

Official



**North East and  
North Cumbria**

# Integrated Care Board Standing Financial Instructions

## April 2026

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**Better health  
and wellbeing for all...**



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# 1. Purpose and statutory framework

- 1.1.1 These Standing Financial Instructions (SFIs) shall have effect as if incorporated into the integrated Care Board's (ICB) constitution. In accordance with the National Health Service Act 2006, as amended by the Health and Care Act 2022, the ICB must publish its constitution.
- 1.1.2 In accordance with the Act as amended, NHS England is mandated to publish guidance for ICBs, to which each ICB must have regard, in order to discharge their duties.
- 1.1.3 The purpose of this governance document is to ensure that the ICB fulfils its statutory duty to carry out its functions effectively, efficiently and economically. The SFIs are part of the ICB's control environment for managing the organisation's financial affairs as they are designed to ensure regularity and propriety of financial transactions.
- 1.1.4 SFIs define the purpose, responsibilities, legal framework and operating environment of the ICB. They enable sound administration, lessen the risk of irregularities and support commissioning and delivery of effective, efficient and economical services.
- 1.1.5 The ICB is established under Chapter A3 of Part 2 of the National Health Service Act 2006, as inserted by the Health and Care Act 2022 and has the general function of arranging for the provision of services for the purposes of the health services in England in accordance with the Act.
- 1.1.6 Each ICB is to be established by order made by NHS England for an area within England, the order establishing an ICB makes provision for the constitution of the ICB.
- 1.1.7 All members of the ICB (its Board) and all other Officers should be aware of the existence of these documents and be familiar with their detailed provisions. The ICB SFIs will be made available to all Officers on the intranet and internet website for each statutory body.
- 1.1.8 Should any difficulties arise regarding the interpretation or application of any of these SFIs, the advice of the Chief Executive or the Chief Finance Officer must be sought before acting.
- 1.1.9 Failure to comply with the SFIs may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the ICBs applicable disciplinary policy and procedure in operation at that time.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1.1 All officers of the ICB, without exception, are within the scope of the SFIs without limitation. The term officer includes, permanent employees, secondees and contract workers.
- 2.1.2 Within this document, words imparting any gender include any other gender. Words in the singular include the plural and words in the plural include the singular.
- 2.1.3 Any reference to an enactment is a reference to that enactment as amended.
- 2.1.4 Unless a contrary intention is evident, or the context requires otherwise, words or expressions contained in this document, will have the same meaning as set out in the applicable Act.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

### 3.1 Staff

3.1.1 All ICB Officers are severally and collectively, responsible to their respective employer(s) for:

- abiding by all conditions of any delegated authority;
- the security of the statutory organisations property and avoiding all forms of loss;
- ensuring integrity, accuracy, probity and value for money in the use of resources; and
- conforming to the requirements of these SFIs.

### 3.2 Accountable Officer

3.2.1 The ICB constitution provides for the appointment of the Chief Executive by the ICB Chair. The Chief Executive is the Accountable Officer for the ICB and is personally accountable to NHS England for the stewardship of ICBs allocated resources.

3.2.2 The Chief Finance Officer reports directly to the ICB Chief Executive and is professionally accountable to the NHS England Regional Finance Director

3.2.3 The Chief Executive will delegate to the Chief Finance Officer the following responsibilities in relation to the ICB:

- preparation and audit of annual accounts;
- adherence to the directions from NHS England in relation to accounts preparation;
- ensuring that the allocated annual revenue and capital resource limits are not exceeded;
- ensuring that there is an effective financial control framework in place to support accurate financial reporting, safeguard assets and minimise risk of financial loss;
- meeting statutory requirements relating to taxation;
- ensuring that there are suitable financial systems in place (see Section 6)
- meeting the financial targets set for it by NHS England;
- use of incidental powers such as management of ICB assets, entering commercial agreements;
- ensuring the Governance statement and annual accounts & reports are signed;

- ensuring planned budgets are approved by the Board; developing the funding strategy for the ICB to support the Board in achieving ICB objectives, including consideration of place-based budgets;
- making use of benchmarking to make sure that funds are deployed as effectively as possible;
- ensuring executive members (partner members and non-executive members) and other officers are notified of and understand their responsibilities within the SFIs;
- specific responsibilities and delegation of authority to specific job titles are confirmed;
- financial leadership and financial performance of the ICB;
- identification of key financial risks and issues relating to robust financial performance and leadership and working with relevant providers and partners to enable solutions; and
- the Chief Finance Officer will support a strong culture of public accountability, probity, and governance, ensuring that appropriate and compliant structures, systems, and process are in place to minimise risk.

