

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 26-074

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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By Email

5 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 18 May 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 writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding neurology services commissioned by your ICB, with a particular focus on headache and migraine pathways.

1. Neurology commissioning and service structure

Please provide details of:

- a. Any neurology strategy, service specification, or commissioning plan your ICB holds that covers headache or migraine services, including the title of the document and the date it was last reviewed or updated.
- b. Whether your ICB commissions a dedicated headache or migraine clinic or pathway, and if so, the name of the service and the provider(s) involved.
- c. Whether your ICB participates in, or has established, any neurology network, migraine service network, or specialist neurology hub – either within your ICS footprint or across a broader regional footprint. For each, please provide:
 - The name of the network, hub, or group
 - Its purpose or remit (a brief description or terms of reference if held)
 - How frequently it meets
 - The name, job title, and contact email address of the lead or chair (if held)

2. Responsible commissioners and leads

So that I may direct any follow-up correspondence appropriately, I would be grateful if you could provide the name, job title, and contact email address (if held) for the following roles, or the nearest equivalent where a role is held under a different title:

- a. Clinical lead for neurology
- b. Planned care lead (or elective care lead / planned care programme director)
- c. Long-term conditions lead (if applicable)
- d. Medicines optimisation or medicines management lead
- e. Chief pharmacist or deputy chief pharmacist

If any of these roles do not exist within your organisation, or if responsibilities sit elsewhere within the ICS, I would be grateful for details of the most appropriate equivalent.

If it is not possible to provide all of the information requested due to the cost of compliance limits under Section 12 of the Act, please provide advice and assistance under your Section 16 obligations as to how I might refine my request.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me — I am happy to clarify what I am seeking and to discuss the request further.

Our Response

We can confirm, as per Section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the ICB does hold the information requested.

1. Neurology commissioning and service structure:

- a. The ICB have a service specification in place for Neurology which references Headaches, this is with South Tyneside & Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust (FT). A copy of the service specification is attached.

We also commission South Tees Hospitals NHS FT, Newcastle-upon-Tyne Hospitals NHS FT, Northumbria Healthcare NHS FT and North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS FT to provide a range of neurology services of which the following health pathways/service descriptors are in place:

<https://www.newcastle-hospitals.nhs.uk/services/neurosciences/neurology/headache-clinic/>
[Neurology: North Cumbria Integrated Care](#)
<https://www.southtees.nhs.uk/services/neurosciences/neurology/>

- b. As noted above, services are in place as described in the attached specification or health pathways/service descriptor.
- c. NENC ICB participates in the NENC Neurology collaborative group.

The Provider Collaborative in collaboration with the four Neurology services across NENC have been working together to ensure that we continue to deliver and develop high quality out and inpatient care to the population of the North East and North Cumbria over the next five-ten years. As part of this collaboration a stock take of current provision, issues and opportunities has been carried out with a detailed assessment presented to the Provider Collaborative's Strategy Approach to Clinical Services (SACS) Board in February 2025.

Neurology services across NENC face a number of challenges which are the key drivers for this work including Access, Staffing, Reliance on external provision, finance complexity, Therapeutics, primary care and community provision.

The four Neurology services across NENC aim to deliver high-quality neurological services with a focus on:

- Equity of access across the region.
- Timely and clinically appropriate access to services.
- Multidisciplinary workforce to meet patient needs.
- Effective neurological pathways for treatment and support at the most appropriate level.
- Innovative use of resources, including primary care and digital solutions.
- Access: Significant disparities in waiting times for first appointments and sub-specialty services. Waiting lists are growing, with some patients waiting over a year.
- Staffing: Disparities in medical and non-medical staff levels, compounded by recruitment challenges and recent departures.
- Reliance on External Provision: Expensive outsourced solutions for consultant-level activity, which are not sustainable long-term.
- Finance Complexity: Outpatient tariffs do not reflect the cost of long-term condition support.
- Therapeutics: Expanding range of treatments creates sustainability and cost challenges.
- Primary Care and Community Provision: Need for more support outside hospital settings.

The group meets every two months.

Lead/Chair details are:

- Provider Collaborative Lead is Jill Simpson, NHS England
- Chair of Collaborative Group is Naomi Warren (Consultant), the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

2. Responsible commissioners and leads are noted below:

- a. Dr James Carlton, ICB Clinical Lead, email
- b. Paul Turner, Director of Commissioning
- c. Lynn Wilson, Director of Commissioning – Central Neighbourhood Team
- d. Ewan Maule, Clinical Director
- e. Ewan Maule, Clinical Director

Please direct all queries to these individuals using the ICB's generic mailbox nencicb-sun.reception@nhs.net marked for their attention. Alternatively, please telephone the ICB's Switchboard on 0191-512-8484.

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**