

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 26-042

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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By Email

6 May 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 30 April 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

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would be grateful if you could provide information relating to the role of physiotherapists within Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs) and neighbourhood working arrangements across your Integrated Care Board area. In particular:

1. Are physiotherapists currently involved in the development or delivery of Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs) or neighbourhood-based services within your ICB area?
 - a. If yes, please describe the roles physiotherapists are undertaking (for example: clinical service delivery, leadership roles, pathway development, system transformation, prevention, or population health initiatives).
 - b. If no, please outline any plans or intentions to involve physiotherapists in your neighbourhood working in the future.
2. What mechanisms exist for physiotherapists to engage with the development of neighbourhood programmes in your ICB?
3. Does your ICB or partner organisations employ or commission any “Neighbourhood Coaches” or similar roles within Integrated Neighbourhood Teams? If so, please provide contact details for the relevant neighbourhood coach or coordinating team, where disclosure is permitted under FOI legislation.

4. What are the core objectives or priority functions of your Integrated Neighbourhood Teams?
5. How are physiotherapists currently deployed within Integrated Neighbourhood Teams to support your core objectives/priority functions?
6. How have physiotherapists influenced the design or structure of services intended to meet population health needs within neighbourhood models?
7. How are you moving elements of physiotherapy provision from traditional outpatient models into neighbourhood or community-based settings?
8. Please provide a designated named contact and work e-mail address for the person responsible for physiotherapy services within neighbourhood teams.

If possible, I would appreciate responses provided electronically.

Our Response

As the system **strategic commissioner**, the Integrated Care Board (ICB) supports system leadership to develop neighbourhood approaches by setting strategic direction, aligning commissioning intentions and outcomes, and working with local partners through place-based arrangements. The detailed design of Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs) and neighbourhood-based service models—including the specific roles within INTs and the deployment and involvement of staff (including physiotherapists) in pathway development in response to priority cohorts identified within neighbourhoods—sits with our NHS provider organisations and wider partners who deliver those services.

Where information is requested about **specific workforce roles, staff deployment, pathway design activity** or **named contacts** within individual INTs, this is operational detail that is determined and held by the relevant provider organisations and delivery partners rather than the ICB.

Response to questions

1. The ICB does not hold a single, centrally maintained record confirming whether physiotherapists are involved in the development or delivery of each Integrated Neighbourhood Team (INT) or neighbourhood-based service across the ICB footprint. This information is held by the relevant provider organisations and delivery partnerships for each neighbourhood.
 - a. The specific roles undertaken by physiotherapists within INTs (for example clinical delivery, leadership, pathway development, transformation, prevention or population health activity), and any future plans to involve physiotherapists in neighbourhood working, are part of local operational service design and workforce deployment. These decisions are made and held by provider organisations and local partners within each neighbourhood.
 - b. Please refer to the response to question 1a.
2. Engagement mechanisms for physiotherapists to contribute to neighbourhood programme development are arranged through local provider organisations, primary care networks and partnership forums in each place/neighbourhood. The ICB supports this at a strategic level through commissioning and place-based partnership arrangements but does not hold a definitive list of profession-specific engagement mechanisms for each neighbourhood.
3. The ICB does not hold information on whether partner organisations employ or commission “Neighbourhood Coaches” (or similar roles) within INTs across the whole ICB area, nor does it hold an approved list of named contacts for such roles. This information is held by the relevant employing/commissioning provider organisation(s) or local partnership arrangements.

4. At ICB level, the core objectives of neighbourhood working are to support integrated, multi-disciplinary care delivered closer to home, with a focus on improving outcomes and reducing inequalities for locally agreed priority cohorts. The detailed objectives and functions for each INT are set locally by delivery partnerships in response to neighbourhood population needs and agreed priorities.
5. The ICB does not hold a centrally maintained dataset describing how physiotherapists are deployed within each INT to support local objectives/priority functions. Workforce deployment is determined by provider services and partners operating within each neighbourhood.
6. Any influence that physiotherapists have had on the design or structure of services intended to meet population health needs within neighbourhood models will be evidenced within local pathway/service development work led by provider organisations and local partners. The ICB does not hold a single record of profession-specific contributions across all neighbourhoods.
7. The ICB commissions for outcomes and supports neighbourhood approaches, but operational changes such as moving elements of physiotherapy provision from traditional outpatient models into neighbourhood or community-based settings are decisions taken by provider organisations (in partnership with primary care and other local partners) as part of local service redesign.
8. The ICB does not hold a single designated named contact responsible for physiotherapy services within neighbourhood teams across all providers and neighbourhoods. Responsibility for physiotherapy services sits within the relevant provider organisations; any named contact details would need to be provided by the employing organisation and would be subject to consideration under Freedom of Information and data protection legislation.

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**