

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 25–235

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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By Email

8 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 18 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 would be grateful if you could provide the following information, for each of the last two full financial years and any current year forecasts or snapshots where available. For ease, I have attempted to break down the information I would like to know into manageable chunks on the topics of CHC processing and current AI and digital systems.

Please provide what you can:

- If any parts of the request exceed cost/time limits, I would appreciate any partial data, aggregated summaries, or guidance on what can be supplied within statutory limits.
- If exact percentages or separate figures are not available, please provide the most recent best available summary or range.
- If any element is not held in the format requested, I would welcome whatever similar or nearest equivalent data is available.
- If it is not held centrally, I would appreciate recommendations of other organisations that may be able to help.
- Where possible, I would greatly appreciate the information in a spreadsheet or tabular format.

CHC Processing

1. The total Continuing Healthcare (CHC) expenditure in your ICB for each of the last two full financial years, and your current forecast for the present financial year.
2. The number of whole-time equivalent (WTE) staff whose primary role is CHC in each of the last two financial years, plus your current forecast.
3. Expenditure on agency and/or bank staff working on CHC in each of the last two financial years and estimated or forecast spend for the present year.
4. The number of CHC applications your ICB received and processed in each of the last two financial years, and year-to-date in the current year.
5. As of the date of this request, the number of CHC applications currently “open” (i.e., not yet concluded). Of these, how many are “active” (currently being assessed/reviewed by your team) and how many are “awaiting allocation or further information” (not currently being worked on)?
6. Of all CHC applications processed in each of the last two financial years, what percentage came via the Fast Track pathway?
7. What percentage of draft CHC assessment reports/Decision Support Tools (DSTs) required revision prior to being finalised and issued to applicants or their representatives, in the last financial year?
8. Of CHC cases approved by your ICB in each of the last two financial years, what percentage received a review at 3 months and at 12 months, in accordance with NHS England guidance? If precise figures are not available, please provide your best estimate, most recent audit or monitoring results, or a narrative description of processes and compliance with this guidance.
9. What percentage of CHC funding decisions made by your ICB were formally appealed/challenged in each of the last two financial years at ICB level (Local Resolution), NHS England level (Independent Review Panel) and Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)?
10. Please estimate the total staff time (in hours, staff days, percentage of CHC team workload, or any other relevant measure) spent in the last two financial years preparing or reviewing CHC cases for Local Resolution, Independent Review Panel and PHSO. If exact figures are not held, I would appreciate your best approximation, broad summaries, or even a short narrative on the scale of work and resource required in these activities.
11. Please provide the name, job title and email address for the senior manager responsible for CHCs.

AI and Digital Systems

1. Which IT systems or software applications are used by your ICB in the management of CHC applications? Please specify the company name, product and contract end date if applicable.
2. Does your ICB currently use any Artificial Intelligence (AI) or automated decision-support tools in the creation and management of the DST? If yes, please specify the company name, product and contract end date if applicable.
3. How does your ICB capture and store information from CHC assessment of needs and Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) meetings (e.g., handwritten notes, typed notes, digital audio recordings, or an electronic casework system)?
4. Please provide the name, job title and email address for the senior manager responsible for digital systems and AI.

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.

CHC Processing

1. The total Continuing Healthcare (CHC) expenditure in your ICB for each of the last two full financial years, and your current forecast for the present financial year.

Financial Year	Total Expenditure	Current Year Forecast
2023/24	£448,805,576.79	
2024/25	£522,148,958.27	
2025/26		£555,603,297.04

2. Please find whole-time equivalent (WTE) average as requested.

Financial Year (see note)	WTE average
As of 31/03/2024	46.40
As of 31/03/2025	75.48
As of 02/10/2025	156.79

Note: this is the average WTE over the 12 months of the financial year (first 6 months for 25/26) and is consistent with how the ICB reports WTE figures in its annual accounts. Figures provided are for permanent staff only and does include agency staff. The increase from 2024/25 to 2025/26 was due to the TUPE of staff from North of England Care System Support (NECS) which was paid via a Managed Service Contract.

3. Expenditure on agency staff working on CHC for the last two financial years and estimated forecast spend for 25/26 as at month 6 (this is subject to change), is as follows:

Financial Year (see note)	Expenditure on agency staff
2023/24	£250,856
2024/25	£570,753
2025/26	£819,911

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, this is publicly available as part of NHS England published data: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/nhs-chc-fnc/>

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. There are currently 38 open cases, all being currently worked on, with 10 awaiting allocation.
6. Please refer to the response to question 4.
7. 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.
8. All new CHC Cases will receive a 3-month review then after with receive annual (12 month) reviews.
9. CHC funding decisions formally appealed/challenged:
- Local Resolution: 2023/24: 177, 1.38%
2024/25: 237, 1.80%
- IRP: 22, not broken down by date
- PHSO: 5, not broken down by date

10. 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.
11. Hilary Lloyd is NENC ICB's Chief nurse and AHP officer. Please direct all queries to Hilary using the ICB's generic mailbox nencicb-sun.reception@nhs.net marked for her attention. Alternatively, please telephone the ICB's Switchboard on 0191-512-8484.

AI and Digital Systems

1. NENC ICB uses BroadCare to manage CHC applications.
2. NENC ICB does not currently use any Artificial Intelligence (AI) or automated decision-support tools in the creation and management of the DST.
3. The ICB captures and store information from CHC assessments using a local drive and BroadCare.
4. There is no specific individual who has responsibility for all digital systems the ICB commissions. Please provide the name, job title and email address for the senior manager responsible for digital systems and AI.

Please direct all queries via the ICB's generic mailbox nencicb-sun.reception@nhs.net clearly stating the nature of your request. Alternatively, please telephone the ICB's Switchboard on 0191-512-8484.

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**