

Our Reference      North East and North Cumbria ICB\  
FOI ICB 25-322

North East and North Cumbria ICB  
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By Email

28 November 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 on 12 November 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, 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 writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I would be grateful if you could provide the following information:

1. What Agenda for Change Pay Scales are counsellors employed on within the ICB?
2. What Agenda for Change Pay Scales are psychotherapists employed on within the ICB?
3. What is the total number and Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) number of counsellors and psychotherapists employed within the ICB?
4. What Agenda for Change Pay Scales are high intensity therapists within NHS Talking Therapies for Anxiety and Depression, including both trainees and qualified high intensity therapists, employed on within the ICB?
5. Does the ICB categorise counsellors and psychotherapists working at Step 3 within NHS Talking Therapies for Anxiety and Depression and delivering one of the approved intervention modalities as High Intensity Therapists, as outlined within the NHS Talking Therapies for Anxiety and Depression Manual published by NHS England?
6. What Agenda for Change Pay Scales are counsellors employed on within services commissioned by the ICB?
7. What Agenda for Change Pay Scales are psychotherapists employed on within services commissioned by the ICB?

8. What is the total number and WTE number of counsellors and psychotherapists employed within services commissioned by the ICB?
9. What Agenda for Change Pay Scales are high intensity therapists within NHS Talking Therapies for Anxiety and Depression, including both trainees and qualified high intensity therapists, employed on within services commissioned by the ICB?
10. Does the ICB contract out to a third party the employment of any counsellors, psychotherapists or high intensity therapists?
11. If the ICB contracts out the employment of any counsellors, psychotherapists or high intensity therapists to a third party, does the ICB make any requirements that Agenda for Change pay scales are adhered to by that provider?
12. Can you please detail the commissioned providers of NHS Talking Therapies with the ICB?
13. Can you please detail the budget spent for each commissioned mental health service within the ICB, as well as detailing the budget allocated to each provider of each service?

Please could you provide the information in electronic format (PDF preferred). If any part of the request is unclear or likely to exceed the cost limit, I would appreciate your input as to how it may be refined to fall within the limits.

If the information is held by another public authority or organisation, I would be grateful if you could advise of this and if possible, transfer the request.

I understand that under the Act, I am entitled to a response within 20 working days. If you require any further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact.

## **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. The ICB does not directly employ counsellors or psychotherapists. We do, however, commission a range of providers, including Acute and Mental Health Foundation Trusts and VCSE organisations, to employ staff in these professions (not limited to talking therapies). Banding for talking therapies staff is nationally mandated and these roles are not employed within the ICB.
2. Please refer to the response to question 1.
3. Please refer to the response to question 1.
4. We can confirm, as per Section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the ICB on this occasion is not able 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 any of the information requested.

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) provide Talking Therapies service across County Durham and Darlington. Agenda for Change pay scales are:

- Trainee Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner (PWP) – Band 4,
- PWP Band 5,
- Low intensity psychological wellbeing practitioner – Band 5
- Trainee High intensity therapist (HIT) Band 6,
- Step 1 counsellor Band 6,
- Trainee Counselling for Depression (CfD) Band 6,
- High Intensity Therapists - Band 7
- CfD qualified Band 7,

- Senior PWP Band 6,
- Senior HIT Band 8a

For all other services outside of Talking Therapies for Anxiety and Depression (TTAD), please redirect your request to TEWV FT, who are commissioned by the ICB to provide all Mental Health, Learning Disability and autism secondary health services.

In Newcastle Gateshead, North Cumbria, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside, Sunderland, the information is held by the following service providers:

- Newcastle – Vita Health Group
- Northumberland – Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust
- North Tyneside – Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Sunderland – Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust
- South Tyneside – South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust
- Gateshead – South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust
- North Cumbria – Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear (CNTW) NHS Foundation Trust

The ICB categorises counsellors and psychotherapists working at Step 3 within NHS Talking Therapies for Anxiety and Depression and delivering one of the approved intervention modalities as High Intensity Therapists, as outlined within the NHS Talking Therapies for Anxiety and Depression Manual published by NHS England.

For your reference, the link to the manual is [NHS Talking Therapies for anxiety and depression manual](https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/talking-therapies-for-anxiety-and-depression-manual-2018.pdf)

In Tees Valley, these services are provided by Alliance Psychological Services.

5. In Tees Valley place, the ICB categorises counsellors and psychotherapists working at Step 3 within NHS Talking Therapies for Anxiety and Depression and delivering one of the approved intervention modalities as High Intensity Therapists, as outlined within the NHS Talking Therapies for Anxiety and Depression Manual published by NHS England.
6. The ICB is aware that within TEWV, the pay scales are Talking Therapies, Step 1 – Band 6, CfD – Band 7.
7. Please refer to the response to question 1.
8. TEWV Talking Therapies has 138 total number and 119.9 WTE staff. For Vita Health Group, Newcastle there are 53 total staff and 49.3 WTE.
9. Agenda for Change pay scales are trainee Band 6 and qualified Band 7.
10. Please refer to the response to question 1.
11. Please refer to the response to question 4.
12. TEWV provides Talking Therapies service across County Durham and Darlington. Alliance Psychological Therapies provide services in Teesside.
13. As part of the 5-year Mental Health Implementation plan, which forms part of the broader NHS Long term Plan, there was a commitment that ICBs invest in their mental health services, designed to improve the quality and accessibility of mental health services across the NHS.

As such the North-East and North Cumbria ICB (NENC ICB) produces a Mental Health Investment Standard (MHIS) return, subject to independent review, which shows the organisation's mental health spend year on year.

The attached schedule shows the NENC ICB's 24/25 spend within mental health, and latest forecast spend for 2025/26, split by categories as required in the MHIS return.

The ICB has numerous suppliers, providing mental health services, across the categories outlined within the MHIS return.

The main providers are Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS FT, and Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS FT, alongside to a lesser degree other local FTs. The ICB also commissions services from Local Authorities, as well as the independent and voluntary sectors.

The Alliance Talking Therapies annual contract value is £8,441,585.00.

In accordance with our duty under s.16 of the FOIA to provide reasonable advice and assistance to an individual requesting information, we have provided the contact email addresses of acute and mental health trusts in the NENC ICB region, plus other providers noted in our responses above, to allow you to make your request to them.

| <b>NENC Acute Hospital FTs</b>           | <b>Email/Online portal</b>  |
|--|---|
| County Durham and Darlington NHS FT      | cdda-tr.cddftfoi@nhs.net  |
| Gateshead Health NHS FT                  | ghnt.foi.enquiries@nhs.net  |
| North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS FT     | foirequest@cumbria.nhs.uk   |
| North Tees and Hartlepool NHS FT         | nth-tr.foi@nhs.net  |
| Northumbria Healthcare NHS FT            | foi@northumbria.nhs.uk  |
| South Tees Hospitals NHS FT              | stees.foi.admin@nhs.net   |
| South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS FT     | stsft@infreemation.co.uk  |
| The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS FT | <a href="https://www.newcastle-hospitals.nhs.uk/help/foi/">https://www.newcastle-hospitals.nhs.uk/help/foi/</a> |

| <b>NENC Mental Health Hospital FTs</b>        | <b>Email</b>     |
|---|------------------|
| Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS FT | foi@cntw.nhs.uk  |
| Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS FT             | tewv.foi@nhs.net |

| <b>Other Providers</b>          | <b>Email</b>                |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Alliance Psychological Services | info@alliancepsychology.com |
| Vita Health Group               | enquiries@vhg.co.uk         |

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**