

Our Reference      North East and North Cumbria ICB\  
FOI ICB 26-041

North East and North Cumbria ICB  
Pemberton House  
Colima Avenue  
Sunderland Enterprise Park  
Sunderland  
SR5 3XB

Tel: 0191 512 8484  
E-mail: [nencicb.foi@nhs.net](mailto:nencicb.foi@nhs.net)

By Email

21 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 29 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**

I am undertaking a public health review of the UK Ministry of Defence looking at early psychological support and access to talking therapy pathways for serving Armed Forces personnel.

I am particularly interested in how NHS Talking Therapies and related psychological support services are accessed by serving military personnel, and how this interacts with wider Defence, NHS and third sector support.

Please provide the following recorded information for your ICB footprint.

For the purposes of this request, “serving military personnel” means currently serving UK Armed Forces personnel, including regular personnel and reservists, where this status is recorded or identifiable in the data you hold.

Please provide information for the following periods where held:

- 2023/24 financial year
- 2024/25 financial year
- 2025/26 financial year

If the current ICB was created through merger or boundary change, please provide the information held for the predecessor ICBs or predecessor footprint where available.

1. NHS Talking Therapies provision

Please provide:

- a. The name of the NHS Talking Therapies service or services commissioned for your ICB population
- b. The provider organisation or organisations delivering these services.
- c. What services are delivered
- d. Whether the service(s) accepts self-referrals.
- e. Whether the service accepts referrals from NHS GPs only, or from other routes such as Defence Medical Services GP practices.
- f. Any eligibility criteria that apply to serving Armed Forces personnel.

2. Access by serving Armed Forces personnel

Please confirm whether serving military personnel can access your ICB-commissioned NHS Talking Therapies service if they are:

- a. Registered with an NHS GP in your ICB area.
- b. Temporarily posted or resident in your ICB area.
- c. A reservist registered with an NHS GP in your ICB area.
- d. Under Defence Medical Services primary care rather than NHS primary care.

If any of these groups are excluded, redirected or subject to a different access route, please provide the recorded policy, guidance or pathway document that explains this.

3. Activity data

For each requested year, please provide the following information where held:

- a. Total number of referrals to NHS Talking Therapies by service(s) offered if multiple are offered.
- b. Number of referrals where the person was identified as serving Armed Forces personnel.
- c. Number of serving Armed Forces personnel accepted for assessment.
- d. Number of serving Armed Forces personnel entering treatment.
- e. Number of serving Armed Forces personnel completing treatment.
- f. Average or median wait from referral to assessment.
- g. Average or median wait from referral to first treatment appointment.
- h. Recovery, reliable improvement or other outcome measures for serving Armed Forces personnel, where separately recorded.
- i. DNA/non-attendance rates for serving Armed Forces personnel, where separately recorded.

If serving military status is not recorded or cannot be separately identified, please state this clearly. I am not requesting any patient-identifiable information. Aggregated data is sufficient, and I am content for small numbers to be suppressed where required.

4. Recording of Armed Forces status

Please confirm:

- a. Whether Armed Forces status is routinely recorded in NHS Talking Therapies referrals or assessments.
- b. Whether the categories distinguish between serving personnel, reservists, veterans and family members.
- c. Whether this information is recorded in a structured data field or only in free text.

- d. Whether the ICB has any local guidance on identifying or recording Armed Forces status within mental health or talking therapy services.

5. Dedicated pathways, protocols or agreements

Please provide copies of, or links to, any recorded:

- a. Referral protocols between NHS Talking Therapies and Defence Medical Services.
- b. Referral protocols between NHS Talking Therapies and Departments of Community Mental Health or other Defence mental health services.
- c. Memoranda of understanding, service level agreements or local pathway documents relating to serving Armed Forces personnel and psychological therapies.
- d. Commissioned arrangements with third sector or Armed Forces charities for psychological support, talking therapies, counselling, online support or related mental health provision for serving personnel.

6. Online, digital and third sector psychological support

Please provide details of any online, digital or third sector psychological support commissioned, funded or formally promoted by the ICB for people with mild to moderate anxiety, depression, stress, adjustment difficulties or related presentations. For each service, please provide where held:

- a. Name of service.
- b. Provider.
- c. Whether it is available to serving Armed Forces personnel.
- d. Whether access is by self-referral, GP referral, NHS Talking Therapies referral or another route.
- e. Annual cost to the ICB, where held.
- f. Annual uptake or usage data, where held.
- g. Whether usage by serving Armed Forces personnel is separately recorded.

