

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 24-062

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By Email

21 May 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 May 2024 for information held by NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB) under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

NENC ICB covers the areas of County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Cumbria, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside, Sunderland, and Tees Valley (which covers the 5 councils that make it up – Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees).

Please find the information you requested on behalf of the ICB as follows.

Your Request

My request relates to expenditure on IT systems and services to support our GP practices in the financial year 2023/24. I would like information relating to all expenditure across the ICB.

If it is possible to break this down to sub-ICB level, then I would like this level of detail.

If policies differ between sub-ICB areas, please provide copies of all policies.

1. What ring-fenced funding was supplied to the ICB to support the Primary Care (GP) Digital Services Operating Model?
2. What ring-fenced funding was supplied to the ICB to support the Digital Pathways Framework?
3. What budget was set by the ICB for the year 2023/24 for both of these schemes?
4. What was the final expenditure against this budget for the year 2023/24?
5. What specifically was this money spent on, broken down by products (eg computer screen, specific piece of software) or services (eg IT Helpdesk)?
6. What was the ICBs policy in terms of allocation of funding? Specifically, what was considered to be within the scope of both of these schemes and what was outside of these schemes?
 - a. How was the policy shared with GP practices?

- b. What was the process for liaising with the LMCs in relation to developing this policy?
- 7. What was the ICBs procedure for practices to apply for IT equipment or services?
 - a. How was the procedure shared with GP practices?
 - b. What was the process for liaising with the LMCs in relation to developing this procedure?
- 8. How many requests for funding were refused?
 - a. What were the reasons for refusal?

I look forwards to receiving your responses by email. If you require any clarification as to the information that I require, please do not hesitate to get back in touch.

Our Response

We can confirm, as per Section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the ICB does hold the information you have requested.

- 1. This is part of ICB core allocations and not a ring-fenced budget.
- 2. There was no ring-fenced funding for this scheme, as currently not yet a nationally published framework.
- 3. No ringfenced budget was set for the schemes. Instead, they formed part of a wider budget which included meeting the needs of the GPIT.
- 4. In line with 3. above the expenditure for these schemes is not ringfenced and forms part of wider expenditure.
- 5. GPIT Budgets are used on General Practice IT services, end user devices, connectivity, security and core systems as set out under the nationally published GPIT Operating Model. We also commission strategic IT delivery partners such as North of England Commissioning Support (NECS) and North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust (NCIC) to offer IT engineer support and service desk capability.
- 6. Any policy the ICB adopts around national funding is aligned to publicly available policy published on NHS England website. As an example, core & mandated GP IT services have the first call on ICB GP IT funding as per the GPIT Operating Model, which is a publicly available document. The Digital Pathways Framework currently does not exist & therefore there is no ring-fenced funding. In addition, digital funding is not typically allocated to practices, and instead hardware and solutions provided as part of the core and mandated GPIT offer.
- 7. Responses to question 7a and 7b:
 - a. Procedure has not changed since 2013 – NECS/NCIC IT Service Desk. Documented in the CCG-Practice Agreement.
 - b. There is LMC representation on the NENC ICB GP IT Governance Group & NENC ICB Digital Operations Group
- 8. Refusals for requests for funding is not known – all requests are reviewed individually on their own merits although the ICB typically commissions products and services as opposed to offering funding through application. Direct digital funding to practices is not common practice.

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