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Adults with serious healthcare needs becoming less likely to receive CHC funding, NHS figures suggest

- Total number of people applying for standard CHC funding still below pre-pandemic levels
- Proportion assessed as eligible also trending downwards to a low of 22% in Q3 2021/22
- Three quarters of over 45s (75%) have never heard of NHS CHC

Adults with serious healthcare needs are becoming less likely to receive funding from the NHS than before the pandemic, latest official figures suggest.

The figures from **NHS England**¹ show that the total number of people applying by the standard route for NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC) was 14,636 in the three months to December last year, below pre-pandemic levels. The 12,542 assessments completed remains below pre-pandemic levels.

The proportion being assessed as eligible is also gradually trending downwards to a low of 22% of assessments.

Period	Number of new Standard NHS CHC referrals	Number of Standard NHS CHC assessments completed	Number assessed as eligible	
	Total	Total	Total	%
2021/22 Q3	14,636	12,542	2,813	22%
2021/22 Q2	15,178	12,916	3,178	25%
2021/22 Q1	16,001	13,989	3,422	24%
2020/21 Q4	17,215	15,135	3,772	25%
2020/21 Q3	15,612	13,091	3,309	25%
2020/21 Q2	8,608	2,375	675	28%
2020/21 Q1	6,870	920	296	32%
2019/20 Q4	16,538	12,658	3,061	24%
2019/20 Q3	17,985	14,594	3,508	24%
2019/20 Q2	18,198	15,048	3,586	24%
2019/20 Q1	17,889	15,361	3,652	24%
2018/19 Q4	18,140	15,252	3,598	24%
2018/19 Q3	17,726	15,803	3,855	24%
2018/19 Q2	18,763	16,356	4,045	25%
2018/19 Q1	18,846	16,770	4,465	27%
2017/18 Q4	18,831	15,567	4,015	26%
2017/18 Q3	18,210	15,781	4,074	26%

Stephen Lowe, group communications director at retirement specialist Just Group, said that the figures suggest a system on the recovery from the pandemic but one which is also becoming less generous. However, he said it was important to shine a light on the Continuing Healthcare route which is generally poorly understood but could save people who are eligible many thousands of pounds in care costs.

“NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC) is one of the best kept secrets in State support. Our research² found three-in-four over 45s (75%) had never heard of NHS CHC, while a further 15% have heard of CHC but don’t know any of the details.

“It remains a key part of a health and social care system that people often don’t understand or even think about until they are faced with an urgent care need for themselves or loved ones. CHC can cover care costs for those with a ‘primary health need’ in a hospital, care home or your own home, but the

application process is complex as it requires an initial checklist to be completed by a healthcare professional or social worker followed by a full assessment.

“This can deter people from applying for NHS CHC or for NHS-funded Nursing Care and few people receive either. But given how valuable CHC can be in helping to finance ongoing care, it is important people know they have a right to ask for a qualified healthcare professional, such as a GP, care home or district nurse or a social worker, to fill in a checklist which is the first step towards an assessment.”

Enquiries

Media

Stephen Lowe, Group Communications Director

Lucy Grubb, Head of Media & PR

Telephone: +44 (0) 1737 827 301
press.office@wearejust.co.uk

Temple Bar Advisory

Alex Child-Villiers
William Barker
Sam Livingstone

Telephone: +44 (0) 20 7183 1190

Notes to Editors:

About the research

1: NHS, NHS Continuing Healthcare and NHS-funded Nursing Care:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/nhs-chc-fnc/>

2. **Just Group**, online survey among 1,000 adults aged 45 years and older in England and Northern Ireland, conducted 7-13 April 2021 by Opinium

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