

Information sheet C11 – NHS Continuing Health Care (CHC)

If you need support with your daily life because of a disability or illness, you may be eligible either for “social care” support, which is funded under arrangements made by Northumberland County Council, or for NHS Continuing Health Care (NHS CHC) funded by the NHS. In Northumberland, the County Council manages arrangements for NHS CHC, so arrangements mostly work in the same way as they do for social care.

Support funded through NHS CHC may involve similar services to social care support, including personal care in your own home or accommodation in a care home. However there are no charges for NHS CHC, whereas most people have to make a financial contribution towards the cost of social care support (depending on their means).

You will only be eligible for NHS CHC if you have a “primary health need”. The Department of Health has published a booklet explaining how decisions are made about whether someone has a “primary health need”, based on the nature, complexity, intensity and unpredictability of their care needs. You can ask your care manager for a copy, or if you have access to the internet you can find it at www.tinyurl.com/CHCbooklet2013.

■ How do I find out if I might be eligible for NHS CHC?

If you are in hospital, and it becomes clear that you will need longer-term support after your discharge, or if you have support arranged by a care manager, the professionals working with you should consider whether you need an NHS CHC assessment. If you think that you might be eligible, but you are not sure whether this has been considered, please ask. If your care needs are fairly straightforward, they may tell you that you are not likely to be eligible, though you do still have a right to ask for an “NHS CHC checklist” to be completed to confirm whether there is a need to complete a full assessment of your needs.

If an NHS CHC checklist indicates that a full assessment is called for, a specialist nurse will consult all the health and social care professionals who are working with you and complete a “Decision Support Tool”. A recommendation on your eligibility for NHS CHC will then be made to Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and a panel led by the CCG will then consider whether you are eligible. We will let you know in writing what decision the panel has made.

■ What if I think the decision is wrong?

The specialist nurse who coordinates your assessment should discuss the information with you before the Decision Support Tool is submitted, so usually the recommendation and decision should not be a surprise. However if you think something has gone wrong, please contact our Complaints Team, by phoning (01670) 62 88 88, or by writing to:

CHC Complaints, FREEPOST RLTX-LBXU-SHBS, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF
Email: CHCcomplaints@northumbria.nhs.uk

If you are still not happy with our response, we can let you know how to contact NHS England to ask for an independent review of the decision.

■ What support will I get if I am eligible for NHS CHC?

We will aim to make sure that you have all the support which you need to protect your health, safety and dignity. We will try to achieve the outcomes that most matter to you. However we are only able to fund support which is necessary to meet your assessed needs, and we do have to consider the requirement to make efficient use of public resources. Information sheet C3 explains how we decide what support to provide – we make decisions in the same way for NHS CHC as for social care, though some of the *kinds* of support which you need may be different (for instance some of your support may have to be provided by qualified health professionals).

■ How much of my support will be funded by NHS CHC?

If you are assessed as eligible for NHS CHC, all of the support that you need will be paid for by the NHS, including support such as home care or care home fees which could otherwise have been provided as social care.

When people who are *not* assessed as eligible for NHS CHC have a level of needs which is close to the level where NHS CHC would be approved, we sometimes agree a shared arrangement, in which part of the cost of your support will be paid for by the NHS and part by the County Council. In this case, you may have to contribute part (or all) of the cost of the social care support yourself, depending on your financial means.

■ When might my eligibility for NHS CHC change?

Whether your support is funded as social care or as NHS CHC, we will aim to review your needs and support arrangements at least every twelve months, and if there is a significant change in your needs we will carry out a review sooner than that.

Each time we review your needs, we will consider again whether you may be eligible for NHS CHC, or if your support is already funded as NHS CHC, whether you are still eligible. If we think your eligibility may have changed, we will go through the same process that is described above, to make sure that our decision takes account of all relevant issues.

■ Can I take control of my own support?

Yes. We will give you a “personal health budget”, and you can have as much control over this as you wish. Three options are available:

- You can have a direct payment to pay for your care and support, paid into an account which you manage
- You can choose someone else to receive a direct payment and manage it for you
- You can ask us to manage the arrangements for you – but still have the opportunity to tell us how you would like the available funding to be used

If you choose one of the direct payment options, we will agree a support plan with you, setting out how you will use the money to meet your assessed needs in a safe and effective way. We will need to check that you are using the money in the ways that your support plan says you will, but you will be in control. Information sheet C7 has more information about direct payments.