### 3.3 Audit Committee

3.3.1 The Board and Accountable Officer should be supported by an Audit Committee, which should provide proactive support to the Board in advising on:

- the management of key risks;
- the strategic processes for risk;
- the operation of internal controls;
- control and governance and the governance statement;
- the accounting policies, the accounts, and the annual report of the ICB;
- the process for reviewing of the accounts prior to submission for audit, management's letter of representation to the external auditors; and the planned activity and results of both internal and external audit.

## 4. Management accounting and business management

4.1.1 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for maintaining policies and processes relating to the control, management and use of resources across the ICB.

4.1.2 The Chief Finance Officer will delegate the budgetary control responsibilities to budget holders through a formal documented process.

4.1.3 The Chief Finance Officer will ensure:

- the promotion of compliance to the SFIs through an assurance certification process;
- the promotion of long term financial health for the NHS system (including ICS);
- budget holders are accountable for obtaining the necessary approvals and oversight of all expenditure incurred on the cost centres they are responsible for;
- the improvement of financial literacy of budget holders with the appropriate level of expertise and systems training;
- that the budget holders are supported in proportion to the operational risk; and
- the implementation of financial and resources plans that support the NHS Long term plan objectives.

4.1.4 In addition, the Chief Finance Officer should have financial leadership responsibility for the following statutory duties:

- The duty of the ICB to perform its functions as to secure that its expenditure does not exceed the aggregate of its allotment from NHS England and its other income; and
- The duty of the ICB, in conjunction with its partner trusts, to seek to achieve any joint financial objectives set by NHS England for the ICB and its partner trusts.

4.1.5 The Chief Finance Officer and *any senior officer responsible* for finance within the ICB should also promote a culture where budget holders and decision makers consult their finance business partners in key strategic decisions that carry a financial impact.

## 5. Income, banking arrangements and debt recovery

### 5.1 Income

5.1.1 An ICB has power to do anything specified in section 7(2) of the Health and Medicines Act 1988 for the purpose of making additional income available for improving the health service.

5.1.2 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for:

- ensuring order to cash practices are designed and operated to support, efficient, accurate and timely invoicing and receipting of cash. The processes and procedures should be standardised and harmonised across the NHS System by working cooperatively with the Shared Services provider; and
- ensuring the debt management strategy reflects the debt management objectives of the ICB and the prevailing risks.

### 5.2 Banking

5.2.1 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for ensuring the ICB complies with any directions issued by the Secretary of State with regards to the use of specified banking facilities for any specified purposes.

5.2.2 The Chief Finance Officer will ensure that:

- the ICB holds the minimum number of bank accounts required to run the organisation effectively. These should be raised through the government banking services contract; and
- the ICB has effective cash management policies and procedures in place.

### 5.3 Debt management

5.3.1 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the ICB debt management strategy.

5.3.2 This includes:

- a debt management strategy that covers end-to-end debt management from debt creation to collection or write-off in accordance with the losses and special payment procedures;
- ensuring the debt management strategy covers a minimum period of 3 years and must be reviewed and endorsed by the ICB Board at least every 3 years to ensure relevance and provide assurance;
- accountability to the ICB Board that debt is being managed effectively;
- accountabilities and responsibilities are defined with regards to debt management to budget holders; and
- responsibility to appoint a senior officer responsible for day to day management of debt.

## 6. Financial systems and processes

### 6.1 Provision of finance systems

6.1.1 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for ensuring systems and processes are designed and maintained for the recording and verification of finance transactions such as payments and receivables for the ICB.

6.1.2 The systems and processes will ensure, inter alia, that payment for goods and services is made in accordance with the provisions of these SFIs, related procurement guidance and prompt payment practice.

6.1.3 As part of the contractual arrangements for ICBs officers will be granted access where appropriate to the Integrated Single Financial Environment (“ISFE”) 2. This is the required accounting system for use by ICBs, Access is based on single access log on to enable users to perform core accounting functions such as to transacting and coding of expenditure/income in fulfilment of their roles.

6.1.4 The Chief Finance Officer will, in relation to financial systems:

- promote awareness and understanding of financial systems, value for money and commercial issues;
- ensure that transacting is carried out efficiently in line with current best practice – e.g. e-invoicing;
- ensure that the ICB meets the required financial and governance reporting requirements as a statutory body by the effective use of finance systems;
- enable the prevention and the detection of inaccuracies and fraud, and the reconstitution of any lost records;
- ensure that the financial transactions of the authority are recorded as soon as, and as accurately as, reasonably practicable;
- ensure publication and implementation of all ICB business rules and ensure that the internal finance team is appropriately resourced to deliver all statutory functions of the ICB;
- ensure that risk is appropriately managed;
- ensure identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers;
- ensure the ICB has suitable financial and other software to enable it to comply with these policies and any consolidation requirements of the ICB;
- ensure that contracts for computer services for financial applications with another health organisation or any other agency shall clearly define the responsibility of all parties for the security, privacy, accuracy, completeness, and timeliness of data

during processing, transmission and storage. The contract should also ensure rights of access for audit purposes; and

- where another health organisation or any other agency provides a computer service for financial applications, the Chief Finance Officer shall periodically seek assurances that adequate controls are in operation.

