

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 24–350

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By Email

19 December 2024

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 8 December 2024 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 to make a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding fertility preservation policies for patients with endometriosis within your Integrated Care Board (ICB) area.

Specifically, I would be grateful if you could provide information on the following:

1. *Policy on Fertility Preservation:*

Does your ICB have a specific policy regarding fertility preservation (e.g., egg or embryo freezing) for patients with endometriosis prior to surgical intervention for ovarian endometriomas/ endometriotic cysts?

2. *Clinical Criteria for Funding:*

- Are there set clinical criteria that must be met for patients with endometriosis to receive NHS funding for fertility preservation? For example, do these criteria include:
 - Age restrictions?
 - Requirement for patients to be undergoing surgery for bilateral endometriomas or other specific endometriosis-related surgeries?

- A previous history of surgery for endometriosis?
- A specific Anti-Müllerian Hormone (AMH) cut-off value?

3. *Scope of Funding:*

- If funding is available, is it typically provided for one cycle of egg/embryo freezing, or are additional cycles potentially funded if the patient responds poorly to the initial cycle?

4. *Second or Further Cycles:*

- In the case of an unexpectedly poor response to the initial funded cycle, is there any possibility of additional funding being granted for a second or further cycle of egg/embryo freezing?

5. *Statistics on Funding Applications:*

- How many patients with endometriosis have been granted NHS funding for fertility preservation prior to surgery in the last two years?
- How many funding applications for fertility preservation for patients with endometriosis have been made and subsequently declined during this same period?

Please provide the information in an electronic format. If any of the requested information is not available, or if it exceeds the cost limit under the FOI Act, please provide any partial information or guidance on how to refine the request.

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. NENC ICB does not have a specific policy for endometriosis. Page 58 of the ICB's Value Based Clinical Commissioning (VBCC) Policy covers fertility preservation. A link to the policy is here: [icp040-value-based-clinical-commissioning-policy-v13-0.pdf](#)
2. NENC ICB does not have a specific criterion for endometriosis. The criterion for funding is covered by the Embryo/Gamete Harvesting & Storage policy (VBCC policy, page 59, link provided in response 1).
3. The scope of funding is not covered by the VBCC policy.
4. The scope of funding is not covered by the VBCC policy.
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 acute hospital NHS foundation trusts (FTs) within the North East and North Cumbria region.

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 addresses for those acute hospitals to make your request.

NENC Acute Hospital FTs	Email
County Durham and Darlington NHS FT	cdda-tr.cddftfoi@nhs.net
Gateshead Health NHS FT	ghnt.foi.enquiries@nhs.net
North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS FT	foirequest@cumbria.nhs.uk
North Tees and Hartlepool NHS FT	foi@nth.nhs.uk

Northumbria Healthcare NHS FT	foi@northumbria.nhs.uk
South Tees Hospitals NHS FT	foi@stees.nhs.uk
South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS FT	stsft.freedomofinformation@nhs.net
The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS FT	nuth.freedom.information@nhs.net

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

S Davies

S Davies
Information Governance Officer