

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 24–265

NECS – John Snow House
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By Email

16 October 2024

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 by North of England Commissioning Support (NECS) on 26 September 2024 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, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Cumbria, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside, Sunderland, and Tees Valley (which covers the five local authorities of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees).

Please find the information you requested on behalf of the ICB as follows.

Your Request

The following questions cover both the ICB's delegated responsibility, from 1 July 2023, for Primary Care complaints handling and the ICB's handling of complaints about ICB-commissioned Hospital and Community Services. These duties are set out variously in The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009, the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 (the 2009 and 2014 Regulations) and delegated functions for primary care complaints handling under the Health and Social Care Act 2022.

I would like to request the following information:

1. How does your Integrated Care Board deliver its complaints handling function? Please select all that apply.
 - a. The Integrated Care Board directly provides both the primary care and hospital and community health services complaints handling responsibilities.
 - b. The Integrated Care Board directly provides only the primary care complaints handling responsibility.

- c. The Integrated Care Board directly provides only the hospital and community health services complaints handling responsibility.
 - d. The Integrated Care Board delegates both primary care and hospital and community health services complaints handling responsibilities to a host organisation (i.e. another ICB or a Commissioning Support Unit).
 - e. The Integrated Care Board delegates only the primary care complaints handling responsibility to a host organisation (i.e. another ICB or a Commissioning Support Unit).
 - f. The Integrated Care Board delegates only the hospital and community health services complaints handling responsibility to a host organisation (i.e. another ICB or a Commissioning Support Unit).
 - g. Other (please specify).
2. What budget (in £) did your Integrated Care Board allocate to complaints handling in the financial year 2023/4 (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024)? This could include the value of any sub-contracts you have made to commissioning support units or other ICBs to manage complaints handling on your behalf. If it is not possible for you to source this information, please provide an estimate.
 3. How many staff (FTE) were employed by your Integrated Care Board to handle complaints on 1 March 2024 (or the nearest possible date, please state what this date is)? If it is not possible for you to source this information, please provide an estimate.
 4. Does your ICB have a target response time for responding to complaints? If so, please state the target response time.
 5. What was the average complaint response time in the financial year 2023/4 (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024)?

Our Response

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

1. The ICB delivers its complaints handling function as per option f. The Integrated Care Board delegates only the hospital and community health services complaints handling responsibility to a host organisation (i.e. another ICB or a Commissioning Support Unit).
2. The allocated estimated budget was £277,268.
3. There are 5.0 FTE (employed by NECS to deliver commissioning complaints) and 3.0 FTE (employed by the ICB to deliver primary care complaints).
4. Target response time:
 - Commissioning complaints – currently 3 months from receipt of the complaint (or receipt of appropriate consent/authority to act or agreement of the complaint plan in complex cases).
 - Primary care complaints – currently 6 months
5. Average complaint response time:
 - Commissioning complaints – average response timescale was 24 working days. The range was 1 to 151 working days.
 - Primary care complaints – average response timescale was 105 working days. The range was 31 to 257 working days.

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 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 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 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

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 sincerely

S Davies

S Davies
Information Governance Officer