# 7. Procurement and purchasing

## 7.1 Principles

- 7.1.1 The Chief Finance Officer, working with the Chief Operating Officer, will take a lead role on behalf of the ICB to ensure that there are appropriate and effective financial, contracting, monitoring and performance arrangements in place to ensure the delivery of effective health services.
- 7.1.2 The ICB must ensure that procurement activity is in accordance with relevant procurement legislation and associated statutory requirements whilst securing value for money and sustainability.
- 7.1.3 The ICB must consider, as appropriate, any applicable NHS England guidance that does not conflict with the above.
- 7.1.4 The ICB must have a Procurement Policy which sets out all of the legislative requirements.
- 7.1.5 All revenue expenditure and investments must be appropriately approved in accordance with the ICB business case policy (where relevant) and delegated financial limits, prior to an agreement being made with a third party that enters a commitment to future expenditure.
- 7.1.6 All officers must ensure that any conflicts of interest are identified, declared and appropriately mitigated or resolved in accordance with the ICB standards of business conduct policy.
- 7.1.7 Budget holders are accountable for obtaining the necessary approvals and oversight of all expenditure incurred on the cost centres they are responsible for. This includes obtaining the necessary internal and external approvals which vary based on the type of spend, prior to procuring the goods, services or works.
- 7.1.8 Any contract variations or extensions must be undertaken in accordance with relevant procurement legislation requirements and the ICB procurement policy.
- 7.1.9 Retrospective expenditure approval should not be permitted. Any such retrospective breaches require approval from any committee responsible for approvals before the liability is settled. Such breaches must be reported to the Audit Committee.

## 8. Staff costs and staff related non pay expenditure

### 8.1 Chief Corporate Officer

8.1.1 The Chief Corporate Officer (or equivalent people role in the ICB) will lead the development and delivery of the long-term people strategy of the ICB ensuring this reflects and integrates the strategies of all relevant partner organisations within the ICS.

8.1.2 Operationally the Chief Corporate Officer will be responsible for;

- defining and delivering the organisation's overall human resources strategy and objectives; and
- overseeing delivery of human resource services to ICB employees.

8.1.3 The Chief Corporate Officer will ensure that the payroll system has adequate internal controls and suitable arrangements for processing deductions and exceptional payments.

8.1.4 Where a third-party payroll provider is engaged, the Chief Corporate Officer shall ensure this supplier is closely managed through effective contract management.

8.1.5 The Chief Corporate Officer is responsible for management and governance frameworks that support the ICB employees' life cycle.

## 9. Annual reporting and accounts

9.1.1 The Chief Finance Officer will ensure, on behalf of the Accountable Officer and ICB Board, that:

- the ICB is in a position to produce its required monthly reporting, annual report, and accounts, as part of the setup of the new organisation; and
- the ICB, in each financial year, prepares a report on how it has discharged its functions in the previous financial year;

9.1.2 An annual report must, in particular, explain how the ICB has:

- discharged its duties in relating to improving quality of services, reducing inequalities, the triple aim and public involvement;
- review the extent to which the Board has exercised its functions in accordance with its published 5 year forward plan and capital resource use plan; and
- review any steps that the Board has taken to implement any joint local health and wellbeing strategy.

9.1.3 NHS England may give directions to the ICB as to the form and content of an annual report.

9.1.4 The ICB must give a copy of its annual report to NHS England by the date specified by NHS England in a direction and publish the report.

### 9.2 Internal audit

9.2.1 The Chief Executive, as the Accountable Officer, is responsible for ensuring there is appropriate internal audit provision in the ICB. For operational purposes, this responsibility is delegated to the Chief Finance Officer to ensure that:

- all internal audit services provided under arrangements proposed by the Chief Finance Officer are approved by the Audit Committee, on behalf of the ICB Board;
- the ICB must have an internal audit charter. The internal audit charter must be prepared in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS);
- the ICB internal audit charter and annual audit plan, must be endorsed by the ICB Accountable Officer, Audit Committee and Board;
- the head of internal audit must provide an annual opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the ICB Board's framework of governance, risk management and internal control as they operated during the year, based on a systematic review and evaluation;

- the head of internal audit should attend Audit Committee meetings and have a right of access to all Audit Committee members, the Chair and Chief Executive of the ICB.
- the appropriate and effective financial control arrangements are in place for the ICB and that accepted internal and external audit recommendations are actioned in a timely manner.

