



# North East and North Cumbria

Our Reference SD\North East and North  
Cumbria ICB\FOI ICB696

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7 February 2024

By Email

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 12 January 2024 for information held by NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB) under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

NENC ICB covers the areas of County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Cumbria, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside, Sunderland, and Tees Valley (which covers the 5 councils that make it up – Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & 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 on behalf of the Continuing Healthcare Alliance to request information about NHS continuing healthcare applications made to the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) for the 2022/23 financial year. Please can you tell me:

1. The total number of
  - a) standard applications
  - b) fast-track applications

that were made to your ICB for NHS continuing healthcare funding?

2. How many of those standard applications were
  - a) negative (did not meet criteria)
  - b) positive (did meet criteria) but did not proceed to full assessment?
3. How many of the standard applications proceeded to a full assessment of needs?

4. Of those that went to full assessment, how many standard applications involved an in person face-to-face meeting with the applicant?

Following a full assessment of needs, can you tell me:

5. How many applications were assessed as ineligible for NHS continuing healthcare funding?
  - a) Of those, how many involved an in person face-to-face meeting with the applicant?
6. How many were eligible for NHS continuing healthcare?
  - a) Of those, how many involved an in person face-to-face meeting with the applicant?
7. Does your ICB always involve specialists in the assessment of the specific medical condition that the person being assessed for NHS continuing healthcare presents with? For example, a Parkinson's nurse, an MS specialist nurse, a neurologist etc.
8. What is the minimum level of training NHS continuing healthcare assessors undertake to understand needs associated with a range of complex long-term conditions?
9. Please can you complete the table below to show how many applications were completed in relation to the different timescales?

	Less than 4 weeks	4 – 8 weeks	8 – 12 weeks	12 – 26 weeks
Checklists				
Full Assessment				
Applications for review				

Please let me know if anything in the request is unclear so I can provide clarification. If you do not hold the information requested or feel that any of the information is exempt under the Act, please specify this in your response, clarifying which exemption is relevant.

## Our Response

### Questions 1 to 4, 5 and 9

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. However, this is available within NHS England's publication scheme which can be accessed on the statistics pages on their website: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/nhs-chc-fnc/>

In accordance with s.21 of the FOIA, we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is reasonably accessible to you by other means. The information you have requested is already publicly available as advised in the above paragraph.

### Questions 5a, 6 and 6a

All appointments are scheduled to take place face to face. They are only held via Microsoft Teams if the care home has an infection which prevents access. All areas endeavour to complete face to face assessments in all cases but of course would require scrutiny to understand if there was a particular case for specific circumstances where this was not possible, and the attendance/records collated from any specialists.

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. However, we have estimated that to provide you with the required information re application numbers, would exceed the cost limit of £450 for the NHS as specified in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004.

S.12(1) of the FOIA provides that a public authority is not obliged to respond to a request for information if the cost of locating, retrieving, and extracting information and preparing the response can be included in the costs for these purposes.

In order to provide the detail as to whether an application was eligible or ineligible and involved a face-to-face meeting, a member of staff would need to access each individual case because this data is not centrally recorded.

It is estimated that it would averagely take a member of staff approximately 5 minutes to obtain the requested information from each record. Allocating 5 minutes per transaction, the NENC ICB estimates that 3954 transactions/records x 5 minutes = 19,770 minutes divided by 60 = 330 hours to extract the level of detail requested from our records. NENC ICB is therefore unable to provide the requested information within the prescribed limit.

In accordance with our duty to provide advice and assistance under s.16 FOIA 2000, we confirm we hold the desired information, but we are unable to provide this as it would exceed the appropriate limit. We have attempted to estimate what information we may be able to provide you within the appropriate limit. Unfortunately, as the data is not routinely recorded within our systems as explained above, we would need to review each individual case to establish the outcome of the appointment to ascertain if it is relevant, which would still exceed the appropriate time limit. We have considered ways in which you may refine your request either by changing or narrowing the scope but in all circumstances, given the volume of negative and positive CHC cases within the desired timeframes, we have concluded it would exceed the appropriate limit in responding to your request.

On this basis and in accordance with s.17 Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter represents a refusal notice for questions 5a, 6 and 6a.

#### Question 7

All professionals involved with a patient are invited to MDT and if they are not able to attend, they are invited to submit a written report prior to appointment.

#### Question 8

NENC ICB policy is a 6-month induction period and continuous training, peer supervision. 1-1's, appraisals, and support thereafter. This includes visits from specialist Nurses. Regular 1-1 meetings with Clinical Leads. Regular joint working and training takes place with professional and local authorities.

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 to complain to the Information Commissioner as established by s.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](http://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](http://www.legislation.gov.uk) . This will not affect your initial information request.

Yours sincerely

*S Davies*

**S Davies**  
**Information Governance Officer**