

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 26–115

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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By Email

10 June 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 8 June 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

According to guidance from the National Medical Examiner (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/national-medical-examiners-guidance-for-england-and-wales/>), “if a member of the public has a complaint about a medical examiner or officer in England, they should make this to the NHS trust or NHS foundation trust where the medical examiner or officer is employed, or the ICB that commissions services from the NHS trust or NHS foundation trust” and “if a complaint is made to an ICB in England, the ICB should follow its usual complaints process, and in addition must inform NHS England’s regional medical examiner of the complaint and consult them before finalising the response. The ICB should follow its usual procedure for seeking consent before sharing the complaint with the NHS trust and the regional medical examiner.

However, according to section 19(5) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2005, NHS bodies (as defined in section 18A) do not have “any role in relation to the way in which medical examiners exercise their professional judgment as medical practitioners.”

The North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board’s Complaints Policy (ICBP007) does not describe how the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board handles, investigates, and responds to complaints about or involving medical examiners, given the requirement to inform the regional medical examiner of the complaint and to consult the regional medical examiner

before finalizing the response, and given the restriction prescribed by section 19(5) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2005.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I request that I be provided with the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board's policies and processes for handling, investigating, and responding to complaints about or involving medical examiners, given the requirement and the restriction mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Our Response

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.

Medical Examiners are appointed by and work within NHS provider organisations (such as NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts). The operational management, employment, and clinical governance arrangements for Medical Examiners sit with those provider organisations. This includes:

- Recruitment and employment of Medical Examiners
- Day-to-day operational oversight
- Local governance and performance management
- Compliance with national Medical Examiner standards and guidance

Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), including NHS North East and North Cumbria ICB, do not employ Medical Examiners and do not hold direct responsibility for their oversight or operational management.

The role of the ICB is distinct and is set out under the Health and Care Act 2022, which establishes ICBs as system leaders responsible for commissioning services, improving population health outcomes, and overseeing system performance. This role does not extend to the employment or clinical governance of Medical Examiner services within provider organisations. Accordingly:

- The ICB does not hold a standalone policy governing Medical Examiner practice.
- Any policies relating to Medical Examiners would be held and maintained by the relevant NHS provider organisations where those services are hosted.
- National guidance on the Medical Examiner system is issued centrally (via NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care), rather than by ICBs.

If you require further information on Medical Examiner policies or local practice, this would be most appropriately sought from the relevant NHS Trust(s) responsible for delivering Medical Examiner services.

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 foundation trusts within the NENC region.

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/

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**