## 9.3 External Audit

9.3.1 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for:

- liaising with external audit colleagues to ensure timely delivery of financial statements for audit and publication in accordance with statutory, regulatory requirements;
- ensuring that the ICB appoints an auditor in accordance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; in particular, the ICB must appoint a local auditor to audit its accounts for a financial year not later than 31 December in the preceding financial year; the ICB must appoint a local auditor at least once every 5 years; and
- ensuring that the appropriate and effective financial control arrangements are in place for the ICB and that accepted external audit recommendations are actioned in a timely manner.

## 10. Losses and special payments

- 10.1.1 HM Treasury approval is required if a transaction exceeds the delegated authority, or if transactions will set a precedent, are novel, contentious or could cause repercussions elsewhere in the public sector.
- 10.1.2 The Chief Finance Officer will support a strong culture of public accountability, probity, and governance, ensuring that appropriate and compliant structures, systems, and process are in place to minimise risks from losses and special payments.
- 10.1.3 NHS England has the statutory power to require an Integrated Care Board to provide NHS England with information. The information, which is not limited to losses and special payments, must be provided in such form, and at such time or within such period, as NHS England may require.
- 10.1.4 ICBs will work with NHS England teams to ensure there is assurance over all exit packages which may include special severance payments. ICBs have no delegated authority for special severance payments and will refer to the guidance on that to obtain the approval of such payments.
- 10.1.5 All losses and special payments (including special severance payments) must be reported to the ICB Audit Committee.
- 10.1.6 For detailed operational guidance on losses and special payments, please refer to the ICB losses and special payment guide which includes delegated limits.

# 11. Fraud, bribery and corruption (Economic crime)

11.1.1 The ICB is committed to identifying, investigating and preventing economic crime.

11.1.2 The ICB Chief Finance Officer is responsible for ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place to provide adequate counter fraud provision which should include reporting requirements to the Board and Audit Committee, and defined roles and accountabilities for those involved as part of the process of providing assurance to the Board.

11.1.3 These arrangements should comply with the NHS Requirements the Government Functional Standard 013 Counter Fraud as issued by NHS Counter Fraud Authority and any guidance issued by NHS England.

# 12. Capital Investments & security of assets and Grants

12.1.1 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for:

- ensuring that at the commencement of each financial year, the ICB prepares a plan setting out their planned capital resource use;
- ensuring that the ICB exercises its functions with a view to ensuring that, in respect of each financial year local capital resource use does not exceed the limit specified in a direction by NHS England;
- ensuring that there is an effective appraisal and approval process in place for determining capital expenditure priorities and the effect of each proposal upon business plans;
- ensuring that there are processes in place for the management of all stages of capital schemes, that will ensure that schemes are delivered on time and to cost;
- ensuring that capital investment is not authorised without evidence of availability of resources to finance all revenue consequences; and
- for every capital expenditure proposal, the Chief Finance Officer is responsible for ensuring there are processes in place to ensure that a business case is produced.

12.1.2 Capital commitments typically cover land, buildings, equipment, capital grants to third parties and IT, including:

- authority to spend capital or make a capital grant;
- authority to enter into leasing arrangements.

12.1.3 Advice should be sought from the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer if there is any doubt as to whether any proposal is a capital commitment requiring formal approval.

12.1.4 For operational purposes, the ICB shall have nominated senior officers accountable for ICB property assets and for managing property.

12.1.5 ICBs shall have a defined and established property governance and management framework, which should:

- ensure the ICB asset portfolio supports its business objectives; and
- comply with NHS England policies and directives and with this guidance.

12.1.6 Disposals of surplus assets should be made in accordance with published guidance and should be supported by a business case which should contain an appraisal of the options and benefits of the disposal in the context of the wider public sector and to secure value for money.

## 12.2 Grants

12.2.1 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for providing robust management, governance and assurance to the ICB with regards to the use of specific powers under which it can make capital or revenue grants available to;

- any of its partner NHS trusts or NHS foundation trusts; and
- to a voluntary organisation, by way of a grant or loan.

12.2.2 All revenue grant applications should be regarded as competed as a default position, unless there are justifiable reasons why the classification should be amended to non-competed.

## 13. Legal and insurance

13.1.1 This section applies to any legal cases threatened or instituted by or against the ICB. The ICB should have policies and procedures detailing:

- engagement of solicitors / legal advisors;
- approval and signing of documents which will be necessary in legal proceedings; and
- Officers who can commit or spend ICB revenue resources in relation to settling legal matters.

