NHS
North East and North Cumbria

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\ FOI ICB 26–334

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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By Email

15 October 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 27 September 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

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am requesting information regarding how your organisation consults disabled people and satisfies its Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

Please provide answers to the following four questions covering the period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2025:

1. Financial expenditure & payouts
   a. What was the total monetary amount paid DIRECTLY to disabled participants (as task stipends, living-wage fees, cash payouts, or gift vouchers) for participating in surveys, focus groups, or usability audits in 2023, 2024, and 2025?
   b. What was the total expenditure paid to EXTERNAL charities, consultancies, or market research agencies to conduct disability consultation, access audits, or Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) over the same period?

2. Consultation methodology
   For each disability consultation project, survey, or usability test conducted across all service areas (including highways/transport, social care, housing, public health, and digital services):

a. What specific engagement method was used (e.g., mobile/web surveys, paper forms, assisted telephone interviews, focus groups, or WCAG 2.2 accessibility user testing)?
b. What was the recorded sample size and demographic/impairment profile of participants?

3. DPO vs charity classification
   a. Does your organisation hold or maintain a register, definition, or policy distinguishing Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs), defined as organisations 100% governed and controlled by disabled people, from generic charities, service providers, or carer groups?
   b. If yes, please provide a list of all registered DPOs consulted during 2023–2025.
   c. If no policy is held, please confirm whether organisational governance is recorded for consulted groups.

4. Equality impact assessments (EIAS)
   a. Copies of, or web links to, all published Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) or Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs) produced between 2023 and 2025 that explicitly record consultation with disabled people.
   b. Please detail how a local DPO or disabled resident panel can formally register to be consulted on future policy and service changes.

If any part of this request requires clarification, or if you estimate that processing will exceed the statutory cost limit, please contact me immediately to assist in refining the scope, as per your duty to advise and assist under Section 16 of the Act.

Our Response

1. Financial expenditure & payouts
   a. 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 to the level requested.
   b. Please refer to the response to question 1a.

2. Consultation methodology
   a. The ICB does not hold a central register of all disability consultations, surveys, usability tests or engagement activity undertaken across all ICB service areas between 1 January 2023 and 31 December 2025.

      Information relating to individual projects is held within project records and reports. Published reports can be found on the ICB's website: What you told us | North East and North Cumbria NHS. This link includes Annual Involvement reports.

      Disability-specific engagement has been undertaken through the following methods:
      - Online surveys
      - Accessible surveys and Easy Read materials
      - Focus groups and engagement events
      - Working with community, voluntary and advocacy organisations
      - Involvement through existing patient, carer and lived experience groups

   b. The ICB not hold a single consolidated record containing participant numbers, demographic profiles and impairment profiles for every disability-related activity undertaken across the ICB during the requested period.

3. DPO vs charity classification
   a. There is no central register, definition or policy distinguishing Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) from charities, service providers or carer organisations.
   b. Please refer to the response for question 3a.
   c. The ICB does not routinely record or verify the governance arrangements of organisations that participate in involvement or engagement activity.

4. Equality impact assessments (EIAS)
   a. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) and Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs) are not maintained; there is no central register of EIAs or IIAs produced by the ICB.
   b. People and organisations wishing to be involved in future engagement activity can access involvement opportunities through the ICB's public involvement webpages or contact the Involvement Team via NENCICB.involve@nhs.net. The ICB website: https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/ includes opportunities to share views, join groups and forums, share experiences, access support to get involved and sign up to involvement opportunities.

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, 4th Floor, No. 3 Circle Square, 5 Hawkshaw Street, Manchester, M1 7BL 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

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North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board