

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 25–457

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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By Email

26 February 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 8 February 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

Please can I seek the following Information from your MSK Rheumatology Commissioners:

1. How many acute trusts do you commission Rheumatology Help Line Services from? Please provide the names of these trusts.
2. Are Rheumatology Advice Lines commissioned as part of the Rheumatology contact? Yes/ No
3. How is the activity coded and paid?
 - Aligned payment and incentives (API)
 - Low volume activity (LVA) block payments
 - Activity-based payment (ABP)
 - Local agreement (LA)
 - Other – please provide detail
4. Do you require any service line reports for activity and patient reported outcome/ satisfaction? Yes/No
5. If yes, which reports do you request?
6. Any other relevant information around commissioning of Rheumatology Advice Lines.

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 commissions Rheumatology Help Line Services from two acute trusts, County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT) and South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust (STSFT)

In Northumberland and North Tyneside, there is not an explicit rheumatology Help Line service; however Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust and Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust provide "Advice and Guidance" for related condition which GP can seek advice from. This is part of the acute contract with these trusts.

2. Rheumatology Advice Lines are commissioned as part of the Rheumatology contact.
3. Activity is coded and paid as part of a block contract.
4. No, the ICB does not require service line reports for activity and patient reported outcome/ satisfaction.
5. Please refer to the response to question 4.
6. At STSFT, telephone lines are nurse-led and provide support to existing Rheumatology patients with issues with their DMARD monitoring or joint flares. They are not general Rheumatology advice lines for the public or for GPs.

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**