13.1.2 ICBs are advised not to buy commercial insurance to protect against risk unless it is part of a risk management strategy that is approved by the Accountable Officer.

# Appendix 1 – Financial Delegations



**North East and  
North Cumbria**

## ICB Financial Delegation

All financial delegations are to the substantive post-holders listed. Only where specifically indicated may the delegation be exercised by their deputy.

The approval of the Delegated Financial Limits is reserved to the ICB.

For invoice/purchase order/order/credit memo and journal approval limits see operational authorised signatory list.

### Financial Delegations - Contents

<u>Section</u>	<u>Title</u>
1	Capital Projects & Assets
2	Procurement of goods and services
3	Income Generation and Research & Development Contacts
4	Petty Cash
5	Engagement of Solicitors
6	Payroll Expenditure
7	Losses & Write-Off of Debts
8	Special Payments
9	Budgetary Control
10	Bank accounts and Payment Methods
11	Fraud and Irregularity
12	External audit – non audit services
13	Investments and approval of expenditure
14	Grants

Ref	Responsibility	Delegation Arrangements	Notes
<b>1</b>	<b>Capital Projects &amp; Assets</b>		
1.1	<p>Approval of capital business cases and capital expenditure variations, including PFI schemes/other schemes and granting, terminating or extending leases:</p> <p>Up to and including £250,000</p> <p>Up to and including £500,000</p> <p>Up to and including £5,000,000 except where these may give rise to significant qualitative, reputational or financial risk in which case these must be referred to the ICB Leadership Committee or ICB Board for decision.</p> <p>Greater than £5,000,000</p>	<p>ICB Director of Finance</p> <p>ICB Chief Executive <u>or</u> ICB Chief Finance Officer</p> <p>Both ICB Chief Executive <u>and</u> ICB Chief Finance Officer</p> <p>ICB Leadership Committee</p>	Delegation only applies where relevant capital funding is available.
1.2	Maintenance of the capital asset register	Nominated Finance Officer	Nominated Finance Officer to be determined by the ICB Chief Finance Officer.
1.3	<p>Approval of asset disposals:</p> <p>Where asset has a residual value of less than £100,000</p> <p>Greater than £100,000</p>	<p>ICB Chief Executive <u>or</u> ICB Chief Finance Officer</p> <p>ICB Leadership Committee</p>	The Nominated Finance Officer must be informed of all disposals (whatever their value) to enable the asset register to be updated.

Ref	Responsibility	Delegation Arrangements	Notes
			Disposals include those items that are obsolete, obsolescent, redundant, or cannot be repaired cost effectively.
<b>2</b>	<b>Procurement of goods and services</b>		
Procurement of goods and services must follow the ICB Procurement Policy. Within that process, the following delegations may then apply:			
2.1	Financial appraisal of companies identified as potential tenderers	ICB Chief Finance Officer <b>or</b> Nominated Finance Officer	Nominated Finance Officer to be determined by ICB Chief Finance Officer.
2.2	<p>Waiver of relevant procurement process (including authorisation of single tender/single quote for example)</p> <p>For all contracts less than £250,000 (life time value)</p> <p>For all contracts of £250,000 (life time value) and above</p>	<p>ICB Chief Finance Officer <b>or</b> ICB Finance Director</p> <p>ICB Chief Executive <b>and</b> ICB Chief Finance Officer</p>	<p>Where a single tender/single quote is sought or received, the ICB shall as far as practical, determine that the price to be paid is fair and reasonable and that details of the investigation are recorded.</p> <p>Where a single tender/single quote is authorised, the reason for this must be recorded and signed and dated by those with delegated authority. This must be reported at the next audit committee.</p>
2.3	Permission to consider late tenders	Individual ICB Chief Officers <b>and</b> ICB Director of Finance (or nominated deputy)	
2.4	Evaluation of quotations up to relevant procurement threshold	<p>ICB Chief Finance Officer <b>or</b></p> <p>ICB Chief Officer <b>or</b></p>	

