

Health Scrutiny Committee, 14 October 2015

Information Bulletin

The Information Bulletin is a document that is made available to the public with the published agenda papers. It can include update information requested by the Committee as well as information that a service considers should be made known to the Committee.

This Information Bulletin covers the following items:

NHS Continuing Healthcare

This item updates members on progress to address an identified backlog in assessing individuals for continuing healthcare in Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG and West Suffolk CCG.

BACKGROUND

“NHS Continuing Healthcare” means a package of care arranged and funded solely by the health service in England for a person aged 18 or over to meet physical or mental health needs which have arisen as a result of disability, accident or illness. The NHS becomes the responsible authority following a comprehensive multidisciplinary assessment of an individual’s care needs, the development of a care plan and a determination whether the individual has a “primary health need”. When an individual meets this criterion the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) becomes responsible for arranging and funding a package of care to meet the individual’s ongoing care needs and for the subsequent annual review and case management to ensure that the individual’s care needs are being met. As this is deemed a health service, the individual cannot be charged for the care package. All adults in any care setting have access to the assessment process.

Statutory duties in relation to NHS CHC services apply to CCG, local authorities and NHS hospitals therefore the statutory bodies need to work collaboratively and systemically to deliver integrated assessment and care management pathways for individuals. There is a national framework and practice guidance which prescribes the processes and standards of practice expected. NHS England has recently added CHC framework compliance to the CCG Assurance Framework.

The CCG’s responsibilities include:

- Ensuring fair access and compliance with the national framework
- Delivering or commissioning the comprehensive assessment process to determine an individual’s care needs, the care interventions required and whether the individual has a primary health need.
- Making the decision whether an individual is eligible for NHS CHC.
- If eligible, for commissioning a care package either supporting an individual to live at home or providing a place in a residential or nursing home. Individuals are

entitled to have a personal health budget if they prefer this approach to commissioning and managing their care package.

- Ongoing case management.
- Regular review of the individual's care needs to ensure that care provision meets their needs.
- Providing a local dispute resolution procedure for those individuals who are not eligible and who wish to dispute the decision.

KEY POINTS

1. A backlog in delivering NHS CHC assessments has developed over several years. Increased referrals for assessments have created a bubble of unmet need as the CCGs have not increased staffing levels to keep up with higher activity levels. The assessment process for each individual also needs work to make sure cases can be assessed within 28 calendar days of receipt of the referral. This is a national framework standard.
2. In June 2015, the CCG conducted a review of the service it delivers and identified shortcomings in its operating model that have contributed to the backlog. It has established four improvement goals The goals are:
 - a. Improved patient and carer experience
 - b. National framework compliant practice – consistently delivered
 - c. Standardised, lean processes
 - d. Sustainable, skilled workforce
3. The CCG has embarked on a significant programme of work to transform its service and clear the backlog of assessments. The CCG Accountable Officer is leading the programme reporting directly to the Clinical Executive Scrutiny Committee. An interim CHC Programme Director has been appointed lead the CHC team through this period of significant change, develop a backlog clearance plan and deliver a new operating model for CHC assessments that will provide sustainable achievement of a 28 day full considerations process
4. The improvement projects include:
 - a. Process redesign projects for the assessment processes, care package commissioning, case reviews and dispute processes.
 - b. Building a team that has the capability to meet the demand - including a recruitment drive for interim and substantive clinical and non-clinical roles; extended office opening hours to facilitate evening and weekend working; and a restructuring of the department.
 - c. Electronic access to clinical records and improved reporting of activity and performance
 - d. Improved joint working with social services about the provision of care assessments, home care package commissioning; care home package commissioning and supply of equipment.
 - e. Backlog clearance
5. The backlog project is underway with the planned clearance by 30 June 2016, subject to timely and successful recruiting of interim and permanent staff; access

to social workers to conduct care assessments; and timely access to clinical records to enable the assessment to be progressed within the 28 day standard.

6. A project team has been created from existing staff, to be expanded as new staff become available during October and November, and commenced the case reviews starting with the high risk assessed cases.

NEXT STEPS

This is a significant piece of work for the CCGs, which will be reported to both governing bodies regularly.

CONTACT DETAILS

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