

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 26–244

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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By Email

8 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 13 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

With over 2 million people currently living with sight loss in the UK – and numbers projected to rise due to the effects of the ageing population – ensuring eye health is being prioritised within local population needs assessments has become increasingly important.^{1,2}

The questions set out in this FOI are therefore intended to support a clearer understanding of how North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board is considering, planning and commissioning eye health and care services to prevent avoidable sight loss and ensure timely access to care for people that live with sight loss and visual impairments.

Questions:

1. Which Integrated Care Board (ICB) are you responding on behalf of?
2. Is eye health included within your local population health management/needs assessment approach?
 - Yes
 - NoIf not, why is this? Please share further details below.

3. Which of the following eye care service components are in place and routinely available within your system? Choose all that apply
- Minor Eye Conditions Service (MECS)
 - Community Urgent Eyecare Service
 - Virtual clinics/asynchronous review
 - Risk stratification and validation
 - One-stop clinics
 - Diagnostic/management centres in community settings overseen by hospital eye services
 - Post-operative cataract follow up
 - Long-term condition management for glaucoma
 - Pre-referral glaucoma and AMD review
 - Other
- If you selected other, please share further details below.

4. How do you monitor provider performance of eye care services across your ICB footprint?
Please provide as much detail as you can.

5. Across your ICB footprint, to what extent are NHS trusts meeting the NICE-recommended quality standard [QS180] for patients diagnosed with age-related macular degeneration to start treatment within two weeks of referral?
- All trusts are consistently meeting this standard
 - Most trusts are consistently meeting this standard
 - Few trusts are consistently meeting this standard
 - No trusts are consistently meeting this standard
 - Do not know
- Please share any further details below.

6. What are the most common constraints affecting patient's timely access to eye care services across your ICB footprint? Choose all that apply.
- Workforce capacity
 - Clinic space
 - Availability of diagnostics
 - Estate capacity
 - Follow-up backlog pressures
 - Accuracy of referral
 - IT/interoperability limitations
 - Financial barriers
 - Patients not attending appointments
 - Other.
- If you selected other, please provide more details below.

7. Which eye care digital enablers are currently in place across your ICB footprint? Choose all that apply
- Universal NHS email for primary eye care
 - Shared referral platforms
 - Ability to share OCT images
 - Agreed data standards such as DICOM
 - Shared care record / Single patient record
 - Patient portal/NHS App integration
- Please share any further details below.

8. Do you have targeted programmes to increase uptake of routine sight testing and early intervention for at-risk groups across your ICB footprint?
- Yes
 - No
 - In development
- Please share any further details below.
9. Do you have access to and regularly review patient-reported experience and outcome measures for eye care (e.g., PREMs/PROMs) to drive improvement and accountability at provider level across your ICB footprint?
- Have access and regularly review
 - Have access but do not regularly review
 - Do not have access
 - In development and plan to regularly review
 - In development but no plans to regularly review
- Please share any further details below.
10. Have any planning discussions taken place or activity been undertaken with regard to adopting Single Point of Access (SPoA) care models within eye care services across your ICB footprint?
- Planning discussions taken place and activity undertaken
 - Planning discussions taken place but no activity undertaken
 - No planning discussions or activity undertaken
 - Not yet but we plan to do so in the future
- Please share any further details below.
11. Is there an example of effective local practice that has improved access, enabled community delivery, improved digital connectivity, or reduced inequalities in eye care across your ICB footprint, and can you share details of why it worked? Please share further details below.
12. What would most help your ICB to improve access and reduce inequalities in eye care over the next 12–24 months? Please rank the following in order of impact.
- Best practice/examples
 - Implementation support
 - Analytics/data
 - Workforce Growth and Training
 - Digital/IT support
 - Contracting support
 - Investment
 - Greater patient voice.
13. Would a new national Modern Service Framework for Eye Health, developed as part of the Government's Modern Service Framework programme, help to provide direction for local eye care services?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
- Please share any further details below.

[1] RNIB. Key information and statistics on sight loss in the UK. Available at: <https://www.rnib.org.uk/professionals/research-and-data/key-information-and-statistics-on-sight-loss-in-the-uk/> [Accessed August 2026]

[2] RNIB. Using data to respond to the increase of sight loss in the UK. Available at: <https://www.rnib.org.uk/news/using-data-to-respond-to-the-increase-of-sight-loss-in-the-uk/> [Accessed August 2026]

Our Response

1. This response is provided on behalf of North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board.
2. Yes, eye health is included within our local population health management/needs assessment approach.
3. The following eye care service components are in place and routinely available within the ICB's system:
 - Post-operative cataract follow up
 - Long-term condition management for glaucoma
 - Pre-referral glaucoma and AMD review
4. Performance is monitored in line with the requirements of the contract and discussed at contract review meetings with providers.
5. All/Most trusts are consistently meeting this standard and through contractual meetings the ICB addresses performance issues and concerns.
6. NENC ICB is undertaking a Eyecare Service review to establish constraints affecting access, however, please be aware that specific information would be available via the Provider Collaborative or individual hospital foundation trusts. 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 email address for the NENC Provider Collaborative and FOI contacts for foundation trusts in the NENC region.

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/

NENC Provider Collaborative	Email
NENC Provider Collaborative	nenc.providercomms@nhs.net

7. Details of eye care digital enablers in place across the ICB footprint:
 - Universal NHS email for primary eye care – Yes used as a fallback urgent route.
 - Shared referral platforms – Yes varies across the system.
 - Ability to share OCT images – Yes via specific pathways.
 - Agreed data standards such as DICOM – Yes, evolving.

- Shared care record / Single patient record – Yes for our FTs via the GNCR.
 - Patient portal/NHS App integration – General NHS App and GP online record integrations exist for primary care/GP-held data, but specialized primary eye care clinical portals do not feature a unified regional patient-facing app integration.
8. A programme is in development. The ICB is currently developing the Special Educational Settings (SES) sight testing programme.
 9. The ICB does not hold recorded information relating to a process for routinely receiving and reviewing PREMs/PROMs across eye care services at provider level.
 10. The Provider Collaborative is managing the SPoA rollout across our foundation trusts. Contact details for all organisations was provided as part of the response to question 6.
 11. The ICB is undertaking a Eyecare Service review which will be reviewing these areas.
 12. The ICB is undertaking a Eyecare Service review which will be reviewing these areas.
 13. Yes, a new national Modern Service Framework for Eye Health, developed as part of the Government's Modern Service Framework programme, would help to provide direction for local eye care services.

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**