



leading you through the maze  
of continuing healthcare

Introducing the  
National NHS  
Continuing  
Healthcare  
Information and  
Advice Service



# Introducing the National NHS Continuing Healthcare Information and Advice Service

Beacon has been working in partnership with NHS England since December 2014 to pilot a new specialist service for people in the South of England who need independent information and advice in relation to NHS Continuing Healthcare. Following the successful completion of this pilot, Beacon has now been commissioned to expand the information and advice service across England.

From November 2015 members of the public will be able to access independent information and advice to help them to understand the eligibility criteria and navigate the assessment and review processes. This service is supported by a consortia of leading voluntary sector organisations including Age UK, Parkinson's UK and the Spinal Injuries Association.

Information and advice is accessible in the form of free and comprehensive written guidance, and individuals are also able to access up to 90 minutes of free advice with a trained NHS continuing healthcare adviser.

During advice surgeries, individuals will have an opportunity to discuss any element of their assessment, request for a review of an eligibility decision and care plan within the scope of the National Framework for NHS Continuing Healthcare and NHS-funded Nursing Care (National Framework), NHS England Operating Model for NHS Continuing Healthcare (Operating Model) and Beacon's written guidance with their adviser, as well as general information about eligibility criteria.

## Aims of the Service

### The information and advice service aims to:

- Provide individuals who feel they may be eligible for NHS Continuing Healthcare with the information they need to help them to understand key principles of the National Framework, the eligibility criteria for NHS Continuing Healthcare and equip them to contribute fully to their assessment.
- Raise awareness so that individuals who may be entitled to an assessment understand how to request a referral and what to expect at each stage of the process.
- Help individuals to understand how their needs have been assessed against the criteria so that they are able to make informed choices about whether and how to request a review of their eligibility decision.
- Help individuals engage effectively with local resolution procedures and if necessary come to Review Panels prepared with the most relevant information.
- Provide CCGs, Local Authorities and other stakeholders with a free and trusted source of specialist information and advice to which they are able to refer clients and service users.
- Support individuals to engage fully with the care planning process once eligible in a way that maximises control and ensures their preferences are reflected in the way their assessed needs are met.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. How does the Information and Advice service work?

The service provides individuals with information and advice in two specific areas:

- Two-tiered remote advice surgeries: time-limited specialist advice delivered via telephone, Skype and/or email
- Written guidance in the form of Beacon's Navigational Toolkit provided via digital access points or as a hard copy

Individuals are entitled to receive a copy of Beacon's Navigational Toolkit in the format they find most accessible, and up to 90 minutes of Tier 2 verbal advice.

Tier 1 advisers will provide up to 15 minutes of basic information and guidance on matters such as how to request an assessment or review, and Tier 2 advisers will provide up to 90 minutes of in-depth advice specific to the individual's situation. Individuals will be able to access their 90 minutes of advice across multiple surgeries if required.

In addition to this, Beacon is in the process of developing a set of short films which aim to provide individuals with clear and accessible audio-visual information about the key principles of assessment and appeal.

Access to the written guidance is available 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. The remote verbal advice service operates 9am – 5pm on weekdays excluding bank holidays.

## 2. Who is entitled to access the service?

The service is open to individuals in England, their families or representatives at any stage of their NHS Continuing Healthcare journey, from initial pre-Checklist enquiries through to the latter stages of the appeal process.

## 3. What type of information and advice will you provide?

Information and advice is provided on any area within the scope of the National Framework for NHS Continuing Healthcare and NHS-funded Nursing

Care 2012 (revised) and any future editions, related guidance, and on the topics covered by Beacon's Navigational Toolkit. This includes the eligibility criteria, key principles, assessments, care planning, joint packages of care and appeals.

Where it has been identified that individuals may benefit from information and advice about matters related to their NHS Continuing Healthcare query (e.g. accessing benefits or carer support), they will be signposted to partner organisations as appropriate.

## 4. How do I refer my clients/service users to the service?

Formal referrals are not necessary. Individuals simply need to contact Beacon on 0345 548 0300 or alternatively submit a 'Talk to Us' request through our website, [www.beaconchc.co.uk](http://www.beaconchc.co.uk). Either access points will enable individuals to speak with a Tier 1 adviser or to schedule a Tier 2 advice surgery. Beacon's website also contains a wealth of information about NHS Continuing Healthcare and can be accessed at any time of the day.

## 5. What is the best way for me to inform my clients/service users about the service?

Beacon and NHS England would like any individual who feels that they may need independent information and advice around NHS Continuing Healthcare to be informed of the information and advice service, and CCGs, Local Authorities and voluntary sector organisations are key to raising awareness of the service.

CCGs may choose to inform individuals when their assessors first come into contact with a new service user, or alternatively reference the service in their eligibility decision letters as a free source of independent advice. Other stakeholders (for example voluntary sector organisations) may wish to inform individuals who contact them with a continuing healthcare enquiry.

We have produced posters and flyers explaining what the service is about which you are welcome to download from our website and distribute as appropriate. Please visit [www.beaconchc.co.uk/resources](http://www.beaconchc.co.uk/resources).

