NHS
North East and North Cumbria

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\ FOI ICB 26–293

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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By Email

18 September 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 10 September 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

Please provide the following information relating to any Frailty Virtual Ward and/or Hospital at Home service commissioned within your Integrated Care System during 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27.

Service Configuration

1. Does your system currently commission a Frailty Virtual Ward and/or Hospital at Home service?
2. If yes, please provide:
   - The organisation(s) responsible for delivering the service.
   - The commissioned bed capacity in 2024/25, 2025/26, 2026/27.
   - The operating hours of the service.
3. How would you describe the primary service model?
   - Consultant-led
   - ACP-led
   - Nurse-led
   - MDT-led
   - Other (please specify)
4. Does the service:

- Routinely medically review all patients; or
- Operate through escalation-based senior medical involvement?

Workforce

1. If held, please provide a summary of the workforce establishment (WTE) for the Frailty Virtual Ward/Hospital at Home service, including:
   - Consultants
   - GPs
   - Advanced Clinical Practitioners (ACPs)
   - Registered Nurses
   - Therapists
   - Pharmacists
   - Administrative staff
   - Other staff groups (please specify)

Funding and Financial Position

1. What was the total annual commissioning allocation for the Frailty Virtual Ward and/or Hospital at Home service in 2024/25, 2025/26, 2026/27.
2. What commissioned bed capacity was associated with this funding in each year?
3. If held, please provide the commissioner funding allocation per commissioned Frailty Virtual Ward/Hospital at Home bed in 2024/25, 2025/26, 2026/27.
4. Since the cessation of ring-fenced virtual ward funding in March 2024, has funding for the service increased/decreased/remained broadly unchanged?
5. Has the ICB undertaken any review, redesign, reduction in capacity, workforce review, service reconfiguration, or affordability review relating to the Frailty Virtual Ward/Hospital at Home service since April 2024?
6. Does the ICB hold information indicating that the provider cost of delivering the service exceeds the commissioning allocation?
7. If yes, please provide:
   - The estimated annual provider funding gap or deficit (where held).
   - Any summary information available regarding the scale of the gap.
   - Whether the gap is recurrent or non-recurrent.
8. Have providers requested additional funding or submitted business cases seeking additional funding support for the Frailty Virtual Ward/Hospital at Home service since April 2024?
9. Please provide copies of any board papers, committee papers, business cases, options appraisals, service reviews or reports produced since April 2024 relating to:
   - Frailty Virtual Ward funding;
   - Hospital at Home funding;
   - Service affordability;
   - Workforce redesign;
   - Service sustainability;
   - Capacity reductions or service reconfiguration.

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.

Service Configuration

1. Yes, NENC ICB commissions a Frailty Virtual Ward and/or Hospital at Home service.

2. The organisations responsible for delivering the service are the acute hospital NHS foundation trusts within the NENC region. Service operating hours are 8am-8pm, 7 days a week at a minimum with an out-of-hours provision.

   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 on the commissioned bed capacity. However, we have determined that the information is held by the acute hospital NHS foundation trusts (FTs) within the North East and North Cumbria region.

   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 those foundation trusts.

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/

3. The primary service model is effective governance and clinical leadership, with consultant physician/consultant practitioner/GP oversight.
4. NENC ICB does not hold the information requested on the service. Please refer your question to the acute hospital trusts listed in response to question 2.

Workforce

1. 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 on the commissioned bed capacity. However, we have determined that the information is held by the acute hospital NHS foundation trusts (FTs) within the North East and North Cumbria region.

   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 those foundation trusts in response to question 2 (Service Configuration).

Funding and Financial Position

1. Annual commissioning allocation for the Frailty Virtual Ward and/or Hospital at Home service:
   - 2024/25: £15,267k
   - 2025/26: £10,343k
   - 2026/27: £10,533k

2. NENC ICB does not hold the information requested on commissioned bed capacity. Please refer your question to the acute hospital trusts listed in response to question 2 (Service Configuration).
3. Please refer to the response to question 2 (Service Configuration).

4. Since the cessation of ring-fenced virtual ward funding in March 2024, funding for the service has decreased.
5. Yes, the ICB has undertaken a review relating to the Frailty Virtual Ward/Hospital at Home service since April 2024.
6. No, an additional assessment of staffing costs was carried out in 2024/25, but this did not include full costs and has not been refreshed since.
7. Please refer to the response to question 6 (Funding and Financial Position).
8. NENC ICB has undertaken discussion with providers where allocations were reduced based on activity in 2025/26.
9. All ICB board papers are publicly available on the ICB website: ICB Board meetings: NENC NHS. In addition, the 202627 medium-term planning submission: item-12-202627-nenc-mt-planning-board-update made reference to virtual wards. The NENC strategic approach to clinical services framework sets out a system approach for collaboratively developing sustainable acute secondary and tertiary clinical care and that draft framework can be accessed here: item-17-20251125-icb-board-draft-sacs-framework-v10. Therefore, the ICB considers this element of your request exempt from disclosure by way of s.21 as the information is readily accessible by other means.

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