Ref	Responsibility	Delegation Arrangements	Notes
		Nominated Finance Officer	
2.5	<p>Signing of contracts, letters of intent or variations (where contract approved in accordance with ICB delegated financial limits)</p> <p>Contracts/variations up to £250,000 (life time value)</p> <p>Contracts/variations up to £1,000,000 (life time value)</p> <p>Contracts/variations over £1,000,000</p>	<p>Individual ICB Director or Senior Manager up to relevant individual delegated financial limit</p> <p>Individual ICB Director or Chief Officer (e.g. relevant Director of Commissioning),</p> <p>Individual ICB Chief Officer (or nominated deputy)</p>	Where contract/variation appropriately approved in accordance with delegated financial limits.
<b>3</b>	<b>Income Generation and Research &amp; Development Contacts</b>		
3.1	<p>Approval of income generation contracts or research and development contracts (including variations &amp; extensions):</p> <p>Less than £250,000</p> <p>Greater than £250,000</p>	<p>ICB Chief Finance Officer <u>or</u> ICB Finance Director</p> <p>ICB Chief Executive <u>or</u> ICB Chief Finance Officer &amp; relevant Chief Officer</p>	Those greater than £500,000 must be reported to ICB Leadership Committee for information.
<b>4</b>	<b>Petty Cash</b>		
4.1	<p>Authorisation of petty cash payments:</p> <p>Disbursements up to and including £100</p>	Nominated Petty Cash Officer	Nominated Petty Cash Officer to be determined by ICB Chief Finance Officer.

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Delegation Arrangements</b>	<b>Notes</b>
	Disbursements over £100	ICB Chief Finance Officer <u>or</u> ICB Finance Director	
<b>5</b>	<b>Engagement of Solicitors</b>		
5.1	Engagement of Solicitors	Engagement of solicitors must be approved in accordance with the legal services Standing Operating Procedure, which will be maintained by the Chief Corporate Officer	Approval of relevant legal costs must be in line with individual delegated financial limits.
<b>6</b>	<b>Payroll Expenditure</b>		
6.1	Engagement / recruitment of staff and re-grading employees, (permanent or temporary)	ICB Chief Officer	Authorisations must be within the limit of the approved budget and funded establishment.  Must follow relevant establishment / vacancy control process.
6.2	Remuneration for substantive staff on VSM contracts or non Agenda for Change e.g. clinicians and non-executives	Remuneration Committee or ICB Board for Remuneration Committee members (except those delegated to NHS England)	In accordance with Scheme of Reservation and Delegation.  Taking account of relevant NHS England and DHSC guidance.
6.3	Use of Agency staff	Relevant ICB Chief Officer and ICB Chief Executive approval required.  ICB Chief Finance Officer and NHS England approval also required for any non-clinical agency staff.	Use of agency staff, particularly non-clinical, is expected to be in exceptional circumstances only.  NHS England approval process must also be followed

Ref	Responsibility	Delegation Arrangements	Notes
			for any non-clinical agency requests.
6.4	<p>All Off-payroll engagements where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cost is less than £245/day</li> <li>- Engaged for less than 6 months</li> <li>- And not in roles of significant influence</li> </ul> <p>Where any of the above are <u>not</u> met</p>	<p>ICB Chief Executive <u>or</u></p> <p>ICB Chief Finance Officer <u>and</u> ICB Executive Director</p> <p>ICB Chief Executive</p>	
6.5	<p>Authorisation of travel and expenses claims</p> <p>Claims older than 3 months</p>	<p>Line Managers</p> <p>ICB Chief Finance Officer (or nominated ICB Director of Finance)</p>	Approval of any travel and expenses claims should follow the travel and expenses policy.
6.6	Authorisation of timesheets	Line Manager	No authorisations may exceed the conditions of an individual's contract.
6.7	Authorisation of early retirement, redundancy and other termination payments to staff where there is a cost to the ICB	Remuneration Committee or ICB Board for Remuneration Committee members (except those delegated to NHS England)	Taking account of relevant NHS England and DHSC guidance and any additional approval that may be required.
<b>7</b>	<b>Losses &amp; Write-Off of Debts</b>		
7.1	<p>Authorisation of debt write-off and losses:</p> <p>Less than £50,000</p>	ICB Finance Director	Must be presented to Audit Committee for information.

Ref	Responsibility	Delegation Arrangements	Notes
	£50,000 to £300,000  Greater than £300,000	ICB Chief Finance Officer  ICB Board (and NHS England)	<b>All losses greater than £300,000 must also be approved by NHS England</b>
7.2	Authorisation to refer debts to debt collection agency	ICB Chief Finance Officer <u>or</u> ICB Finance Director	Where this course of action risks adverse publicity the matter must first be discussed with the ICB Chief Executive and/or ICB Chair.
<b>8</b>	<b>Special Payments</b>		
8.1	As part of the HR process, authorisation of special payments, including: staff compromise agreements; and ex-gratia payments:  Up to £10,000  Up to £95,000  £95,000 and over	ICB Finance Director  ICB Chief Finance Officer  ICB Chief Executive <u>or</u> ICB Chief Finance Officer <b>and</b> ICB Chair <b>and</b> requires NHS England approval	All special payments must be reported to Audit Committee.  Refer to ICB losses and special payments guide which includes delegated limits. No special payments exceeding delegated limits shall be made without the prior approval of NHS England. <b>Any special payments over £95,000 require NHS England approval along with all special severance and retention payments.</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Budgetary Control</b>		
9.1	Approval of budgets and resources  Delegation of budgets	ICB Board  ICB Chief Finance Officer	The approval of budgets and resources will usually take place during March for the following financial year

