

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 26–246

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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By Email

2 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 15 August 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

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please provide the following recorded information held by NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board.

The request concerns adults with co-occurring mental health and alcohol or drug-use needs. Please limit the search to current documents and records produced between 1 December 2025 and 31 July 2026.

1. The current ICB-level pathway, joint protocol, memorandum of understanding or equivalent document governing access to mental health and substance-use services for people with co-occurring needs.
2. Any current commissioning policy or service specification held by the ICB which addresses:
 - a. refusal or deferral of mental health support because a person is using alcohol or drugs;
 - b. requirements concerning abstinence or “stability”;
 - c. responsibility for coordinating care between services; and
 - d. jointly owned assessments or care plans.
3. The latest existing assurance report, audit, dashboard or performance paper covering any of the following:

- a. referrals rejected, deferred or redirected because of substance use;
- b. movement of patients between mental health and substance-use services;
- c. simultaneous treatment by both services; and
- d. jointly owned care plans.

I am requesting existing reports only and am not asking the ICB to perform a new case-record review or statistical analysis.

4. The implementation plan or action tracker through which the ICB is responding to the national co-occurring mental health and substance use delivery framework published in December 2025.
5. The terms of reference and two most recent sets of minutes for the ICB group responsible for this work.
6. The job title or organisational role accountable for implementation across the ICB area.

If any of these matters are not currently measured or recorded, please state this for the relevant item. If relevant operational information is held only by commissioned NHS trusts, please identify the trust or trusts likely to hold it.

Where information is withheld, please identify the applicable exemption and provide the remainder in redacted form. If any part would exceed the cost limit, please respond to the remaining parts and advise under section 16 how the affected part could be narrowed.

Our Response

1. 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.

Access to these services is governed at Trust level. This question needs to be re-directed to the mental health trusts in the NENC region. Substance misuse services are commissioned by local authority public health services. Please re-direct this part of the questions to them.

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 and local authorities.

NENC Mental Health Hospital FTs	Email
Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS FT	foi@cntw.nhs.uk
Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS FT	tewv.foi@nhs.net

NENC Local Authorities	Email/Online portal
Cumbria County Council	information.governance@cumbria.gov.uk
Darlington Borough Council	freedomofinformation@darlington.gov.uk
Durham County Council	Freedom of Information - Durham CC

Gateshead Council	Freedom of Information request - Gateshead Council
Hartlepool Borough Council	freedomofinformation@hartlepool.gov.uk
Middlesbrough Borough Council	Freedom of Information Request - Middlesbrough BC
Newcastle City Council	freedomofinformation@newcastle.gov.uk
North Tyneside Council	foiofficer@northtyneside.gov.uk
Northumberland County Council	Information Governance - Northumberland CC
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council	informationgovernance@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk
South Tyneside Council	foi@southtyneside.gov.uk
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council	foiandcomplaints@stockton.gov.uk
Sunderland City Council	freedom.information@sunderland.gov.uk

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.

We don't have an ICB commissioning policy relating to points 2a to 2d.

Our service specifications include, rather than exclude, dual diagnosis (where an individual may have an affective disorder and use drugs). Requests relating to details of service design should be redirected to the two mental health trusts named in response to question 1.

3. NENC ICB does not have a specific ICB group responsible for monitoring co-occurring mental health and substance misuse. In accordance with the delivery framework mentioned, the ICB's responsibility is to:

"Ensure there is effective strategic collaboration between commissioners and providers of mental health and drug and alcohol treatment services. This collaboration should help deliver high-quality personalised treatment and better outcomes for people with co-occurring substance use and mental health conditions."

Our mental health hospital foundation trusts work in partnership with local authority colleagues. Recommendations for clinical and service leaders and those around service design are the responsibility of our trusts and this question should be re-directed there.

Whilst our reports look at waiting times for patients, active involvement in care planning, outcomes for patients, for example, we do not split out a cohort of people with severe mental health issues co-occurring with substance misuse as part of the ICB reporting.

We are also part of the national community of practice relating to Intensive and Assertive Community Mental Health Care which is led by NHS England.

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 contact for NHS England: england.contactus@nhs.net. Please write "Freedom of Information" in the subject line.

4. Please refer to the response to question 3.

5. Please refer to the response to question 3.

6. Please refer to the response to question 3.

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**