

Project Summary

Castle Point and Rochford CCG - Public information events regarding changes to the Continuing Healthcare threshold policy

Introduction

This is a report to summarise the activities of a 4 week public information project commissioned by Castle Point and Rochford Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) regarding changes to the threshold policy for future Continuing Healthcare (CHC) patients.

Enable East is an Essex-based independent and not-for-profit NHS organisation that helps deliver projects across the NHS and social care. It was commissioned by Castle Point and Rochford CCG to help them inform the public about future changes to the threshold policy for new patients eligible for CHC.

Castle Point and Rochford CCG provides CHC packages to approximately 550 people. The CCG has seen an increase in people needing CHC linked to an aging population and higher numbers of people with complex needs. With more people eligible for CHC, the CCG has reviewed the way that CHC packages will be funded in the future, to ensure that it can still provide the best possible care for everyone in a more fair and equitable way than the existing system.

From the 1st April 2016, changes to CHC mean that care packages will be more responsive to individual needs, offering more flexibility than the existing system. Under the new policy, CHC packages will focus on an individual's need, bringing together a range of support that best meets the needs of the patient rather than pre-packaged support.

The CCG commissioned a public information project with two key objectives:

- To inform the public of the changes that would affect new claimants of CHC
- To inform those already in receipt of a CHC package they would not be affected by the policy change

Engagement tactics

The CCG asked Enable East to develop communications that would provide the public with clear, easy to understand information about the proposed changes and also provide opportunities for the public to attend local information events.

Our communications approach included:

- A printed stakeholder information document to convey key messages
- An electronic flipbook of the stakeholder information document to be used on the CCG website and through their online communications
- A slide deck presentation to be used at public information events
- Four newspaper adverts placed in the Yellow Advertiser and the Southend and Rochford Echo
- Four public information events held in the 4 CCG districts of Rayleigh, Canvey Island, Rochford and Hadleigh.

Reaching the public

A total of 13 people attended the 4 public information events. Of those attendees, 5 were representatives from community based information/support services who attended so they could share the information with their service users and 7 were members of the public.

The events were held in community venues, each lasting 3 hours from mid-morning to early afternoon.

Date	Venue
Monday, 25 th January	The Paddocks Community Centre, Canvey Island
Friday, 5 th February	The Women's Institute Hall, Rochford
Friday, 12 th February	The Salvation Army Hall, Hadleigh
Wednesday, 17 th February	The Baptist Church, Rayleigh

The events were publicised in the local media and through other CCG communications. They were advertised as drop-in events that people could 'pop along to' at any time during the 3 hour period.

Public feedback

During the 4 events the following questions were asked:

Can an individual change the provider(s) delivering their CHC package?

Question	Answer
Is there advice and guidance available to support an individual through the CHC assessment process?	The CHC Nurse assessor should be able to provide information and support throughout the assessment process.
Is the CHC assessment carried out locally?	The CHC team will predominately be working within the CP&R area.
Is there an appeals process if an individual is not happy with the decision?	There is an appeals process, which starts with 'local resolution, and moves through CHC panel and then to an independent panel review. All of this should be explained as part of the assessment process. However, hopefully, you will have been involved with the assessment, so will be part of the decision making.
What does CHC funding pay for?	CHC funding is to provide care and support based upon identified 'needs', although this is not quite the same as 'wants'
Is there advice and guidance available to help an individual manage their CHC personal budget?	There is opportunity for people to manage their own CHC budget, if they would prefer. Support and guidance will be available
How long have personal healthcare budgets been available within CHC?	There have been Personal Health budget Pilots since 2013, however, since April 2014 anyone eligible for CHC now has the right to request a Personal Health Budget.
Who sets the criteria for the CHC assessment?	The National CHC criteria were established by the department of Health in 2007 and were updated in 2009 and again in 2012.
Who are CHC assessors answerable to?	The Nurse assessors for Castle Point & Rochford CCG will be accountable to the Chief Nurse; Tricia D'Orsi
Is there an opportunity to be reassessed for CHC?	People can move in and out of eligibility, as it is based upon the individual needs. If someone has previously been assessed as not eligible and their needs have changed, they would be entitled to request another assessment. Where someone is assessed as eligible, they should be reassessed no later than 3 months after initial assessment and thereafter, no less frequently than once a year. However, depending upon the identified needs, CHC can be reassessed more frequently, if it is appropriate.

How often is a CHC package reviewed?	As set out above
How long does it take to reach a decision from the point of initial referral?	Generally, we would try to reach a decision within the Nationally stipulated 28 days. However, this can vary for individuals, if there is a need to obtain specialist reports etc.
Does the CHC assessment go to a panel for decision?	As much as possible, where there is a clear recommendation and the in-house validation confirms the recommendation is appropriate for the identified needs, it does not need to go to panel
Can an individual change the provider(s) delivering their CHC package?	Wherever possible, we would try to maintain continuity, so would try to resolve and issues internally. However, it is completely possible for care to be transferred to another provider, as long as they have capacity and the required skills to manage the care.
If a number of individuals in receipt of CHC personal budgets got together, could they commission shared services?	There is no reason why people in receipt of a Personal Health Budget cannot jointly commission some aspects of their care.
Are the eligibility criteria for CHC changing?	The eligibility criteria are nationally established. If there were to be any changes, this would be as a result of Department of Health changes.

Conclusion

This public information project involved a range of different methods to reach people to inform them about the changes to policy. The attendance to the public information events was low but was in line with our experience of running similar events on this topic. Overall the methods to communicate the policy changes to the public were diverse and enabled the CCG to reach people through the local media, online, through leaflet drops and face to face, thereby offering numerous opportunities for the public to be made aware of the forthcoming changes.

As a result of the public information events, people had the opportunity to voice their questions and concerns not only about the proposed changes but also about CHC in general. As a result the CCG can gauge the common questions the public have in relation to the eligibility, assessment and management of continuing healthcare packages. This could be useful when developing further communications in relation to CHC, such as a FAQ leaflet for new claimants.