

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 25–244

North East and North Cumbria ICB
Pemberton House
Colima Avenue
Sunderland Enterprise Park
Sunderland
SR5 3XB

Tel: 0191 512 8484
E-mail: nencicb.foi@nhs.net

By Email

6 October 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 on 23 September 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, 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 am writing under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request information on how Non-Emergency Patient Transport (NEPT) services are currently commissioned in your area.

For clarity, by NEPT I mean the transport service commissioned (not emergency ambulance) which carries patients to and from routine or pre-booked medical appointments and hospital discharges.

Please provide the requested information for your Integrated Care Board (ICB) area. If any information is held at a more local level (e.g., place / sub-ICB / former CCG area), please indicate which sub-area it relates to.

Please answer the following questions:

1. Which compan(ies) are currently providing your non-emergency patient transport (NEPT) services?
2. Do they use any subcontractors and, if so, what compan(ies) are those?
3. What is the £ value of the NEPT contracts you have commissioned (please state annual value or total contract value and indicate which)?

4. What is the length of the NEPT contracts with the providers (initial term and any extension options)?
5. What requirements have you shared with providers for what services they have to run and with what kinds of vehicles (please summarise your specification, including any accessibility/vehicle-type requirements, and how many of each kind of vehicle)?
6. Are there any other compan(ies) on your 'framework' (or approved supplier list) that can bid for these services in future and, if so, who are they?
7. When are you next due to go out to tender (or re-commission) NEPT services, or when do current contracts expire?
8. How long did you have to wait between appointing a NEPT provider and the provider commencing the provision of services (mobilisation period)?
9. Approximately how many patients are served annually by NEPT in your ICB area that require wheelchair accessible transport?
10. Approximately how many appointments do patients miss annually because of lack of accessible transport? What kind of missed appointment (e.g. dialysis) is most common?

If any of the above is not held or not applicable, please state that explicitly (e.g., 'not held' or 'not applicable'). I would prefer to receive the response by email, using the spreadsheet attached.

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. Companies providing NEPT services are North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (NEAS), Specialist Medical Transport (up to 29 August 2025) and ERS Transition Ltd.
2. NEAS use the following subcontractors:
 - Ambulnz
 - BLT Contracts Ltd (T/A Blueline Taxis)
 - British Red Cross
 - Central Taxis Gateshead Ltd
 - Cipher Medical
 - FSNE
 - Hardcore Medical and Ambulance Services Ltd
 - Medicare EMS Group UK Limited
 - Middlesbrough Borough Cars Limited
 - NERAMS
 - Readypay Limited
 - Spark Medical Limited
 - Supportive SRC Ltd
 - UK Event Medical Services
 - Vcare 24
 - XL Team Ltd
3. NEPT contracts commissioned by NENC ICB are valued at:

NEAS: £30,099,000 (2025/26)

ERS Medical Transition: £353,850.46

Specialist Medical Transport: £86,655.24 (to 29/08/2025)

NEAS: £130,666 (from 30/08/2025)

Supportive: £135,151

4. NEPT contract lengths and extensions:
NEAS: 3 years option to extend for a further 2 years. The contract commenced 01/04/2024
ERS Medical Transition: 12 months commencing 31/03/2025, extension 12 months.
Specialist Medical Transport: contract ended 29/08/2025
NEAS: contract commenced 30/08/2025, 12 months contract urgent award.
Supportive: 12-month contract commencing 01/04/2025
5. Service and vehicle requirements:
NEAS: manage the contract according to need and demand of the patients, varying the vehicle type as required
ERS Medical Transition: provide a multi-purpose vehicle with the ability to transport more patients for discharge. The exception to this is bariatric patients and complex resident homes if the patient is unable to weight bear.
Supportive: provide volunteer drivers to drive patients to the appointments. The list of these drivers is available on request.
6. NEAS have their own framework. The ICB are aware of the national PTS framework and will be reviewing access to this as a possibility of future commissioning
7. Please refer to the response to question 4.
8. On this occasion it is not possible 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.
9. 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 on patients requiring wheelchair accessible transport. 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 NEAS.

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 address for NEAS – freedom.of.information.requests@neas.nhs.uk – to make your request.

10. Please refer to the response to question 9.

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**