

Financial Limits

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The tables below set 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.
- 1.2 Appendix 1 outlines the delegated limits to be provided to staff in North of England Commissioning Support (NECS) to ensure effective processing of transactions.

2. Additional Financial Controls

- 2.1 Additional financial controls were implemented in 2023/24 to manage the challenging financial position facing both the ICB and ICS. These additional financial controls processes continue to apply for the ICB. The following principles apply:
 - Financial controls apply to all discretionary spend;
 - Discretionary spend between £0 - £10k, where a budget is identified, should be considered by the responsible Executive Director;
 - Discretionary spend between £10k - £250k, where a budget is identified, should be considered by the Investment Oversight Panel;
 - All proposals above £250k or where there is no budget currently identified must continue to follow the current ICB investment business policy and go to Executive 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 Budgets

- 3.1 Initial budgets and relevant contract values will be reviewed by the Executive Committee and approved by the ICB Board prior to the start of the financial year. The following limits will then apply to administrative budgets:

Limit	Authoriser
Over £5,000,000	Integrated Care Board
Up to £4,999,999	Executive Committee
Up to £1,999,999	ICB Chief Executive and ICB Chief Finance Officer and ICB Chair
Up to £1,000,000	ICB Chief Executive and ICB Chief Finance Officer
Up to £250,000	Individual ICB Executive Directors
Up to £100,000	Band 9 and VSM
Up to £50,000	Senior Managers (Band 8b-d)
Up to £10,000	Managers (Band 7 to 8a)
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	

4. Commissioning Budget and Functions

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

Limit	Authoriser
Over £30,000,000	Integrated Care Board
Up to £29,999,999	Executive Committee
LDT / place budgets:	
Up to £4,999,999	Chief Delivery Officer and Director of Finance
Up to £1,000,000	Delivery Director and Director of Finance
Contracting and Primary Care sub-committee budgets:	
Up to £4,999,999	Chief Contracting and Procurement Officer and Director of Finance
Up to £1,000,000	Director of Contracting and Oversight and Director of Finance
General budgets:	
Up to £4,999,999	ICB Chief Executive and ICB Chief Finance Officer
Up to £2,999,999	ICB Chief Executive and relevant Executive Director
Up to £1,000,000	Relevant Executive Director and Chief Finance Officer
Up to £500,000	Individual ICB Executive Directors
Up to £250,000	Band 9 and VSM
Up to £75,000	Senior Managers (Band 8b-d)
Up to £10,000 <i>Up to £75,000 Individual packages of care only *</i>	Managers (Band 7 to 8a)
Up to £10,000	Nominated Officers for non-contract activity and individual funding requests
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 (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.

Managers (Band 7 to 8a) will have approval to agree individual packages of care up to £75,000 pa. This will also apply to relevant Band 6 case managers where agreed by the Chief Finance Officer. This includes Continuing Healthcare packages, Funded Nursing Care, Section 117 healthcare, children's packages, joint funded packages.

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, confirming the relevant individuals holding delegated authority in line with the limits set out below, will be maintained by the ICB finance team and approved by the ICB Chief Finance Officer. This may include certain individuals employed by NECS to work on behalf of the ICB, in accordance with the delegated limits outlined below.

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 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

NECS Delegated Limits**1. Healthcare spend**

1.1 Under the ISFE system, formal requisitions should be processed for healthcare payments in order for any payments to be made to providers. It is essential that we agree the boundaries in terms of what NECS can authorise on behalf of the ICB to ensure efficient processing of transactions whilst managing any potential financial risk to the ICB.

1.2 The scheme of delegation for the following key areas is as follows:

Contract Type	Signed contract by ICB?	Authorisation of requisition and receipting of service on a monthly basis	Contract Over / Under Performance
Acute / Community / Mental Health / 999 / PTS / contracts	Yes - Signed standard NHS contract is in place, which includes an agreed monthly payment profile	All requisitions can be processed by contract manager in line with rules as identified in the ISFE. This does not require additional authorisation from ICB.	Relevant NECS staff can authorise additional payment / credit up to £75,000 without additional authorisation from ICB for each contract. Amounts above £75,000 would require approval in accordance with ICB scheme of financial delegation. Excluded from the above is where a service is currently not commissioned from the provider. A variation appropriately authorised in accordance with the ICB scheme of financial delegation is required.
AQP	Yes - Signed standard NHS contract is in place with zero activity and financial value	All requisitions can be processed by contract manager in line with rules as identified in the ISFE. This does not require additional authorisation from ICB.	NECS can authorise additional payment / credit up to the overall budget agreed by ICB. Budgets will be reviewed monthly and reset where appropriate. If budget is exceeded, approval in accordance with the ICB scheme of financial delegation will be required for payment above 2% or £75,000 whichever is the lowest for each service line, e.g. AQP Adult Hearing (not provider level).

Contract Type	Signed contract by ICB?	Authorisation of requisition and receipting of service on a monthly basis	Contract Over / Under Performance
NCAs including PTS NCAs (all other PTS will be covered above)	No signed contract in place.	Requisition not required.	<p>NECS can authorise additional payment / credit up to the overall budget agreed by the ICB. Budgets will be reviewed monthly and reset where appropriate.</p> <p>NCAs with an individual value above £10,000 will require approval in accordance with the ICB scheme of financial delegation.</p> <p>Emergency air ambulances / decompression chambers above £50,000 will require approval in accordance with the ICB scheme of financial delegation.</p> <p>PTS air ambulance/transport above £10,000 will require approval in accordance with the ICB scheme of financial delegation.</p>
Enhanced Services	Yes – signed enhanced service agreement in place	All requisitions can be processed by contract manager in line with rules as identified in the ISFE. This does not require additional authorisation from ICB.	<p>NECS can authorise additional payment / credit up to the overall budget agreed by ICB. Budgets will be reviewed monthly and reset where appropriate.</p> <p>If budget is exceeded, approval will be required for payment above £10,000 for each service line, e.g. minor ailments (not provider level).</p>
Continuing Healthcare Agreements / Individual packages of care (including MH/LD and children's packages)	Yes - Signed standard NHS contract is in place with zero activity and financial value	All requisitions can be processed by contract manager in line with rules as identified in the ISFE. This does not require additional authorisation from ICB.	<p>NECS can authorise additional payment / credit up to the overall budget agreed by the ICB. Budgets will be reviewed monthly and reset where appropriate.</p> <p>Individual continuing care packages above £75,000 (annual value) will require individual approval in accordance with the ICB scheme of financial delegation.</p>
Local Authority Agreements	Yes - Signed section 256	All requisitions can be processed by contract	NECS can authorise additional payment / credit up to the overall monthly budget agreed by ICB.

Contract Type	Signed contract by ICB?	Authorisation of requisition and receipting of service on a monthly basis	Contract Over / Under Performance
	or section 75 in place	manager in line with rules as identified in the ISFE. This does not require additional authorisation from ICB.	<p>Budgets will be reviewed monthly and reset where appropriate.</p> <p>Only if the section 75 covers continuing health care, any individual continuing care packages above £75,000 will require individual approval in accordance with the ICB scheme of financial delegation.</p>

2. Non-healthcare spend

2.1 It is suggested that the ICB delegates to NECS sufficient authority to allow NECS to make low value non-healthcare payments on behalf of the ICB. The proposed areas and levels of payment are as follows:

Payment Type	Value of delegated authority
Collaborative fees, blue badges, adoption forms etc	NECS can authorise individual payments up to £100.
Childcare vouchers	NECS can authorise individual payments where the cost to the ICB is up to £100.
Any other incidental expenditure	NECS can authorise individual payments up to a value of £1,000.