email/Online portal
County Durham and Darlington NHS FT	cdda-tr.cddftfoi@nhs.net
Gateshead Health NHS FT	ghnt.foi.enquiries@nhs.net
North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS FT	foirequest@cumbria.nhs.uk
North Tees and Hartlepool NHS FT	nth-tr.foi@nhs.net
Northumbria Healthcare NHS FT	foi@northumbria.nhs.uk

South Tees Hospitals NHS FT	stees.foi.admin@nhs.net
South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS FT	stsft@infreemation.co.uk
The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS FT	https://www.newcastle-hospitals.nhs.uk/help/foi/

4. North of England Commercial Procurement Collaborative Framework – Language Services (NOE.0583) Lot 1a

The original procurement was conducted under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR) through a compliant framework agreement for the provision of translation and interpretation services, including spoken and non-spoken languages. The contract was awarded following a call-off under the framework and provided translation and interpretation services to support service delivery across the authority. The contract included provisions for extension in accordance with the framework terms. The contract has been extended for a further period of 12 months under Regulation 72 of the Procurement Contract Regulations 2015 (PCR), in line with the original scope and permitted duration of the framework agreement.

Contract Start Date: 01 April 2021
Original Contract End Date: 31 March 2026
New Contract End Date: 31 March 2027

5. NENC ICB holds a contract for interpretation/translation and BLS for primary care services only. The table is completed as follows:

Care setting	% of interpreting spend	Expenditure (£)
Secondary care	0%	£0
Primary care	100%	£1,972,476
Other community settings	0%	£0
Total	100%	£1,972,476

6. There are no current plans to expand interpreting provision into additional care settings above those noted in the response to question 5.

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**