

Our Ref: PW/KJJ/FOI/0925/1435

Stafford Education & Enterprise Park
Weston Road
Stafford
ST18 0BF

23 September 2025

Sent by email

Telephone: 0300 123 1461

Dear

FOI/0925/1435

Your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

Thank you for your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, received on the 18 September 2025. We can now confirm that the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board can provide the following information.

An anonymised copy of this response will be made publicly available on the ICB website. Please note the ICBs responses in [blue](#).

I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request updated information on the commissioning of ear wax removal services by NHS Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board.

Please could you provide me with answers to the questions below:

1. Does the integrated care board currently commission an ear wax removal service or services within primary care or community ear care services, available to all patients registered with GP practices within the integrated care board's boundary, as per NICE guidance?

The ICB does not commission simple ear wax removal for impacted wax alone as per our Excluded and Restricted Procedure Policy (ERP).

The ICB does commission community and acute ENT and Audiology services, who will remove wax if there is a clinical indication to do so as part of a pathway of care.

2. If a wax removal service in primary or community care is not currently available to all patients, is there a plan to set up such a service in future, or to review the need for this service? This includes the provision of ear wax removal services as part of Neighbourhood Health Services.

No the service has recently been reviewed in 2025 and is not due further review at this time.

3. If a wax removal service is commissioned, how can a patient access this service or services when it is considered clinically necessary and/or self-care advice, if appropriate, has been unsuccessful?

GPs can refer patients to the community or acute ENT services if there is a clinical indication such as infection or hearing loss.

4. If the integrated care board does commission a wax removal service within primary care or community care, please provide the name or names of commissioned providers and their address or addresses.

N/A as per above responses – a dedicated simple wax removal service is not commissioned by the ICB.

5. Does the integrated care board utilise [TympaHealth](#) in the provision of wax removal services, including within pharmacies, and if so, which types of healthcare professionals offer wax removal using TympaHealth devices or equipment?

N/A

6. Does the integrated care board have a policy or guidance on ear wax removal and/or referral pathways for its primary care providers for patients for whom the benefit of ear wax removal is clinically indicated? If the integrated care board has issued such guidance, please provide a copy.

staffsstoke.icb.nhs.uk/your-nhs-integrated-care-board/our-publications/governance-handbook/all-policies/commissioning/icb-excluded-and-restricted-procedures-policy-v3-1/?layout=file

7. Can you provide a copy of any guidance the integrated care board provides to patients and/or clinicians on the self-management of symptomatic ear wax?

[Earwax build-up - NHS](#)

8. How many complaints has the integrated care board received from patients about difficulty in accessing or inability to access a wax removal service in the last 24 months?

From 1 August 2023 – 31st August 2025, the ICB received 5 formal complaints regarding difficulty or inability to access ear wax removal.

Should you require any further information or clarification regarding this response please do not hesitate to contact us. If you are dissatisfied with the response, you are entitled to request an internal review which should be formally requested in writing and must be within two calendar months from the date this response was issued.

To request an internal review

You can request an internal review by contacting the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB FOI team by emailing; staffsstokeFOI@staffsstoke.icb.nhs.uk or by post to the address at the top of this letter within 40 working days of the initial response.

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a

decision unless you have exhausted the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board's FOI complaints procedure.

The ICO can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
www.ico.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Paul Winter
Associate Director of Corporate Governance