

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 24–496

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By Email

9 April 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 19 March 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

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am writing to request information regarding the engagement of external consultants by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) to support financial management, cost reduction, or efficiency measures.

I previously submitted a request specifically regarding consultancy support for ICBs that had been placed in financial turnaround. However, I now understand that many ICBs have been required to engage external consultants under other programmes or conditions—including oversight frameworks, NHS England’s Investigation and Intervention regime, and other financial recovery processes.

To reflect this, I am now seeking broader information regarding any engagement of external consultants for financial or efficiency-related support, regardless of whether the ICB has been formally designated as in financial turnaround.

Please provide responses to the following questions:

1. Has the ICB engaged external consultants in the current or previous financial year (2023/24 or 2024/25) to provide financial or efficiency-related support? If yes, please provide details of when this engagement began and its current status.
2. For any external consultancy support commissioned, please provide:
 - a. The names of the consultancy firms or independent consultants engaged.
 - b. The total monetary amount spent or budgeted for consultancy support.
 - c. The scope of work agreed with the consultants.
 - d. Copies of any contracts or agreements with these consultants.
3. What specific recommendations have the external consultants made to address financial challenges? Please provide a summary of any proposed measures or reports produced.

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. Yes, the ICB has engaged external consultants in the current or previous financial year (2023/24 or 2024/25) to provide financial or efficiency-related support. Please refer to the table below:
2. External consultancy support commissioned information is noted in the table below.
 - a. Names of firms or independent consultants engaged are noted in the table below.
 - b. Spend is noted in the table below.
 - c. Scope of work is noted in the table below.
 - d. A summary of the work and value involved has been provided in the table below.
3. Measures or reports produced are noted in the table below.

Name of consultancy firm engaged	Deloitte LLP	PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP
Period of consultancy support	August 2023 – March 2024	October – November 2024
Total value spent (£'000)	£327k	£196k
Scope of work	<p>To support the NENC Integrated Care System (ICS) in preparing a medium-term financial plan. Their work involved support in determining underlying deficit drivers using benchmarking information and discussing with system stakeholders the areas of opportunity to deliver transformation.</p> <p>On agreement of the areas of priority further support was provided in producing Terms of Reference for new governance groups.</p>	<p>To support the NENC Integrated Care System (ICS) with a review of financial grip and control arrangements, focusing on the following areas: review of 2024/25 financial plans, review of Project Management Office (PMO) and depth of cost improvement plans (CIP), and review of governance arrangements underpinning delivery of financial plans.</p> <p>The work was focused on a number of provider organisations within the ICS.</p>

Recommendations / proposed measures or reports	Recommendations included a list of priority areas for the system to focus on which are now established and report through the System Recovery Board.	Final reports issued by PWC to relevant organisations within the ICS, with a range of recommendations. These are currently being reviewed and related actions plans will be agreed by relevant organisations.
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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

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 sincerely

S Davies

S Davies
Information Governance Officer