## 6. Who are Beacon?

Beacon is committed to providing free or low-cost representation for families who are struggling to navigate the NHS Continuing Healthcare assessment or appeal process. We have evolved from a service offered by Age UK Oxfordshire where a team of specialist advisers and advocates have supported thousands of individuals to understand their assessments and the CCG decision making processes, make informed decisions about their care and prepare clear, structured and evidence-based cases for local resolution processes and Independent Review Panels.

Over the past 12 years our team has been commissioned by Local Authorities (e.g. West Berkshire County Council), Strategic Health Authorities (e.g. the former NHS South-Central) and NHS trusts (e.g. NHS Oxfordshire) to provide trusted independent advice, casework and advocacy, and to support the NHS with training. Our aim is to ensure that every individual who may be entitled to NHS Continuing Healthcare receives fair, in-depth and independent advice about every aspect of the NHS Continuing Healthcare process and criteria. We firmly believe that understanding the system empowers people to make informed choices that are in their best interests.

Beacon operates as an independent social enterprise and any profits made from its chargeable casework are donated back to charity to support vital work with older people.

## 7. How can I be certain of the quality of Beacon's information and advice?

Beacon's team have a long history of supporting the NHS with advice, training and independent scrutiny of NHS Continuing Healthcare procedures. We have worked closely with NHS England on the development of the NHS Continuing Healthcare E-Learning programme and supported NHS trusts and the voluntary sector with multiple training initiatives over the past 12 years. These include supporting IRP training for the former NHS South-Central SHA, PUPOC process training for NHS Oxfordshire and

NHS Berkshire West, full National Framework training for various integrated assessment teams and CHC advocacy training at Westminster Briefings.

It is crucial to the success of this pilot that the information and advice provided by Beacon's team is independent and accurately reflects both the letter and spirit of National Guidance. Beacon has committed to working in partnership with NHS England to ensure that CCGs, Local Authorities and other stakeholders can have confidence in the quality of the information and advice we provide. To do this we have established a quality assurance programme which includes the following:

- Working closely with the NHS Continuing Healthcare National Policy Advisory Group to quality-check our verbal and written advice through the scrutiny of literature and case studies
- Anonymous monitoring of Tier 2 advice surgeries
- Gathering feedback from service users and referrers

Over the course of the pilot Beacon conducted telephone surveys to find out how individuals who contacted Beacon rated the quality of the information and advice they had received. In our most recent survey 93% of respondents said they would recommend Beacon to other people who needed independent information and advice about NHS Continuing Healthcare.

## 8. Is there a conflict between the free information and advice service and Beacon's chargeable services?

Having realised the need for ethical and affordable national representation, Beacon was set up to meet the needs of individuals who require specialist advocacy and casework at a reasonable cost to the individual in those areas where there is currently no specialist free advocacy available. As a social enterprise we are committed to providing affordable services.

Our fees for advocacy are comparatively low, we aim to provide a realistic and honest appraisal of individuals' cases and we never tie individuals into long-term contracts. Our business model is clear, simple and transparent for all to see in our literature.

It is important that the free information and advice service is kept separate to our chargeable advocacy services so that individuals are clear about what is free and what is chargeable. In order to maintain these boundaries, we apply the following principles:

- Free information and advice enquiries are separated from advocacy enquiries at source and handled by a separate team. Individuals will not come into contact with the chargeable services team unless they request to be transferred.
- In all online and physical literature where we talk about the information and advice service we make it clear that this service is funded by NHS England and is separate to our private advocacy services.
- Advisers will not refer to Beacon's chargeable services unless asked specifically by the individual about other help or support that may be available to them. In that scenario the adviser will also inform the individual how to find out about alternative advocacy services which may also be available.

## **9. How do you work with other NHS Continuing Healthcare stakeholders?**

We are proud to be working in partnership with a number of major voluntary sector organisations.

In addition to these partnerships Beacon is also a member of the Society of Later Life Advisers, Social Enterprise UK, the Institute of Paralegals and the NHS Continuing Healthcare Stakeholder group.

We recognise the importance of working closely with partner organisations who share our values and may have specialisms outside of Beacon's area of expertise. We commit to working alongside these organisations to ensure that the individuals we come into contact with have the opportunity to access specialist advice and support through referral to partner organisations where appropriate.

## **10. How can I find out more about the service and provide feedback?**

We very much welcome and encourage feedback that will enable us to continue to shape the information and advice service and we have used the feedback we received during the course of the pilot to inform the development of the national service. For more information or to provide feedback please use the following contact details:

**Beacon**

**Tel: 0345 548 0300**

**Email: [feedback@beaconhc.co.uk](mailto:feedback@beaconhc.co.uk)**



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## Further Contact

For further independent information, advice and advocacy regarding NHS continuing healthcare, contact Beacon at:

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1600 John Smith Drive  
Oxford Business Park South  
Oxford  
OX4 2JY  
0345 548 0300  
[www.beaconhc.co.uk](http://www.beaconhc.co.uk)