



North East and North Cumbria

Our Reference PA\ North East & North
Cumbria ICB\ICB510

Your Reference ICB510

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18 September 2023

By Email to

Dear

Freedom of Information Act 2000 - Request for Information – NHS North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board.

Thank you for your request received by North of England Commissioning Support (NECS) on 23 August 2023 for information held by NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

For information Clinical Commissioning Groups ceased to exist on 30 June 2022. Services that were previously delivered by the CCG are now being delivered by the successor organisation NHS North East and North Cumbria (NENC ICB). 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.

Request and response

Since your response to FOI ICB243, all legal arrangements have changed. I am told the Lindisfarne Health arrangement collapsed.

The Lindisfarne Health Group remains in place, Northumberland Health is no longer a part of this organisation and are now a part of Northumbria Primary Care (NPC)

Attached Letter to patients from Northumberland Health 25 July 2023, announcing yet another major operational and legal change, the third in as many years.

The letter continues to misinform the patients, by describing it as a partnership between surgeries and Northumbria Primary care, NPC, it is not a legal partnership.

There is a legal agreement in place between the practice and NPC as this is a contractual requirement under the GMS contract.

NPC is a limited company, a wholly owned subsidiary of Northumbria Healthcare NHS foundation Trust.

NPC are taking over the complete business of running the surgery, including the employment of the staff, including the doctors.

NPC will provide all management and operational support to the practice. This arrangement is the same as the previous arrangement with Lindisfarne.

The doctors will keep the Practice contract in their names.

This is correct, they remain responsible for meeting all of the terms and provisions in the GMS Contract they hold.

Which leads to the question of the Proposed new Felton Surgery. The original proposals were from the doctors.

The proposal remains with the doctors, the process administered and supported by NPC.

As NPC is now running the practices, I assume the process will now need to start all over again with a new application from NPC.

Existing process, development and planning application is proceeding.

This process was paused to ensure that the practice was able to continue to deliver clinical care to their patients. The process can now pick up from the stage at which it was paused, as detailed in the letter attached, as the Practice still holds the GMS contract.

It is scandalous that the patients and residents have had to put up a continuing deterioration in service provision and were not informed at all of the failure of the Lindisfarne setup or this new NPC takeover.

The letter received on 25th of July details the news of the NPC partnership with the Practice, the current CQC rating and the service delivery details.

The Lindisfarne Health Group remains in place however, Northumberland Health are no longer a part of this partnership organisation. The NPC partnership will ensure stability and improved service to patients.

I have copied in Healthwatch Northumberland, as clearly, they have failed in their remit to engage with the residents of Felton on this ongoing fiasco.

The existing Felton surgery was not fit for purpose back in 2011 and under Dr Leas contract new premises should have been found then.

It is the responsibility of the Practice to operate from premises that are fit for purpose. The commissioner was contacted by Dr Lees in 2016 for support to identify a way forward

to improve the current surgery leased premises. The ICB, (previously CCG), has worked closely with the practice and NHS England to move forward any possible developments.

I assume as this practice has effectively been nationalised, we can now expect to see NPC use its considerable expertise to provide the long promised new Felton surgery.

The Felton practice is one of a number in the region to operate with administrative and managerial support from NPC, who will support the delivery of the proposed new Felton Surgery.

FPC now own the site land, The Healthcare Trust has another Project management company which is capable of building the new surgery from its own capital resources, rather than paying exorbitant rents to assura.

The Healthcare Trust has a Facilities Management company that supports the Trust properties, they do not undertake construction and or development or primary care premises.

This would provide Felton with a public owned community asset, in line with current political thinking.

I hereby request an FOI seeking clarification of the points I have raised above and a full explanation of what the future proposals are for the new surgery. Please provide me with copies of all public and private meeting minutes of the ICB relating to the failure of the previous Lindisfarne novel partnership arrangement and this new NPC legal arrangement.

Please see the attached pdf.

Please note that some information has been redacted as it was not in scope of the request..

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

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

Paul Atkinson

Paul Atkinson
Information Governance Officer