

NHS Continuing Healthcare—The Decision Support Tool (DST) and how to get one—Adults

» What is NHS Continuing Healthcare?

NHS Continuing Healthcare is the name given to a package of care that is arranged and funded solely by the NHS for individuals who are not in hospital and have been assessed as having a 'primary health need'.

» How will eligibility for NHS Continuing Healthcare be assessed?

There are two stages to the assessment process. The first is to have an assessment with a health or social care professional using a screening tool called the Checklist Tool. If after completing this tool it looks like the individual might be eligible for NHS Continuing Healthcare, the second stage is a full assessment using a tool called the Decision Support Tool.

The individual should be fully involved in the assessment and decision-making process. Their views about their needs for care and support must be taken into account. If the individual is struggling to explain their views, or would like help doing this, a friend/relative or advocate can help.

1. Initial screening with the Checklist Tool

The Checklist Tool is used to decide whether the individual should be referred for a full assessment. It helps health and social care professionals to work out whether the 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 the individual 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 full assessment with the Decision Support Tool—Multi Disciplinary Meeting

If it is decided that a full assessment is appropriate, this will be carried out by a multi disciplinary team made up of a minimum of two different Health or Care professionals who are already involved in the individual's care so that can build an overall picture of need. This is usually done as a meeting and good practice would ensure that the person and relevant advocate are present. The CCG will arrange the assessment. In some cases more detailed specialist assessments from other professionals.

The DST will focus on the following areas of care:

- behaviour
- cognition (understanding)
- communication
- psychological/emotional needs
- mobility (ability to move around)
- nutrition (food and drink)
- continence
- skin (including wounds and ulcers)
- breathing
- symptom control through drug therapies and medication
- altered states of consciousness
- other significant needs

For individuals who need an urgent package of care because their condition is deteriorating rapidly, the Fast Track Tool may be used instead. This enables the CCG to arrange for care to be provided as quickly as possible.

» 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.



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