

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 26-009

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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By Email

10 April 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 6 April 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 for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I would be grateful if you could provide the following information relating to expenditure on general legal services for each of the last three financial years (2022/23, 2023/24, and 2024/25):

1. The total amount spent on external legal services and advice in each financial year.
2. A breakdown of that spend by category of legal work, for example (but not limited to):
 - Employment law
 - Contract and procurement law
 - Information governance and data protection
 - Property and estates
 - Regulatory and compliance
 - Governance and corporate law
 - Other general legal advice
3. Whether the organisation holds an in-house legal team, and if so, the total annual cost (salary and on-costs) of that team for each of the three years.

- Whether legal services are procured via a framework agreement (e.g. NHS Shared Business Services, Crown Commercial Service), and if so, which framework.

For the avoidance of doubt, this request does NOT seek information relating to:

- Clinical negligence litigation
- NHS Protect or counter-fraud activity
- Any matters covered by legal professional privilege that the Trust/ICB considers exempt

I appreciate that some individual cases or matters may be exempt under section 42 (legal professional privilege) of the Act. I am not seeking details of individual cases — only aggregated financial and organisational information of the type that would ordinarily appear in annual accounts or procurement records.

If the full scope of this request would exceed the appropriate cost limit under section 12 of the Act, I would be grateful if you could advise me which parts could be answered within the limit, and I will refine my request accordingly.

Alternatively, please provide whatever information can be supplied within the limit, prioritising items 1 and 2 above.

Our Response

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

- Total amount spent on external legal services and advice in each financial year:

Year	Overall Annual Legal Spend	Spend on other legal matters	Spend on Court of Protection	% of Court of Protection spend
2022/23 (see note)	£489k	£99k	£390k	80%
2023/24	£1576k	£437k	£1139k	72%
2024/25	£1570k	£251k	£1319k	84%

Note: The information provided for financial year 2022/23 covers the period 1 July 2022 to 31 March 2023. NENC ICB did not come into being until July 2022 and information is not held prior to this date.

- Please refer to the table above for the breakdown of spend. "Other spend" includes corporate and HR advice.
- NENC ICB does not hold an in-house legal team.
- The ICB legal services are procured via a framework agreement which is the Health Trust Europe Legal Services Framework (HTEF)

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**