

Reference:	FOI.20099.26
Subject:	Fast-Track Continuing Healthcare (CHC)
Date of Request:	2 April 2026

Requested:

1. In 2025, how many referrals of any form were made to the ICB for Fast-Track Continuing Healthcare (CHC)?
2. How many of the referrals in question 1 were rejected as inappropriate by the ICB?
3. Please explain, in general terms, the main reasons for which referrals were deemed inappropriate
4. How many of the referrals in question 1 were withdrawn/closed by
 - a. The referrer, or
 - b. The patient/their family.
5. How many of the referrals in question 1 were withdrawn/closed as a result of the patient dying before any funding was put in place?
6. In 2025, how many referrals were accepted for Fast-Track Continuing Healthcare?
7. In 2025, what was the average timeframe - for Fast-Track CHC referrals that were accepted - between receipt of the completed Fast Track Pathway Tool and the care package being commissioned. Please provide the answer in hours where possible, or otherwise in days.

If data for calendar years cannot be provided, please instead give the average timeframe for the most relevant period for which data can be compiled (for example, December 2025).

8. In 2025, what was the average timeframe - for Fast-Track CHC referrals that were accepted - between receipt of the completed Fast Track Pathway Tool and the funding for the care package being put in place. Please provide the answer in days.

If data for calendar years cannot be provided, please instead give the average timeframe for the most relevant period for which data can be compiled (for example, December 2025).

9. Please can you explain the decision-making process for Fast-Track Continuing Healthcare referrals, giving details of all criteria involved in the process between receiving the referral and commissioning support?
10. As part of this, please could you explain:
 - a. The criteria you use for who can make a Fast-Track CHC referral (for example, are non-NHS medical professionals, care home nurses and/or GPs able to do this?)
 - b. Whether Fast-Track Continuing Healthcare referrals made by an appropriate clinician are subject to further checks by professionals working for, or on behalf of, the ICB before being granted? Please explain this process if so.
 - c. Whether a patient referred by an appropriate clinician is required to meet further criteria, such as having a primary health need, in order to qualify for Fast-Track support?

Response:

1. Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) confirms that six hundred and seventy-seven (677) referrals were received by the UHB for Fast-Track CHC, during the 2025 calendar year.
2. The UHB confirms that thirty-two (32) of the referrals received were deemed inappropriate, during the 2025 calendar year.
3. The UHB confirms that the main reason for the referrals being deemed inappropriate, was that the individual did not meet the fast-track eligibility criteria.
4. The UHB does not hold the information exactly as requested. However, the UHB can confirm that seven (7) referrals were withdrawn or closed by the referrer.
5. The UHB confirms that twenty-three (23) of the referrals received were closed due to the patient passing away, prior to funding being put in place.
6. The UHB confirms that six hundred and forty-five (645) referrals were accepted for Fast-Track CHC, during the 2025 calendar year.
7. The UHB confirms that the average timeframe from Fast-Track CHC referrals being accepted and completed to the care package being commissioned, was 2.32 days, during the 2025 calendar year.
8. The UHB confirms that the average timeframe from Fast-Track CHC referrals being accepted and completed to the funding being put in place, was 2.92 days, during the 2025 calendar year.
9. & 10. The UHB confirms that fast-track CHC assessments should be completed by an appropriate clinician. The clinician should give reasons on why the individual meets the conditions requiring a fast-track CHC decision to be made. An appropriate clinician is someone who acts in accordance with the National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006 and is responsible for an individual's diagnosis, treatment and care. Additionally, this is an individual who is a registered nurse or medical practitioner.

Fast-Track CHC referrals are received by the UHB's Long Term Care (LTC) team and should include a clear clinical rationale confirming that the individual meets the Fast-track criterion. On receipt, the LTC team checks that:

- The Fast-Track referral documentation is complete
- The referral has been made by appropriate health professional
- The health professional has confirmed that the individual has a rapidly deteriorating condition which may be entering a terminal phase.

Where a valid Fast-Track referral has been completed by an appropriate health professional, the referral is accepted immediately. In accordance with the National Framework, the individual is deemed eligible for NHS Continuing Healthcare without the need for further eligibility testing.

Following acceptance of the Fast-Track referral, the LTC team proceeds directly to urgent

commissioning of an appropriate package of care, working with providers and relevant teams to ensure the individual's assessed needs are met without delay.