

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 26–108

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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By Email

8 June 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 4 June 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

I would like to request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act.

1. Does the integrated care board have any policy in place for a minimum wait for treatment for elective procedures?
2. If yes to question 1, please provide details of the policy.
3. Has the ICB introduced any changes to the referral criteria for any of the following procedures since 1st May 2023?
 - a. Hip surgery
 - b. Knee surgery
 - c. Cataract treatment
4. If yes to question 3, please provide details or a link to the policy and if possible, please indicate which detail has been updated.

Our Response

1. The ICB uses the provisions within the NHS standard contract (details publicly available here: [NHS England » 2026/27 NHS Standard Contract](#)) in setting Indicative Activity Plans with elective providers. This includes the use of an activity planning assumption, that sets the

expectation that providers will on average see patients in 15 weeks (referral to treatment), i.e. the annual amount of activity commissioned from the provider reflects this assumption. This does not prevent patients from being seen sooner if clinically required. Providers are expected to comply with the national NHS constitutional standards.

2. Please refer to the response to question 1.
3. No changes have been made to the referral criteria. The ICB's Value Based Clinical Commissioning policy can be found here:

<https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/media/dimlerzs/value-based-clinical-commissioning-policy.pdf>

Referral criteria for these procedures continue to follow national clinical guidance and locally agreed pathways.

4. Please refer to the response to question 3.

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**