

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 24-511

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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By Email

17 April 2025

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 30 March 2025 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

I am writing under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request information related to the Independent Oversight Group (IOG) established by the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB) in October 2023 to oversee the implementation of the Dame Marianne Griffiths review recommendations (published July 2023) concerning the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS).

The IOG, chaired by Graham Prestwich, concluded its work by July 2024, as noted in a Chronicle Live report (24 July 2024). I understand the NENC ICB produced a report on this process, which has not been publicly released.

I request the following:

1. The full report produced by the NENC ICB's Independent Oversight Group, chaired by Graham Prestwich, on the implementation of the Griffiths review's 18 recommendations.
2. Minutes or notes from IOG meetings held between October 2023 and July 2024.

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3. Any correspondence between the NENC ICB, the IOG, and NEAS regarding the implementation of the Griffiths recommendations from October 2023 to July 2024.

This request is in the public interest, given the NEAS deaths scandal's severity, allegations of covered-up patient deaths, whistleblower concerns, and systemic failures, as detailed in the Griffiths review, which criticized NEAS for underreporting Serious Incidents, poor candour, and inadequate investigations.

The IOG's findings, referenced at the NENC ICB board meeting (July 2024), are critical to understanding if these issues were addressed, especially as families expressed disappointment with the process (Chronicle Live, 24 July 2024).

Transparency is vital for accountability, patient safety, and restoring trust in NEAS, a public service. If any information is exempt under the FOIA (e.g., Section 40, personal data), please provide anonymized or redacted versions where possible, with a detailed explanation of each exemption and the public interest test applied.

I believe the public interest in disclosure outweighs exemptions given the scandal's impact. Please acknowledge receipt and respond within 20 working days, as required by the FOIA.

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.

1. NHS England was responsible for the governance of the Independent Oversight Group and appointing the chair. They also facilitated contact with the families at the beginning, throughout and the end. The administration and organisation of the meetings was largely down to North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (NEAS).

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 NHS England.

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 address for NHS England is england.contactus@nhs.net. Please write "Freedom of Information" in the subject line.

2. 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. An update was presented at board on the ICB recommendations, and an update provided the following year. The links to the meetings are:

NEAS independent investigation report: [Board meeting held in public – 25 July 2023 NENC ICB](#)

NEAS independent investigation report – one year on: [Board meeting held in public – 30 July 2024 NENC ICB](#)

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.

3. Please refer to the response to question 1.

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

Information Governance Support Officer

**Information Governance Support Officer
North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board**