Ref	Responsibility	Delegation Arrangements	Notes
	Approval to spend	Budget Holder/ Manager is permitted to incur costs in accordance with their budgets & authorisation limits	
9.2	Approval of budget virements across ISFE categories:  Up to and including £500,000  Up to and including £1,000,000  Over £1,000,000  Approval of budget adjustments / transfers within ISFE categories	ICB Finance Director  ICB Chief Finance Officer  ICB Leadership Committee  ICB Chief Finance Officer or nominated finance officer	Nominated finance officer to be agreed with ICB Chief Finance Officer and recorded on authorised signatory list
9.3	Approval of transfers to/from reserves	ICB Chief Finance Officer <u>or</u> ICB Finance Director	This includes the transfer of earmarked / approved funding between budget areas
<b>10</b>	<b>Bank Accounts and Payment Methods</b>		
10.1	Opening of bank accounts or changes to banking arrangements	ICB Chief Finance Officer <u>or</u> ICB Finance Director	Governing Banking Services only.  Must be reported to the next Audit Committee meeting for assurance purposes.
10.2	Signing of cheques for cash, signing of other cheques, and authorisation of electronic payments, cheque and BACs payment schedules	ICB Chief Finance Officer <u>or</u>  ICB Finance Director <u>or</u>	

Ref	Responsibility	Delegation Arrangements	Notes
		Nominated Finance Manager	
10.3	Approval of credit card / payment card arrangements, including opening of any new accounts	ICB Chief Finance Officer	Individual credit card transactions to be approved in line with delegated financial limits.
<b>11.0</b>	<b>Fraud and Irregularity</b>		
11.1	Counter fraud and corruption work in accordance with Secretary of State's Directions	ICB Chief Finance Officer <u>or</u> ICB Finance Director	In liaison with Local Counter Fraud Specialist, Counter Fraud Operational Service and Police as appropriate
11.2	Investigation of suspected cases of irregularity not related to fraud or corruption	ICB Chief Executive <u>or</u> ICB Chief Officer & ICB Chief Finance Officer	
<b>12</b>	<b>External audit – non audit services</b>		
12.1	Any non-audit services provided by the appointed external auditor must comply with the requirements of National Audit Office (NAO) Auditor Guidance Note 01 (AGN/01).  Non-audit services up to £50,000  Non-audit services over £50,000	ICB Chief Executive <u>or</u> Chief Finance Officer  ICB Chief Executive or Chief Finance Officer <u>and</u> Audit Committee	Any proposed services must comply with NAO AGN/01, including total non-audit services being below 70% of audit services and complying with the prohibited services listed in NAO AGN/01.  All non-audit services agreed must be reported to Audit Committee.
<b>13</b>	<b>Investments and approval of expenditure</b>		

Ref	Responsibility	Delegation Arrangements	Notes
13.1	Investment decisions and approval of expenditure. This includes approval of individual healthcare packages.	Refer to individual delegated financial limits set out in appendix 2 for approval of expenditure on administrative and commissioning budgets.	<p>Individual Health care packages to be considered and awarded in accordance with relevant legislation.</p> <p>Relevant commissioning manager may be employed by ICB or other partner organisation such as Local Authority or NHS Provider Trust and working on behalf of the ICB.</p>
<b>14</b>	<b>Grants</b>		
14.1	<p>Decisions to award grants up to and including £250,000.</p> <p>Decisions to award grants of over £250,000</p>	<p>Refer to individual delegated financial limits for approval of expenditure on administrative and commissioning budgets</p> <p>ICB Chief Operating Officer (or nominated deputy) <b>and</b> an ICB Director of Finance</p>	The Chief Executive or another Executive Director to be the nominated deputy in the absence of the Chief Operating Officer.

# Appendix 2 – Financial Limits



North East and  
North Cumbria

## Financial Limits

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The table below sets out the financial limits up to which officers of the Integrated Care Board may exercise executive functions. These financial limits form an integral element of the financial governance arrangements for the ICB as part of the detailed operational policies which support the scheme of reservation and delegation and prime financial policies.

