

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 25–287

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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By Email

10 November 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 20 October 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

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I request the following information relating to self-monitored point-of-care INR (International Normalised Ratio) testing equipment (i.e. devices and test strips used by patients to monitor warfarin therapy at home) for the North East and North Cumbria area:

1. Does the ICB currently provide, fund, or reimburse (in whole or in part) self-monitoring INR test kits (meters / strips / consumables) for patients in its area?

If yes:

- a. In which circumstances / criteria (e.g. patient groups, clinical criteria)
- b. How many patients are enrolled in such a scheme
- c. The annual cost to the ICB of providing these (or reimbursing them)
- d. Which device(s) are used / supported

If no:

- a. Has the ICB ever considered a scheme to provide such kits (or reimbursement)?
- b. If considered, what were the outcomes or reasons for non-adoption

2. Does the ICB have a plan or policy to introduce or expand access to self-monitoring INR test kits within the next 2–3 years? If yes, please provide relevant policy documents, projected costs, and timelines.
3. Has the ICB commissioned or participated in any pilot or research relating to self-monitoring of INR in its area? If yes, please provide the names, dates, and brief descriptions of such pilots / studies.
4. Please provide the ICB's current policy on anticoagulation monitoring (e.g. warfarin monitoring) and how the choice between clinic-based and self-monitoring is decided.

I would like the response in electronic format (e.g. PDF or Word) please. If you believe any part of this request is too broad or would incur excessive cost, please ask me to refine it rather than rejecting it outright.

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 currently provide, fund, or reimburse self-monitoring INR test kits (meters / strips / consumables) for patients in some ICB places – County Durham and Tees Valley and North Cumbria. Responses for those places are noted below.

- a. The circumstances/criteria are noted for the ICB places below:

County Durham and Tees Valley places

Self-testing:

- As part of the model outlined above the Provider will be required to also offer a self-testing model to suitable patients. Self-testing is not feasible for all patients and will require the identification and education of suitable patients.
- Only patients with indications for long term anticoagulant therapy should be considered for self-testing. Self-testing should be considered if preferred by the patient and the following criteria are met:
 - The patient is both physically and cognitively able to perform the self-testing test, or in those cases where the patient is not physically or cognitively able to perform self-testing, a designated carer is able to do so.
 - An adequate supportive educational programme is in place to train patients and/or carers.
 - The patient's ability to self-manage is regularly reviewed.
 - The equipment for self-testing is regularly checked via a quality control programme.
- The following points must be adhered to:
 - Patients (or their carers) must give informed consent to the clinician responsible for their care to undertake self-testing, and this consent will involve agreement to adhere to the requirements as set out below.
 - Competency to perform self-testing including ability to test the International Normalised Ratio (INR) must be assessed by a trained healthcare professional before self-testing is allowed.
 - Previous stability of INR is not a prerequisite to self-testing because unstable patients may benefit from increased autonomy and the possibility of performing the test more frequently.

- Contraindications for self-testing by patients will include previous non-compliance in terms of attendance at clinic or taking of medication. This may include evidence of alcohol misuse.
- Only portable coagulometers that have undergone acceptable evaluations by an expert body – for example NICE or the United Kingdom Medical Devices Agency – should be used for self-testing.
- The provider must ensure that the following is adhered to for all patients commencing self-testing:
 - Record accurately all INR results and dose adjustments together with dates, quality control results and any problems noted in the anticoagulant record book provided to be available for the patient review.
 - Have their ability to self-test, reviewed at least every six months by the trained healthcare professional.
 - Ensure that electronic quality control of the coagulometer is performed every time the machine is used (if possible).
 - Have some form of regular external quality control, at least 6 monthly carried out by the provider.
 - Ensure that if the external quality control procedure is unsatisfactory on more than one occasion, the patient's technique and device must be assessed by the trained healthcare professional. If performance in the external quality control procedure is persistently poor, the patient should be withdrawn from the self-testing programme.
 - Ensure that internal quality control of the device is performed at least once a month or, if testing is less frequent than this, every time the machine is used. It should also be performed with every new box of test strips; if an unusual result is obtained; or an unusual occurrence which may affect the result for example dropping the machine.

North Cumbria place

Self-testing:

- Monitoring/managing can be offered to suitable patients who are on long term therapy, and who wish to self-test.
- b. 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 on how many patients are enrolled in such a scheme.
 - c. NENC ICB does not hold annual cost information.
 - d. 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 on annual cost.

County Durham and Tees Valley places

Only portable coagulometers that have undergone acceptable evaluations by an expert body – for example NICE or the United Kingdom Medical Devices Agency – should be used for self-testing.

North Cumbria place

The POC device used by the patient must be compliant with NICE recommendations

NENC ICB has considered a scheme to provide such kits (or reimbursement) in South Tyneside and Sunderland place. This was not adopted due to cost.

2. The ICB has a plan or policy to introduce or expand access to self-monitoring INR test kits within the next 2–3 years in South Tyneside and Sunderland. The current INR provider (South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust) will be piloting self-testing as part of their existing service within the financial block funding.
3. NENC ICB has not commissioned or participated in any pilot or research relating to self-monitoring of INR.
4. Current policy and decision-making details:

County Durham and Tees Valley places

Please refer to the response to question 1a.

North Cumbria place

Certain competencies are required of patients to self-monitor or self-manage and an agreement must be entered into by the patient in full knowledge that the patient must attend appointments when requested.

Self-test patient:

- I will perform INR tests at mutually agreed intervals and will inform my practice of the results at an agreed date and time.
- I will act on the advice given by my practice with regard to dosage and test interval.
- I will record this data in the yellow anticoagulant book

Self-management patients:

- I will manage my test intervals and dosing in line with the approved dosing algorithm supplied by my practice
- I will contact my practice in line with the approved dosing algorithm 14
- I will contact my practice if I have any concern

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**