

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 24–332

NECS – John Snow House
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By Email

16 December 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 26 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

I would like to request the following information under FOI.

1. A copy of your ICB's pathway for assessment and provision of non-specialist Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), this includes tablet-based devices, text to speech devices and apps but not equipment provided by the specialist hubs.
2. The number of patients assessed for a non-specialist communication aid in 2023 and 2024 (YTD).
3. The number of patients provided with a non-specialist communication aid in 2023 and 2024 (YTD).
4. Your budget for 2023 and 2023 for the provision of non-specialist communication aids.
5. If provision of non-specialist communication aids is on a loan basis, then how long is this for e.g. 3 months, or as long as required.

6. If you do not have a budget for providing non-specialist communication aid devices (e.g. iPads and tablets, text to speech apps, keyboard-based communication aids) how should a local, community or acute based speech and language therapist working for your organisation make available assessment and provision of these devices for adults (18 or over) living with speech difficulties?
7. The number of patients supported with a non-specialist communication aid via an individual funding request.

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.

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