

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 25–501

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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Sunderland
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By Email

16 March 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 3 March 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 provide the following information relating to complaints handled by North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board:

Complaints Handling Performance

1. The average number of working days taken to issue a final response to complaints during:
 - The last 12 months
 - The last 6 months
2. The current number of open complaints awaiting allocation to a case handler.
3. The longest currently outstanding complaint (in working days).
4. The ICB's published or internal target timeframe for resolving complaints.
5. The number of complaints escalated to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) in the last 12 months.
6. The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff currently assigned to the Complaints Team.

Complaint Volumes by Service (Last 5 Financial Years)

For each of the last five completed financial years, please provide:

1. The total number of complaints received by the ICB.

2. A breakdown of complaints by service type, including but not limited to:
 - NHS Dental Services
 - GP Services
 - Hospital/Acute Services
 - Community Services
 - Mental Health Services
 - Other Primary Care Services

If recorded, please provide this information in spreadsheet format. Please provide the information electronically.

Our Response

We can confirm, as per Section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the ICB holds some of the information you have requested.

Complaints Handling Performance

1. Average number of working days taken to issue a final response to complaints:
 - The last 12 months – this information is unavailable due to a change in the system used for logging complaints
 - The last 6 months – 14 days
2. There are 194 open complaints awaiting allocation to a case handler.
3. The longest currently outstanding complaint is 519 days.
4. We can confirm, as per Section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the ICB holds the information you have requested. However, the timeframe for resolving complaints is publicly available within the ICB's Complaints Policy, which can be accessed on the ICB website: [Complaints Policy](#)

In accordance with s.21 of the FOIA, we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is reasonably accessible to you by other means.

5. We can confirm, as per Section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the ICB on this occasion is not able 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 requested. However, we have determined that the information is held by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO).

In accordance with our duty under s.16 of the FOIA to provide reasonable advice and assistance to an individual requesting information, we have provided the FOI email for the PHSO: informationrights@ombudsman.org.uk.

6. There are 5.4 FTE staff currently assigned to the Complaints Team.

Complaint Volumes by Service (Last 5 Financial Years)

1. We can confirm, as per Section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the ICB holds the some of the information you have requested. However, the total number of complaints received by the ICB is reported annually to the Board and available on the ICB website:

Board meeting 30/09/25: [item-9-nenc-icb-complaints-annual-report-2024-25-final-board-dco.pdf](#)

Board meeting 26/11/24: [item-10-complaints-annual-report-2023-24-v2.pdf](#)

In accordance with s.21 of the FOIA, we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is reasonably accessible to you by other means.

The ICB was established as an entity on 1 July 2022; therefore we are unable to provide data from before this date. Additionally, the ICB assumed responsibility for Primary Care complaints only as of 1 July 2023. As such, any prior data is not available within our records. For information predating this period, please redirect your request to NHS England, who hold the relevant data.

In accordance with our duty under s.16 of the FOIA to provide reasonable advice and assistance to an individual requesting information, the FOI email for NHS England is england.contactus@nhs.net. Please write "Freedom of Information" in the subject line.

2. This will take too long to complete as it will need to be a manual search through thousands of records – there is similar information but not in this level of detail on the government website <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/data-collections-and-data-sets/data-collections#k>

We can confirm, as per Section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the ICB holds some of the information you have requested. However, we have estimated that to provide you with the required information, would exceed the cost limit of £450 for the NHS as specified in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004.

S.12(1) of the FOIA provides that a public authority is not obliged to respond to a request for information if the cost of locating, retrieving, and extracting information and preparing the response can be included in the costs for these purposes.

It is estimated that it would averagely take a member of staff approximately 10 minutes to manually search and obtain the requested information from the complaints management system. Allocating 10 minutes per transaction, the NENC ICB estimates that 3,000 cases x 10 minutes = 30,000 minutes divided by 60 = 500 hours to extract the level of detail requested from our Complaints management system. NENC ICB is therefore unable to provide the requested information within the prescribed limit.

Based on the number of hours (500) at a rate of £25 per hour the estimated cost of providing the information is £12,500. Should you wish to proceed we will be able to comply with your request upon receipt of payment. Alternatively, you may wish to reduce the scope of your request so that it comes in under the appropriate limit.

In accordance with our duty under s.16 of the FOIA to provide reasonable advice and assistance to an individual requesting information, we have provided the link to published Primary Care (GP and Dental) data on the NHS Digital website: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/data-collections-and-data-sets/data-collections#>

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**