



Make the application process for NHS Continuing Healthcare easier

NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC) is a package of care for adults with significant health needs. Applying for CHC, which is arranged and funded by the NHS, involves a person being assessed for their eligibility on factors such as their breathing, mobility, nutrition and psychological needs.

The findings of our survey in early 2022 revealed people prepare carefully for a CHC assessment but don't always receive key information, and often find the process complicated and challenging.

Kirstie Jackman, Head of Operations and Clinical Quality for Continuing Healthcare (CHC) and Funded Nursing Care (FNC) at BaNES, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board, explains the changes.



You said

We need more support with the application process.

What's changed?

"One of the first actions in response to the feedback from the survey will be to develop an Application Process document. This will provide the applicant with the timeline and stages of the CHC application process and will have a Frequently Asked Questions section to provide further information on roles, responsibilities and CHC funding.

"We will be engaging with people who have been through the process for their feedback to ensure the document is fit for purpose and answers the questions in terminology that is understood by applicants."



You said

Please make sure we get the information we need.

What's changed?

"We will call first to check if you would like to receive information by post or digitally. Most communications about CHC are now sent electronically, but if you received a letter about the application process in the post then you will get a printed leaflet.

"We will be asking people with lived experience to help us draft letters to make them more accessible and easier to understand."



[Find out more at healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk](https://www.healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk)



You said

Help us understand the process and what to expect.

What's changed?

"The survey showed that people found the application process easier if they had a social worker to help them. Most people will have a social worker but those who don't will be asked if they would like the CHC Assessor to help them or to answer any questions.

"We're looking at training for social care practitioners, voluntary partners, care home partners and hospices to enable people to have well-informed conversations from the start, which will help them on their care journey at a time when they're at their most vulnerable."



You said

Keep us informed about where we are in the process.

What's changed?

"We recognise that consistent and regular communication throughout the application process is needed. We've put procedures in place to improve the way we're keeping people updated - but more work is needed.

"We're working with NHS Digital to look at ways to create a database where patients can log in to see where they are in the application process. We're continuing to update people regularly by phone, email and letter but will be looking to move to a completely digital process in the future."



What's next?

"We will continue to seek feedback from everyone who has been through the application process to facilitate ongoing learning and improvements."

Healthwatch Wiltshire will continue to monitor this service.