

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 25–171

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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By Email

6 August 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 30 July 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 you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information from NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board relating to Continence and Stoma Care Formularies. Please be as specific as possible in your response to all questions

1. Does your organisation have an active Ostomy (stoma) or Continence Care Formulary? If so, please share copies of both formularies, including the full list of products?
2. What NHS organisations are they applicable to?
3. When was the formulary start date, and when will it end or is expected to be renewed?
4. What is the primary objective of the formulary? If this is to deliver cost-improvement/savings, please quantify what savings the formulary has delivered to your organisation each year since it was active?
5. Which part of your organisation benefits from any Formulary savings?
6. What is the process for renewal?
7. Where new, innovative products are launched while the formulary is live, what is the process for reviewing these and adding to the formulary?
8. Other than cost, how are outcomes measured, and which outcomes are measured when assessing the effectiveness of the formulary?
9. Are stoma bags included within your formularies?

10. Who are the lead clinical stakeholder(s) responsible for the formularies – name and job role please?
11. Who are the lead nonclinical stakeholder(s) responsible for the formularies – name and job role please?
12. How is formulary compliance measured by healthcare professionals in your organisation?

If it is not possible to provide the information requested due to the information exceeding the cost of compliance limits identified in Section 12, please provide advice and assistance, under the Section 16 obligations of the Act, as to how we can refine our request to obtain the information requested.

If you have any queries or points that require clarifying or should there be any ways in which my request could be refined, please don't hesitate to contact me via email or directly by phone. Thank you for your time and we look forward to your response.

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 NENC ICB does not currently have a dedicated stoma product formulary in place. However, we do have clinical guidance for stoma care via the Northern Treatment Advisory Group (NTAG): [NTAG Guidelines](#).

For continence care, there are localised continence formularies in some places, and the North East and North Cumbria (NENC) Formulary includes continence-related medicines: [NENC ICS Formulary](#).

2. The NENC ICS Formulary applies to the whole of the North East and North Cumbria ICB, including all relevant NHS provider organisations and GP practices across the footprint.
3. The stoma care guidance (via NTAG) does not operate on a specific start/end cycle. The NENC ICS Formulary is updated on a rolling basis, typically every two months. There is no formal expiry.
4. The formulary's primary objectives are to:
 - Promote safe, effective, and evidence-based prescribing
 - Enable seamless transitions between primary and secondary care
 - Improve prescribing consistency and supply reliability
 - While cost-effectiveness is a factor, we do not hold specific annual savings figures attributable solely to the formulary.
5. Specific savings data are not held. Formularies are primarily a clinical tool to support quality prescribing across the system.
6. The NENC ICS Formulary is reviewed and maintained by NTAG in collaboration with regional clinicians and pharmacy teams. Updates are made regularly, typically every 2 months, and published via: [NTAG – Northern Treatment Advisory Group](#)
7. The process is outlined in the NENC Formulary Introduction: [NENC ICS Formulary](#). Typically, new product submissions are reviewed by NTAG, who assess evidence, clinical benefit, and cost-effectiveness before recommending inclusion.
8. No formal outcomes monitoring framework tied to the stoma or continence components of the formulary.
9. Stoma bags are not currently listed within the NENC ICS Formulary.

10. This information is published via the NENC ICS Formulary website.
11. Please refer to the response to question 10. Non-clinical input may support the development process, but no specific individuals are listed for this function.
12. Primary care prescribing systems (e.g. OptimiseRx) may flag non-formulary items. However, we acknowledge that not all prescribing will be 100% compliant, and prescribers may override guidance based on clinical judgment.

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 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.

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 faithfully

Information Governance Support Officer

**Information Governance Support Officer
North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board**