

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria
ICB\FOI ICB833

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By Email

16/04/2024

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 by North of England Commissioning Support (NECS) on 22/03/2024 for information held by NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB) under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

NENC ICB covers the areas of County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Cumbria, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside, Sunderland, and Tees Valley (which covers the 5 councils that make it up – Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees).

Please find the information you requested on behalf of the ICB as follows.

Your Request

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. Please state the name of your ICB?
2. Does surgery for keloid scars require funding approval in your ICB?
3. If funding is required, is this through a prior approval process (i.e., defined criteria must be met), an individual funding request or another route?
4. How many applications for keloid scar excision surgery did you receive within your ICB in 2023?
5. Relating to question 4, how many applications were approved?

6. Relating to question 4 and 5, what were the anatomical locations of the applications that were received? Please provide a breakdown according to the following areas:
 - a. Face
 - b. Ear
 - c. Trunk
 - d. upper limb
 - e. lower limb

7. Relating to question 4 and 5, what were the anatomical locations of the applications that were approved? Please provide a breakdown according to the following areas:
 - a. Face
 - b. Ear
 - c. Trunk
 - d. upper limb
 - e. lower limb

8. Relating to question 4, how many cases were declined?

9. Relating to question 8, what were the reasons for declining the requests? Please provide a breakdown according to the following reasons:
 - a. Not causing functional impairment
 - b. Not causing symptoms
 - c. Considered cosmetic.
 - d. Case not considered "exceptional".
 - e. Other (please specify)

10. If you cannot provide a breakdown for cases, please indicate the reason(s) that most commonly apply:
 - a. Not causing functional impairment
 - b. Not causing symptoms
 - c. Considered cosmetic.
 - d. Case not considered "exceptional".
 - e. Other (please specify)

11. With regard to all funding applications your ICB has received, please provide an overall breakdown of the ethnicity of these patients. If you do not have data regarding ethnicity, answers can be based on visual impression of the Fitzpatrick skin types (shown below):
 - a. Type 1
 - b. Type 2
 - c. Type 3
 - d. Type 4
 - e. Type 5
 - f. Type 6

12. Please consider the following hypothetical case as though it were a real application and indicate your response: 27-year-old woman. Fit and healthy. No past medical history. No allergies. 5-year history of large keloid scar on right ear lobule from an ear piercing. Stable in size for 4 years, no spontaneous improvement. Has had a course of intralesional steroid injections at another facility 2 years ago with no improvement. No previous surgery. Causing embarrassment, social withdrawal, and persistent pruritus, as well as discomfort when lying down. On examination: 4x3cm, firm, slightly tender, right ear lobule keloid scar.

Secondary care plastic surgery consultant is requesting approval for excision under local anaesthetic, as a 30-minute day case procedure. Intended as a single surgical episode, with the likelihood of adjuvant steroid injections performed in the outpatient clinic during the follow-up period. Please advise if this case would be approved.

13. If not, please indicate the reasoning. N.B. If your policy is for such cases to only be considered following an IFR, please state this below. In such cases, we will provide a completed IFR form and would be grateful if you would consider this according to your usual protocol.

Our Response

1. *North East and North Cumbria ICB (NENC)*
2. *We can confirm, as per Section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the ICB holds the information you have requested. 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. This is available within on the ICB's website on the published "Value Based Commissioning Policy". For Keloid Scars please see page 40 of the policy which can be found at: [icbp040-vbc-policy-12.pdf \(northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk\)](https://www.northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/~/media/040-vbc-policy-12.pdf).*
3. *As above.*
4. *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. This is due to how Keloid Scar procedures are recorded within the ICB they are included in the wider Benign Skin Lesions category and cannot be separated out from this category.*
5. *As above.*
6. *As above.*
7. *As above.*

8. *As above.*

9. *As above.*

10. *As above.*

11. *As above.*

12. *NENC ICB considers this part of your request out of scope of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. FOIA Section 1 subsection 2 states: "For the purposes of this Act, information is held by a public authority if — (a) it is held by the authority, otherwise than on behalf of another person, or (b) it is held by another person on behalf of the authority." This request is not for held information and therefore out of scope of the act.*

13. *As above.*

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 complaints procedure provided by the North of England Commissioning Support Unit.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

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 sincerely

Ehren Smith

Ehren Smith
Information Governance Officer