

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 24-411

NECS – John Snow House
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By Email

7 February 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 by North of England Commissioning Support (NECS) on 27 January 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, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Cumbria, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside, Sunderland, and Tees Valley (which covers the five local authorities of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees).

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

Your Request

Under the Freedom of Information legislation, I wish to obtain the following information.

1. Do you have an active language service (Interpreting) contract?
2. Are services accessed via a framework or independent of a framework? If a framework, what framework(s) is it?
3. When does the existing contract(s) expire?
4. Who are your current suppliers by service type i.e. BSL, telephone, spoken, video?
5. Do you procure spoken and non-spoken (BSL) interpreting together?
6. Do you consider non-spoken interpreting a specialist service? If yes and you do not procure this service separately. Why do you not procure this service separately?
7. Are you aware of The House of Lords inquiry into Interpreting and Translation Services? If so, will this impact how you procure language services?
8. What is your organisation's language services procurement policy. i.e. do you undertake pre-market engagement, do you run a competitive tender process or direct award?
9. Are language services on the procurement plan in 2025, if so, can you please give an indicative timeline?
10. Who is the senior responsible person for Language Services in your organisation?

www.northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk 

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11. Can you please provide historical use for each service for 2024. Please highlight if you are referring to number of assignments or hour/minutes this response.
- On-site spoken
 - Onsite non-spoken
 - telephone interpreting
 - Video spoken
 - Video non-spoken

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. Yes, NENC ICB has an active language service (Interpreting) contract.
2. Services are accessed via the NHS Outcomes Framework and these services are:
 - a. Helping people to recover from episodes of ill health or following injury
 - b. Ensuring people have a positive experience of care
 - c. Treating and caring for people in a safe environment and protecting them from avoidable harm
3. The existing contract expires on 31st March 2026.
4. Language Empire are the provider commissioned by NENC ICB for all the above listed requirements in primary care settings
5. Yes, the ICB procures spoken and non-spoken (BSL) interpreting together.
6. Yes, we do, however we do not have an in-house non-spoken supplier as a commissioning organisation and not a provider we do not have the need to procure this service.
7. When commissioning services, NENC ICB has a duty of care to ensure a provider is meeting the needs of the public.
8. NENC ICB does not have a specific language services procurement policy, however when tendering for patient facing services, this would be expected from the provider.
9. Language services are on the procurement plan and this is due to be reviewed in March/April 2025.
10. Responsibility for all ICB contracts sits with the Chief Contracting and Procurement Officer.
11. Historical usage is as follows:
 - a. On-site spoken: 46746
 - b. Onsite non-spoken: 2554
 - c. telephone interpreting: 16621
 - d. Video spoken: 142
 - e. Video non-spoken: 206

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