



Sunderland Carers Centre Guide To: Continuing Healthcare (CHC)

If someone has on-going significant and complex health needs, they may qualify for free care arranged and funded by the NHS.

The care package funded by the NHS is known as Continuing Healthcare (CHC). Continuing Health Care can be provided in a variety of settings outside of hospital, such as in a care home or in a person's own home.

Who is eligible?

Someone is not automatically entitled to NHS continuing healthcare because they have a certain diagnosis or condition. The decision around whether someone is eligible is based on the persons 'primary health care' needs and not condition. A person will need to have an assessment to decide (determine) whether they have a 'primary health care need' rather than social care need.

NHS Continuing healthcare is for adults. Children and young adults may receive a 'continuing care package' if they have needs arising from disability, accident or illness that cannot be met by existing universal or specialist services.

[Find out more about the children and young people's continuing care national framework on GOV.UK](#)

Being Assessed

Health and/or Social Care professionals who are involved in a person's care should identify when a person should be assessed for NHS continuing healthcare. However, as a carer you can approach the healthcare or social care professional to ask if they have considered an assessment. If the professional deems necessary, the assessment usually takes place over 2 stages. The first stage is what is known as 'the Checklist, which is usually carried out by a healthcare or social care professional. The second stage (if the checklist identifies a need) is a full multi-disciplinary Team (MDT) assessment where the CCG will use the 'Decision Support Tool' to help decide whether a person has a primary healthcare need.

Consent and Mental Capacity

Before starting the assessment process professionals involved must seek the persons consent to be considered for CHC, if they have capacity to make those decisions, and they can ask their family member or advocate to be involved. If a professional has concerns about someone's mental capacity to make an informed decision, they should use the Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice to determine capacity. If the person does not have capacity to make an informed decision, the professional involved should seek to find out if the person has appointed someone to act of their behalf via a Lasting Power of Attorney for Health & Welfare or if the Court of Protection has appointed a deputy for Health & Welfare. If these are not in place the person leading the assessment is responsible for making a 'best interests' decision on the persons behalf. In making a best interest decision the professional must consult with those who have a genuine interest in your welfare, which includes their unpaid carer and/or family members.

The Checklist

The checklist is a screening tool. The checklist does not show whether a person is eligible for continuing healthcare but indicates whether a full assessment is needed or not. The checklist can be applied as part as a hospital discharge, if someone lives in a care home, or living at home. The person involved or family member cannot complete a checklist, this must be done by a professional involved. The person being

assessed can ask for a family member to be involved. The checklist tool uses 12 'domains', which are areas of care need. These domains are: Breathing, Nutrition, Continence, Skin integrity, Mobility, Communication, Psychological and emotional needs, Cognition, Behaviour, Drug therapies and medication, altered states of consciousness and any other significant care needs to be taken into consideration. The checklist has 3 columns within each domain: **A, B, and C.**

A represents high levels of needs, **B** a moderate level of need and **C** no or low level of need. The professional carrying out the assessment completes the check list tool choosing the description that most closely matches the person's needs. The person will require to move to the 2nd stage full assessment if the checklist shows:

- Two or more domains rated as high **or**
- Five or more domains rated as moderate **or**
- One domain rated as high and four rated as moderate **or**
- High in one of the four domains with a priority level of need any level of needs in other domains

The professional(s) completing the checklist should record in writing the reasons for their decision, and sign and date it. The person should be given a copy of the completed checklist

[You can download a blank copy of the NHS continuing healthcare checklist from GOV.UK](#)

Full assessment for NHS Continuing Healthcare using the Decision Support Tool

Following a checklist that identifies a person need a full assessment, the Decision Support Tool will be used by the multi-disciplinary team carrying out the full assessment. The tool uses the same 12 care domains used in the checklist:

1. Behaviour: (such as aggression or lack of inhibition)
2. Cognition (understanding)
3. Psychological and emotional needs (such as anxiety or distressing hallucinations)
4. Communication (using communication technology, signing, braille etc)
5. Mobility (risks of falls, difficulties standing or walking)
6. Nutrition (such as difficulty swallowing)
7. Continence (help needed with Catheters, managing constipation etc)
8. Skin integrity (such as pressure sores or wounds)
9. Breathing (such as COPD)
10. Drug therapies and medication (help needed to manage medication)
11. Altered states of consciousness (such as coma)
12. Other significant care needs

A person's needs within each domain is assessed in addition to a person's needs in relation to:

- Nature
- Complexity
- Intensity
- Unpredictability

A person's needs are scored as being none, low, moderate, high, severe or priority

The Decision Support Tool says that the following would indicate a 'primary healthcare' need:

- Priority needs in any one of the four domains of behaviour, breathing, drug therapies and medication or altered states of consciousness
- Two or more severe needs across all the domains

Also depending on the combination of a person's needs a primary healthcare need may be indicated where:

- One domain is severe as well as a number of other domains depending on their nature, complexity,

- A number of domains with high and/or moderate needs depending on nature, complexity, intensity or unpredictability

The Decision Support Tool is only a guide and a person's needs, or combination of needs do not always add up to a 'primary healthcare' need. The assessment process is very complicated.

[You can download a blank copy of the NHS continuing healthcare decision support tool from GOV.UK](#)

Fast-track assessment for NHS continuing healthcare

People whose health is deteriorating quickly and nearing end of life can be considered for NHS Continuing Healthcare via the fast-track pathway, so that appropriate care and support package can be put in place as soon as possible. This is usually done within 48 hours.

NHS funded nursing care

If someone is not eligible for NHS continuing healthcare but is assessed as requiring nursing care in a care home, the person will be eligible for NHS-funded nursing care. This is a fixed rate payment made directly to a nursing home by the local NHS Clinical Commissioning Group to support the provision of nursing care by the homes registered nurse to those residents as assessed as eligible.

Further information can found at

[NHS-funded nursing care - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

Getting Help and Advice

The process involved in NHS continuing healthcare assessments can be complex. An organisation called **Beacon** gives free independent advice on NHS continuing healthcare. We recommend you contact this organisation for help and advice

Visit the [Beacon website](#) or call the free helpline on 0345 548 0300.

More detailed information can also be found by visiting the following web information

[What is NHS continuing healthcare? | Alzheimer's Society \(alzheimers.org.uk\)](#)

[NHS continuing healthcare - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

[NHS continuing healthcare | Free care for people with significant health needs | Age UK](#)

All information in the guide to is taken from:

When does the NHS pay for care (Alzheimer's Society)

NHS document RE: Continuing Healthcare

Age UK Fact Sheet NHS Continuing Healthcare and NHS funded Care