

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 24–308

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By Email

29 November 2024

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 7 November 2024 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

Pursuant to the principles of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), I am writing to request information regarding referral management and expenditure of the ICB within the periods April 2024 to October 2024.

Within the defined time periods, can you please confirm:

1. Does the ICB have an independent third-party referral management centre?
 - a. If the answer is “Yes” to the above, please indicate by month the number of ophthalmology referrals shared with providers broken down by month and provider.
2. Has the ICB commissioned an independent e-ERS for the processing of ophthalmology referrals?
 - a. If the answer is “Yes” to the above, please indicate by month the number of ophthalmology referrals shared with providers broken down by month and provider.
3. Can the ICB provide all expenditure to the following providers, broken down by month and HRG, or cumulatively where HRG descriptors are unavailable:

- a. New Medica
- b. Spa Medica
- c. Community Health and Eyecare (CHEC)
- d. Optegra
- e. Anglia Community Eye Services (ACES)
- f. Local Acute Trust(s) for Ophthalmology services [where possible]

Please provide the information in electronic format, if possible, and within the statutory time frame stipulated by the FOIA. If any part of my request is denied, please provide a written explanation citing the specific legal exemption that justifies the non-disclosure and provide me with the information that can be provided.

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. The ICB does not have independent third-party referral management centres. EyeV is a referral platform allowing electronic eye care referrals, from Primary care to secondary care, the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (NuTH) triages referrals. There is no referral management centre.
2. 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.

The ICB have commissioned EyeV to process e-ERS ophthalmology referrals however the data sits with NuTH and EyeV.

In accordance with our duty under s.16 of the FOIA to provide reasonable advice and assistance to an individual requesting information, the FOI email address for NuTH is nuth.freedom.information@nhs.net

3. Expenditure is detailed on the attached spreadsheet.

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