

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\  
FOI ICB 24–220

NECS – John Snow House  
Durham University Science Park  
Durham  
DH1 3YG

Tel: 0191 301 1300  
E-mail: [necsu.icbfoi@nhs.net](mailto:necsu.icbfoi@nhs.net)

By Email

11 September 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 26 August 2024 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, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Cumbria, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside, Sunderland, and Tees Valley (which covers the five local authorities of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees).

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

**Your Request**

I am reaching out to share an essential NHS England document titled "An Improvement Framework to Reduce Community Musculoskeletal Waits While Delivering Best Outcomes and Experience." <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/an-improvement-framework-to-reduce-community-musculoskeletal-waits-while-delivering-best-outcomes-and-experience/>

This framework outlines targeted strategies to enhance care delivery, reduce wait times, and improve patient outcomes in our community. My particular interest is action Point 3 addressing self-management.

Can you tell me where the Integrated Care Board has incorporated the improvement framework within its strategy, as I couldn't see the information on the website.

**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.

## County Durham place

In County Durham, County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT) is commissioned to deliver an integrated community musculoskeletal (MSK) service which incorporates and supports self-management, education and signposting to support such as groups and exercise programmes. Escape Pain is an example of a national self-management resource used for back pain, which is included in the Durham MSK service specification. An extract from the spec on self-management is included here:

### **Provision of Self-Help Information & Advice**

A successful MSK integrated care service requires an informed and empowered patient. Effective self-management support means more than telling patients what to do. It means acknowledging the patients' central role in their care, one that fosters a sense of responsibility for their own health. It includes the provision of basic information, emotional support, and strategies for living with a long-term musculoskeletal condition, and not limiting available information to a leaflet or one-off class. Using a collaborative approach, providers and patients will work together to define problems, set priorities, establish goals, create treatment plans and solve problems along the way.

The service will embed this culture of patient empowerment at every stage across the system, from diagnosis to discharge. Public, patients and carers will be able to access reliable information and support, about the prevention and self-management of musculoskeletal problems, both episodic short-term conditions and long-term conditions. In keeping with this culture of empowerment the MSK SPA will include the ability for people to refer themselves directly into the service for physiotherapy and provide physiotherapy advice and support.

The service will work with General Practice to manage demand through a variety of means including up-skilling GPs to maximise the MSK care they can provide and enable them to support self-management utilising the Care Closer to Home vision, approach to long-term conditions by empowering patients to be at the centre of their care and able to make informed decisions about their treatment and care.

The service will:

- Embed patient empowerment across the whole pathway and ensure that the public, patients and carers can access reliable information and support.
- Make use of internet resources.
- Ensure the service has copies of relevant self-management resources.
- Have in place a website designed for patients and health professionals to obtain service information, treatments available, how to access the service and useful information about self-management/lifestyle factors.

### **Social Prescribing – Provided by PCNs**

Social prescribing link workers connect people with local community activities and services that can help improve their health and wellbeing.

(Social Prescribing Link Workers may also be referred to as Community Link Workers, Link Workers, Wellbeing Coordinators or Social Prescribers.)

A vital part of their role is to build relationships with the people they are helping by listening carefully to what's important to them and what motivates them.

Social Prescribing Link Workers can help by:

- supporting with issues that are affecting your health and wellbeing.
- providing advice and support on social issues.
- linking you into local services, groups and activities.

#### Newcastle Gateshead place

MSK services for both Newcastle and Gateshead are delivered by the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (NuTH).

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. However, we have determined that the information is held by NuTH.

In accordance with our duty under s.16 of the FOIA to provide reasonable advice and assistance to an individual requesting information, the email for NuTH is [nuth.freedom.information@nhs.net](mailto:nuth.freedom.information@nhs.net)

#### North Cumbria place

All provider trusts are expected to adhere to the latest good practice guidance across all specialities. This is managed during contractual discussions with the relevant provider.

Our MSK Services were last re-designed as part of the Success Regime process in 2017 to provide a one stop shop for MSK referrals. Subsequent to that re-design work, Primary Care Networks (PCNs) have also recruited First Line Physiotherapists to work across General Practice in the Community.

#### Northumberland and North Tyneside places

A community-based contract is in place across Northumberland and North Tyneside for MSK. When contracts are renewed, recommendations will be incorporated in service specifications. The current services for both Northumberland and North Tyneside are delivered by Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust in Partnership with Connect Health.

In accordance with our duty under s.16 of the FOIA to provide reasonable advice and assistance to an individual requesting information, the FOI email for Northumbria Healthcare is [foi@northumbria.nhs.uk](mailto:foi@northumbria.nhs.uk)

#### South Tyneside and Sunderland place

Both of our local musculoskeletal services have extensive websites with a wide range of self-management resources for patients to access. We also have social prescribing offers in both areas.

#### Tees Valley place

The ICB in Tees Valley place has an overarching strategy in place that sets out a range of aims and objectives in relation to improvements to healthcare across its geographical area which can be found on the ICB website.

In addition to this, the ICB has a range of commissioned services in place with local providers, including arrangements in place for the provision of MSK services. MSK services are commissioned in line with available best practice guidance and form part of contractual agreements with individual providers. Each contract has a service specification in place for the provision of MSK services and it is expected that providers meet the outcomes of this service specification as well as keep up to date with best practice and emerging guidance.

Services are commissioned from providers with the intention that they support self-management where appropriate and this forms part of initial triage and ongoing management. The ICB does not hold further detail in relation to operational policies and procedures and providers would need to be contacted directly for this additional level of information.

Primary Care Networks (PCNs) across the Tees Valley directly commission/employ Social Prescribers as part of the national Additional Role Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS). The group of GP Practices that form the Primary Care Network have responsibility to identify patient cohorts that they feel would benefit from Social Prescriber input and this therefore may be different per PCN geographical area. This may include MSK provision and may also focus on other cohorts.

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](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

*S Davies*

**S Davies**  
**Information Governance Officer**