

Our Reference      North East and North Cumbria ICB\  
FOI ICB 25–165

**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

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 26 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 request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding medicines wastage in your commissioning area, particularly within GP practices and primary care.

Please could you provide the following for the most recent 12-month period available:

1. The estimated financial cost of medicines wasted in primary care under your ICB's remit, including:
  - Returned or uncollected prescriptions from patients
  - Stock expired or disposed of by GP practices or pharmacies
  - Medication wastage due to patient non-adherence, over-prescribing, or other causes
2. Any available quantitative data (e.g., volume/weight or item count) on wasted medicines.
3. Any audits, internal reports, or evaluations your ICB has conducted on medicines wastage or medicines optimisation.
4. Whether your ICB supports or commissions any initiatives, technologies, or systems to reduce or monitor medicines waste.

If only partial data is available, I would be grateful for any estimates or supporting information you can provide.

## 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. NENC ICB uses the following source of data on medicines waste, which is this national evaluation done by the Department of Health in 2010:

[https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1350234/1/Evaluation\\_of\\_NHS\\_Medicines\\_Waste\\_web\\_publication\\_version.pdf](https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1350234/1/Evaluation_of_NHS_Medicines_Waste_web_publication_version.pdf)

The key statistic drew on is that: *approximately £1 in every £25 spent* is wasted. That means 4% of whatever the prescribing spend is, can be considered as waste. NENC ICB spend in the last 12 months, June 2024 to May 2025, was £514,717,770 on medicines alone (does not include dressing, etc), so based on this figure, and the calculation above, we wasted £20,588,710.

2. On this occasion it is not possible 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.
3. NENC ICB has carried out no audits, internal reports, or evaluations on medicines wastage or medicines optimisation.
4. NENC ICB commissions the behaviour change campaign: [Are your medicines stacking up? 'Only order what you need' | North East and North Cumbria NHS](#)

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](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*

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North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board**