



NHS Continuing Healthcare for Children

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What is NHS Continuing Healthcare?

A Continuing Healthcare package will be required when a child or young person has needs arising from disability, accident or illness that cannot be met by existing universal or specialist services alone.

Some children and young people (up to 18 years old), may have very complex health needs. These may be the result of congenital conditions, long-term or life-limiting or life-threatening conditions, disability, or the after-effects of serious illness or injury.

These needs may be so complex, that they cannot be met by the services which are routinely available from GP practices, hospitals or in the community. A package of additional health support may be needed. This additional package of care has come to be known as Continuing Healthcare and is funded by health. The process of obtaining this care is outlined below.

How will eligibility for NHS Continuing Healthcare be assessed?

A referral can be made by any professional involved in a child's care for example a nurse, social worker, doctor.

1. Initial screening with the Checklist Tool

The Checklist Tool is used to decide whether the child or young person should be referred for a full assessment. It helps health and social care professionals to work out whether the child or young person's care needs may be of a level or type that indicates eligibility for NHS Continuing Healthcare.

The Checklist Tool is usually completed by a Social Worker, Nurse, Doctor, or other qualified healthcare professionals who assesses health and Social Care needs. For example:

- a Social Worker could do the screening when carrying out a community care assessment

If the Checklist Tool shows that a child or young person may be eligible for NHS Continuing Health Care, the person who completed it (Social Worker, Nurse Doctor) will contact the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) who will decide if the person should take part in a full assessment.

The CCG will write to the individual to confirm whether or not they will be referred for a full assessment.

2. The Assessment

The **assessment** is led by a children and young people's health assessor nominated by the CCG. The CCG are organisations who are responsible for most of the hospital and community NHS services in local areas. They will draw on the advice of other professionals. At this point, they may do a pre-assessment to determine whether or not a full assessment is necessary.

There are four key areas of evidence that should be considered in the assessment:

- The preferences of the child or young person and their family;
- A holistic assessment of the needs of the child or young person and their family;
- Reports and risk assessments from a Multidisciplinary Team or evidence collated during the Education, Health and Care plan assessment, and;
- The Decision Support Tool for children and young people.

The outcome of the assessment is a recommendation from the assessor as to whether or not the child or young person has Continuing Healthcare needs. Diagnosis of a particular disease or condition is not in itself a determinant of a need for Continuing Healthcare. A child or young person may have a rare condition which is difficult to diagnose, but will still have support needs.

3. The Decision Support Tool

The Decision Support Tool for children and young people is intended to bring assessment information together in a concise, consistent way. It is designed to help ensure that all relevant needs are assessed and captured.

The DST will focus on the following areas of care:

- Breathing
- Eating and drinking
- Mobility
- Continence and elimination
- Skin and tissue viability
- Communication
- Drug therapies and medicines
- Psychological and emotional needs
- Seizures
- Challenging behaviour

4. Decision Making—Multi Agency Forum

All of the information gathered at the assessment is presented to a Multi Agency Forum who consider the evidence and the assessor's recommendation and reach a decision to whether or not the child or young person has a Continuing Healthcare need.

5. The arrangement of provision (package of care)

The child or young person and their family (and any relevant organisations, such as the local authority) are informed of the decision. Following agreement on the package of care the CCG and (where relevant), the local authority make the necessary arrangements to deliver the package of care as soon as possible.

The package of care will be under regular review to ensure the developing child or young person's needs continue to be supported.

About this factsheet

This factsheet tells you about the NHS Continuing Healthcare Decision Support Tool and how to get one. We published this factsheet in May 2016. We will check the information is up to date in May 2018.



You can download all of our factsheets from

www.hartlepool.gov.uk/childrensfactsheets