

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 26–147

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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By Email

30 June 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 24 June 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

I am writing to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (or, where applicable, the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002) for information relating to your organisation's telephony infrastructure, contact centre or patient access operations, associated support contracts, and staffing arrangements.

Please provide responses to the questions below. Where exact figures are not held centrally, reasonable estimates or approximations are acceptable. Where information is not held or is exempt, please state which exemption applies.

Section 1 — Telephony Infrastructure

1. What telephony system(s) does NHS North East and North Cumbria ICB currently use for inbound and outbound calls? Please provide:
 - a. Vendor / manufacturer name
 - b. Product / platform name (e.g. Cisco Unified Communications Manager, Avaya Aura, Mitel MiVoice, Microsoft Teams Direct Routing, 8x8, RingCentral, Gamma, BT Cloud Voice)
 - c. Version or generation currently in use
2. Is your telephony system:
 - a. On-premise (hosted within your own data centre or server rooms)

- b. Cloud-based / hosted (vendor or third-party managed)
- c. Hybrid (combination of on-premise and cloud)
- 3. Approximately how many telephone lines and/or DDI (Direct Dial-In) numbers does NHS North East and North Cumbria ICB currently operate?
- 4. When was your current telephony system first installed or last substantially upgraded?

Section 2 — Contact Centre / Patient Access

- 1. Does NHS North East and North Cumbria ICB operate a dedicated contact centre, patient access centre, or centralised switchboard function? If yes, please provide:
 - a. Name or primary function of the contact centre / access centre
 - b. Communication channels currently supported (e.g. voice/telephone, email, webchat, SMS, social media, video)
 - c. Contact centre platform or software used to manage queuing, routing, and agent interactions (e.g. Cisco UCCE / UCCX, Avaya Contact Centre, Genesys Cloud, NICE CXone / inContact, Amazon Connect, Salesforce Service Cloud, Freshdesk, Puzzel, Content Guru)
- 2. How many contact centre agent seats or licences does NHS North East and North Cumbria ICB currently hold?
- 3. What is the approximate annual inbound call volume handled by your contact centre or switchboard?
- 4. Does your organisation use an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) or automated call routing system? If yes, please provide the vendor and product name.

Section 3 — Support And Maintenance Contracts

- 1. Who provides support and maintenance for your telephony and/or contact centre system(s)? Please provide (for each system if more than one):
 - a. Name of the support provider (vendor direct support or third-party maintenance organisation)
 - b. Type of coverage (vendor support, third-party maintenance, or both)
 - c. Approximate annual value of the support / maintenance contract
Contract start date and expiry / renewal date
- 2. Are any significant telephony or contact centre contracts (including licences, maintenance, or managed service agreements) due for renewal within the next 24 months? If yes, please provide the contract category and approximate renewal date (full commercial detail is not required).
- 3. What procurement framework(s) did NHS North East and North Cumbria ICB use to procure its current telephony or contact centre solution(s)? (e.g. Crown Commercial Service (CCS) RM6116, NHS Shared Business Services, G-Cloud, Tech Products 4, direct award, competitive tender)

Section 4 — Staffing

- 1. How many whole-time equivalent (WTE) staff are directly employed by NHS North East and North Cumbria ICB in contact centre, patient access centre, or switchboard roles?
- 2. Please provide a breakdown of contact centre / switchboard staff by job role or Agenda for Change (AfC) band (or equivalent). Specific names of individuals are not required; job title or band is sufficient.
- 3. Does NHS North East and North Cumbria ICB use any outsourced or third-party contact centre agents or managed service operators? If yes, please provide:
 - a. Approximate number of outsourced agent seats or FTEs

- b. Name of the outsourced provider
- c. Approximate annual cost of the outsourced arrangement
- 4. Does NHS North East and North Cumbria ICB have a named senior role responsible for contact centre or patient access operations? (e.g. Head of Contact Centre, Head of Patient Access, Director of Operations — name of individual not required, role title only)

Section 5 — Future Plans

- 1. Is NHS North East and North Cumbria ICB currently planning, evaluating, or actively procuring a replacement or substantial upgrade to its telephony or contact centre system within the next 24 months? If yes, please state the anticipated timeline and scope (e.g. full platform replacement, cloud migration, additional channel capability).
- 2. Has NHS North East and North Cumbria ICB completed or commissioned any review, business case, or digital roadmap covering telephony or contact centre transformation in the last two years?

I would be grateful if you could provide the requested information within the statutory 20 working days. If any part of this request is refused under an exemption, please specify which exemption applies and whether the public interest test has been considered.

Our Response

We can confirm, as per Section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the ICB does hold the information requested.

Section 1 — Telephony Infrastructure

- 1. Yes, NENC ICB does operate a switchboard function.
 - a. The name is Microsoft & AWS
 - b. Communication channels supported are Microsoft Teams Calling – AWS Amazon Connect
 - c. On this occasion it is not possible 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.
- 2. The telephony system is cloud based.
- 3. NHS North East and North Cumbria ICB currently operates 250 telephone lines.
- 4. The last upgrade was April 2026.

Section 2 — Contact Centre / Patient Access

- 1. Yes, the ICB operate a centralised switchboard function, patient access centre, contact centre.
 - a. The primary function is transport information, transport appeals and access / referral.
 - b. This is telephone communication.
 - c. The platform is Amazon Connect.
- 2. 2 – NENC ICB holds no contact centre agent seats or licence. This service is part of a Corporate IT SLA with a third party.
- 3. The approximate annual inbound call volume is 288,000 minutes.
- 4. NENC ICB uses MS Teams Calling through AWS Amazon Connect.

Section 3 — Support And Maintenance Contracts

- 1. In terms of support and maintenance for telephony/contact centre systems:
 - a. North of England Care System Support is the support provider.

- b. The coverage is both vendor support and third-party maintenance.
 - c. The contract is part of the overall Corporate IT SLA, contract dates are 01/04/2026 to 31/03/2027.
2. Yes, the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement is due for renewal in October 2026.
 3. The procurement framework was CCS RM6068 through NHS England Procurement.

Section 4 — Staffing

1. Nine WTE staff are directly employed by NENC ICB in contact centre, patient access centre, or switchboard roles
2. The breakdown of contact centre / switchboard staff by job role / AfC band is:
 - One Centre Manager, AfC Band 5
 - Two Appeals Assistants, AfC Band 4
 - Six Administrators, AfC Band 3
3. The ICB does not use outsourced or third-party contact centre agents or managed service operators.
4. The Senior Head of Commissioning is responsible for contact centre or patient access operations.

Section 5 — Future Plans

1. No, NENC ICB is not currently planning, evaluating, or actively procuring a replacement or substantial upgrade to its telephony or contact centre system within the next 24 months.
2. No, NENC ICB has not completed or commissioned any review, business case, or digital roadmap covering telephony or contact centre transformation in the last two years.

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**