What is NHS Continuing Healthcare (NHS CHC)?

NHS CHC is a fully-funded package of care paid for by the NHS.

If eligible, the cost of the care required to meet your assessed health and associated social care needs is paid for by the NHS, including accommodation if it's part of your overall needs.

Who should be considered for NHS CHC?

If you are aged 18 or over and the majority of the care you need is focused on addressing and/or preventing health needs, arising from a disability, accident or illness, you may be considered to have a 'primary health need' and potentially be eligible for NHS CHC.

When should NHS CHC be considered?

Health and social care professionals should consider your eligibility in the following circumstances:

- Your physical or mental health deteriorates significantly.
- Your current care package is no longer meeting your needs.
- If you have new needs following a hospital stay.
- You require a nursing home to meet your needs.
- If you receive NHS Funded nursing care payment at your annual review.
- Your condition is rapidly deteriorating and may be entering a terminal phase.

Is NHS CHC only for people living in residential care?

If you are eligible for NHS CHC, it can be provided in any setting that is able to meet your assessed needs, whether that is your own home, a hospice, residential or nursing home or other suitable setting.

How do I get an assessment?

Ask your GP, social worker, district nurse, care home nurse or other health professional if you think you should be considered for NHS CHC. Or, you can ask your local Integrated Care Board (ICB) NHS CHC team directly about accessing an assessment. The ICB is responsible for commissioning NHS CHC.

To find the details of your ICB, see www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/find-your-local-integrated-care-board/ or contact your GP practice.

How long will the assessment take?

An eligibility decision should be made within 28 days of the ICB receiving a positive checklist. If it is going to take longer, ICB staff should inform you of this.

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What does an assessment look like?

A standard NHS CHC assessment has two stages:

- **Checklist** - acts as a screening tool. It is a standard form that in most circumstances a health or social care professional trained in its use should complete. This is used to decide whether you require a full assessment. If the checklist indicates that you should have a full assessment, you progress to the second stage.
- **Decision Support Tool (DST)** – a standardised form completed by a multidisciplinary team (a minimum of two professionals, ideally one from health services and one from social care), to determine whether you have a 'primary health need'. The outcome informs the eligibility recommendation to the ICB.

Both the checklist and the decision support tool look at your needs in 11 different areas or domains, with an additional one for 'other significant care needs' in the DST.

It's not always necessary to complete a checklist if it is clear that you need a full assessment from the outset.

You can get copies of the checklist and the DST online: www.gov.uk/government/collections/nhs-continuing-healthcare-and-nhs-funded-nursing-care

There is a different process if you are fast tracked for NHS CHC, see below.

What if I don't agree with the outcome of the assessment?

You can ask for a review of the decision. The letter informing you of the decision should explain how to do this. Otherwise contact your local ICB.

What is fast-track CHC?

Fast-track CHC is if you have a rapidly deteriorating condition that may be entering a terminal phase. It is intended to get a package of care in place as quickly as possible and means that there's no need for a checklist or DST to be completed. There's a separate form which must be completed by an 'appropriate clinician' - for example a GP.

How long will I have NHS CHC for?

If you're eligible either by going through the full assessment or the fast-track assessment, NHS CHC is not provided indefinitely. You should be reviewed within the first three months and then at least on an annual basis. NHS CHC can be withdrawn if you no longer meet the criteria of having a primary health need.

What is NHS-funded nursing care (FNC)?

If you are not eligible for NHS CHC but you have nursing needs, you may be entitled to FNC, which is a fixed weekly payment made to a nursing home who employ registered nurses to contribute to the cost of your nursing care.

Where can I get more information?

Age UK factsheet 20, NHS Continuing Healthcare and NHS-funded nursing care

Read online, download or call the Age UK Advice Line to order a free copy: **0800 678 1602**
Lines open 8am-7pm, everyday.

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