### 2. Additional Financial Controls

- 2.1 Additional financial controls were implemented in 2023/24 to satisfy NHS England requirements given the deficit plan position for the ICS and to support in managing the challenging financial position facing both the ICB and ICS. These additional financial controls processes continued to apply for the ICB throughout 2025/26. To the extent that such controls are required to continue in 2026/27, the following principles will apply:

- Financial controls apply to all discretionary spend;
- Discretionary spend between £0 - £10k, where a budget is identified, should be considered by the responsible Chief Officer;
- Discretionary spend over £10k should be considered by the relevant ICB sub-committee or Leadership Committee;
- All proposals where there is no budget currently identified must continue to follow the current ICB investment business policy and go to ICB Leadership Committee for consideration and approval

- 2.2 As a result, the financial limits set out in section 3 and 4 below effectively apply to non-discretionary spend only whilst the additional financial controls above remain in place.

### 3. Administrative and Commissioning Budget Limits

- 3.1 Contracts will be agreed at the start of the year through the relevant committee and approved by the ICB Board.
- 3.2 Related requisitions will then be processed on the ISFE2 system for the agreed contract value and relevant invoices will then be processed without further authorisation being required (up to the requisition value).
- 3.3 Within this framework the following authorisation limits will then operate:

Limit	Authoriser
<b>Board / Committee limits:</b>	
Over £50,000,000	Integrated Care Board
Up to £50,000,000	ICB Leadership Committee
Up to £25,000,000	Relevant Sub-Committee: – Neighbourhood Health Subcommittee; Integrated Mental Health and Complex Care Subcommittee; Acute Subcommittee; Specialised Commissioning Subcommittee.
<b>Individual limits:</b>	
Up to £5,000,000	ICB Chief Executive <b>and</b> ICB Chief Finance Officer
Up to £3,000,000	ICB Chief Executive <b>and</b> relevant Chief Officer
Up to £1,000,000	Relevant Chief Officer <b>and</b> Chief Finance Officer
Up to £500,000	Individual ICB Chief Officers
Up to £250,000	ICB Directors (Band 9 and VSM)
Up to £100,000	ICB Deputy Directors (Band 8D)
Up to £75,000	Senior Managers (Band 8a-c)
Up to £10,000	Managers (Band 7)
Up to £10,000	Nominated Officers for non-contract activity and individual funding requests
<b>All age continuing care (AACC) and other individual packages of care only:</b>	
Up to £75,000	Band 6 case managers
Up to £90,000	Manager (Band 7)
Up to £100,000	Managers / Senior Managers (Band 8a-c)
Up to £200,000	Deputy Directors of Nursing (Band 8d)
Invoices for less than £250: All invoices for less than £250 in total can be authorised by an approved member of the finance team without any further authorisation being required by relevant budget holders	

#### Notes:

The limits above refer to individual contract values or individual contract variations (cumulative value over the life of the contract/variation, i.e. 3 year contract for £50,000 p.a. would be considered £150,000 in context of limits above). Where expenditure relates to individual packages of care, the limits above will apply to the annual package value.

Values represent total expenditure on each contract/variation applicable to an individual provider or service specification (including where relevant any VAT not recoverable by the ICB).

The delegations noted above relate to the use of budgets approved by the ICB and within the individual's own areas of responsibility. Authorisation limits, based on these rules, will only be allocated to staff where this is appropriate to their role. Therefore not all staff at the banding levels listed above will be allocated these authorisation limits.

The limits relating to all age continuing care and other packages of care above will only apply to relevant staff approving specific packages of care. This includes Continuing Healthcare packages, Funded Nursing Care, Section 117 healthcare, children's packages, joint funded packages. A full list of relevant posts at Band 6 to Band 8c level to which these limits apply will be agreed with the ICB Chief Finance Officer.

These limits are also applicable for the approval of tenders, provided the relevant tender process has been fully complied with.

An operational authorised signatory list will be maintained by the ICB finance team and approved by the ICB Chief Finance Officer. This may include certain individuals employed by other organisations to work on behalf of the ICB.

Relevant senior finance staff will have higher (in some cases unlimited) approval limits within the financial ledger system to enable the processing of high value orders/invoices relating to contracts which have been approved in line with the limits above.

Approval limits for the financial ledger system, including journal authorisation limits, will be reviewed and approved by the Chief Finance Officer and included within the operational authorised signatory list. This list will be available for scrutiny by the Audit Committee as required.

Additional authorisation or procedure may be required for non-financial aspects of any planned expenditure or where exceptional arrangements are contemplated. It is the responsibility of the budget holder to ensure that any such authorisation has been obtained or procedure completed in advance of any financial commitment. Examples would be:

- expenditure requiring quotations, tenders or business case approval
- service change requiring clinical approval
- contracts of unusually long duration
- non-employed individuals where there may be taxation or employment rights issues requiring expert HR advice
- ex gratia or compensation payments, which have specific procedural requirements