



# North East and North Cumbria

Our Reference SD\North East and North  
Cumbria ICB\FOI ICB543

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13 October 2023

Dear

## **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 19 September 2023 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**

1. What proportion of GP practices are doing spirometry themselves for annual respiratory reviews?
2. What proportion of GP practices are doing spirometry themselves for breathless patients without a diagnosis?
3. What proportion of patients on asthma and COPD registers have spirometry documented in the last 3 years?
4. Do you use outsourced spirometry services to support primary care?
  - a) If so, what are the names of the spirometry providers commissioned to deliver the service to your patients?
  - b) If so, how many organisations have you contracted with in 2023/24 so far?
  - c) How much was spent in total procuring these services?
  - d) When will you be recommissioning spirometry providers?

If it is not possible to provide the information requested due to the information exceeding the cost of compliance limits identified in Section 12, please provide advice and assistance, under the Section 16 obligations of the Act, as to how I can refine my request.

If you can identify any ways that my request could be refined, I would be grateful for any further advice and assistance.

## **Our Response**

### County Durham place

County Durham place does not commission any Spirometry Reviews in primary care and therefore does not require or collect this information.

Outsourced spirometry services are used to support primary care. County Durham and Darlington FT (single provider) is commissioned to provide this service at a cost of £169,082. The service will potentially be recommissioned in 2028.

### Gateshead place

This information for questions 1, 2 and 3 is not held by NENC ICB at Gateshead place. We would advise that you redirect your request directly to the GP practices.

CBC Health is the only provider commissioned to provide this service. The value of the procurement is £141,220 and the service will be recommissioned in November 2024.

### Newcastle place

This information for questions 1, 2 and 3 is not held by NENC ICB at Newcastle place. We would advise that you redirect your request directly to the GP practices.

For question 4, Newcastle does have some spirometry services in place. The current service is provided by one provider, Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, as a secondary care commissioned service. It is for over 35s only for COPD and over 18s for Asthma. GPs can refer into this service. This is part of an agreed outpatient contract – no costs for procurement.

### North Cumbria place

1. GP practices are not doing spirometry themselves for annual respiratory reviews as it is not part of the guidance now.
2. This information is not available – it would be sourced from each individual GP practice.
3. This information is not readily available and would have to be extracted via our local EMIS Enterprise Search and Report system. This would be subject to approval and could not be provided within the timescale required. I have been advised by the PRIMIS team that because the data isn't readily available, it would need to go through the approvals process and there would be a time delay of approximately 3 weeks. The team would need to complete a data request form which would then need to be presented to the panel for approval. If approved, the team would need to inform all the practices of the intention to extract the data and they would be given 2 weeks to opt out.

The ICB estimates that the exercise to retrieve this information would exceed the appropriate limit set out in section 12(1) (cost limit) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Currently this is set at £450 for the ICB, which equates to 18 hours or more of an officer's time.

4. Spirometry services are not outsourced to support primary care.

### North Tyneside place

NENC ICB North Tyneside place does not hold this information, the data would need to be requested directly from GP practices.

There are 2 providers – TyneHealth and Northumbria Healthcare NHS FT – who work together to provide this partnership service in North Tyneside. The value of the contract is approximately £171k.

A paper on Spirometry across the ICB is due to go to ICB Executive Committee on 14 November 2023.

#### Northumberland place

Northumberland ICB place does not hold this information, it is held by the individual contract holders of Northumberland GP practices. There are no outsourced service is in place.

#### South Tyneside place:

NENC ICB South Tyneside place does not hold this information, the data would need to be requested directly from GP practices.

Outsourcing is used for diagnostic spirometry only. The single provider is South Tyneside Health Collaboration. There is an allocated budget of £263,160 and it is unknown at this point whether the service will be recommissioned from this provider.

#### Sunderland place

1. All practices in Sunderland have the capability and will conduct spirometry themselves for patients where annual review is indicated.
2. All practices in Sunderland have the capability and will conduct spirometry themselves where clinically necessary and appropriate.
3. COPD register – 2% of COPD register are coded as having had spirometry in last 3 years and 4% of asthma register are coded as having had spirometry in last 3 years.
4. There are no outsourced spirometry services to support primary care in Sunderland place.

#### Tees Valley place

NENC ICB does not hold the information in Tees Valley, it is held by Primary Care. Please contact GP practices directly.

Contracts with out-sourced providers ended in June 2023. There were 2 organisations contracted with during 2023/24. The total spend was £240,550 (March 2022 to June 2023).

In line 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 make a complaint or 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 complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. 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**