

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\  
FOI ICB 26–036

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 26 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 request the following information regarding the prescribing of emollient treatments and dermatology access within your Integrated Care Board:

1. Formulary Evidence Base

Please provide copies of the most recent cost-effectiveness analyses, clinical reviews, or Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) used to determine the current emollient formulary.

If these were produced by an Area Prescribing Committee (APC) on behalf of the ICB, please also provide the relevant minutes where these recommendations were adopted.

2. Clinical Criteria for Ceramide-Based Emollients

Please outline the clinical criteria and/or evidence reviews used to determine the inclusion or exclusion of ceramide-based emollients (such as CeraVe or similar) from routine primary care prescribing.

Please confirm whether considerations such as reduction in flare-ups and subsequent steroid use form part of any cost-effectiveness assessment.

### 3. Individual Funding Request (IFR) Data

For the last three financial years (2023/24, 2024/25, and 2025/26 to date), please provide:

- The total number of Individual Funding Requests (IFRs) submitted for non-formulary emollients or eczema treatments
- The number of these requests approved
- The number of these requests refused

### 4. Dermatology Referral Waiting Times

To help understand the interval between primary and secondary care, please provide the average waiting time (in weeks) for a patient to be seen following referral from a GP to a dermatology specialist for:

- Urgent referrals
- Routine referrals

Please provide this data for the most recent 12-month period available.

### 5. Evidence Review of Probiotic Interventions

Please clarify whether the ICB or its relevant APC has conducted a clinical review or evidence assessment regarding the use of specific probiotic strains for atopic dermatitis, specifically \*Lactobacillus rhamnosusSP1 (DSM 22775) or \*Lactobacillus reuteriBR03 (DSM 16604).

If no such review has been undertaken, please confirm this.

I would prefer to receive this information in electronic format. If any of the requested information is withheld, please specify the exemption(s) applied.

## **Our Response**

1. The formulary recommendations for NENC ICB listed at: [North East and North Cumbria Formulary](#) are based upon the recommendations included in the NENC Emollient prescribing and formulary guideline available at: [Emollient-Guidance-NENC-Final-2024-approved-Oct-2024.pdf](#). In accordance with s.21 of the FOIA, we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is reasonably accessible to you by other means.
2. Ceramide containing formulations are not included in the current NENC formulary. No documentation exists outlining any criteria related to exclusion or assessment of ceramide containing emollients during the formulary or guideline approval process.
3. In the last three financial years the ICB has received zero individual funding requests for non-formulary emollients or eczema treatments.
4. 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. However, referral to treatment waiting times are publicly available: [Statistics » Referral to Treatment \(RTT\) Waiting Times](#). In accordance with s.21 of the FOIA, we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is reasonably accessible to you by other means.
5. The ICB has not conducted a clinical review or evidence assessment regarding the use of specific probiotic strains for atopic dermatitis.

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**