7. Strategy, needs assessment and equality considerations

Please provide copies of, or links to, any current:

- a. Needs assessments relating to Armed Forces communities and mental health.
- b. Health inequalities assessments or equality impact assessments relating to NHS Talking Therapies access.
- c. Commissioning strategies or service reviews that discuss Armed Forces personnel, reservists, or Armed Forces families in relation to mental health, psychological therapies or early intervention.

8. Commissioning and contract information

Please provide:

- a. The current contract period for NHS Talking Therapies provision.
- b. The annual contract value for NHS Talking Therapies provision, where not commercially exempt.
- c. The ICB role responsible for commissioning NHS Talking Therapies. A generic team name or generic mailbox is sufficient. I am not requesting personal staff details.

If any part of this request would exceed the appropriate cost limit, please provide the information that can be supplied within the limit and advise how I may refine the remaining elements, in line with the duty to provide advice and assistance under section 16 of the Act.

As I would prefer the information in Excel or CSV format where data tables are provided, I have supplied a blank Excel template to support data collation.

## Our Response

### 1. NHS Talking Therapies provision

- a. The service commissioned for NENC ICB is NHS Talking Therapies (previously known as IAPT).
- b. NENC ICB commission a range of providers:
  - Durham and Darlington: Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust
  - Gateshead and South Tyneside: South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust
  - Newcastle: Vita Health Group
  - North Cumbria, Northumberland and Sunderland: Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust
  - North Tyneside: Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
  - Tees Valley: Alliance Psychological Services
- c. NENC ICB have a range of providers delivering Talking Therapies service across NENC which includes (but is not limited to):
  - 1:1 counselling provision
  - Access to cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)
  - Interpersonal therapy (IPT)
  - Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and other NICE recommended therapies
  - Access to employment support
  - Support for long term conditions (LTC)
- d. The service accepts self-referrals.
- e. The service would accept referrals that are received for the relevant geographical boundary.
- f. There are no specific criteria in place.

### 2. Access by serving Armed Forces personnel

- a. The service can be accessed within the relevant geographical boundary.
- b. Please refer to the response to question 2a.
- c. Please refer to the response to question 2a.
- d. Please refer to the response to question 2a.

### 3. Activity data

- a. Total ICB referrals received as follows:

Financial year	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Referrals received	89,485	89,755	89,775

- 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 the information requested.
- c. Please refer to the response to question 3b.
- d. Please refer to the response to question 3b.
- e. Please refer to the response to question 3b.
- f. ICB position against national performance metric of First Treatment Completed in the Period within 6 weeks is:

Financial year	2023/24 YTD	2024/25 YTD	2025/26 YTD
FTC within 6 weeks	93.9%	95.7%	96.6%

- g. Please refer to the response to question 3f.
- h. Please refer to the response to question 3b.
- i. Please refer to the response to question 3b.

4. Recording of Armed Forces status

- a. 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 the information requested.
- b. Please refer to the response to question 4a.
- c. Please refer to the response to question 4a.
- d. The ICB holds no local guidance on identifying or recording Armed Forces status within mental health or talking therapy services.

5. Dedicated pathways, protocols or agreements

- a. There is no protocol in place between NHS Talking Therapies and Defence Medical Services.
- b. There is no referral protocol in place between NHS Talking Therapies and Departments of Community Mental Health or other Defence mental health services.
- c. Memoranda of understanding, service level agreements or local pathway documents relating to serving Armed Forces personnel and psychological therapies are not in place.
- d. There are no specific services commissioned for serving personnel, however, they can access support via the national Operation Courage programme.

6. Online, digital and third sector psychological support

*Responses to this section are on the basis that they refer to only where online/digital support is provided, rather than all provision.*

- a. The service is Adult Online Counselling and Support Platform.
- b. The provider is Kooth Digital Health Ltd – Qwell.
- c. The service is accessible to serving Armed Forces personnel.
- d. Access is by various routes including self-referral, GP referral and NHS Talking Therapies referral.
- e. Annual cost to the ICB is circa £109,000.
- f. 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 the information requested.
- g. Please refer to the response to question 6f.

7. Strategy, needs assessment and equality considerations

- a. 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 the information requested.
- b. Please refer to the response to question 7a.
- c. Please refer to the response to question 7a.

8. Commissioning and contract information

- a. Most contracts are in place until March 2027, however, one provider has a contract end date of July 2027 and one until August 2028.

- b. Contracts form part of wider block contracts with NHS Foundation Trusts and individual costs cannot be extracted.
- c. Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Individual Packages of Care Teams are responsible for commissioning NHS Talking Therapies.

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](http://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](http://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**