

Health and Wellbeing Board

15 May 2024

Better Care Fund 2023/25 overview and progress update

Recommendations

That the Health and Wellbeing Board:

1. Note the update on the overview and impact of the Better Care Fund outlined in the presentation, Appendix A;
2. Note performance against the national Better Care Fund metrics;
3. Note the requirements and changes outlined in the Addendum to the Better Care Fund for 2024/25 published on 28 March 2024, submission deadline and assurance process; and
4. Agree to arrange a Sub-Committee of the Health and Wellbeing Board to approve the final version of the Better Care Fund Plan for 2024/25, in line with the recommendation and delegation of the Health and Wellbeing Board on 23 September 2015.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In addition to the standard quarterly update on the progress of the Better Care Fund (BCF) and performance against the BCF metrics, this report and supporting presentation also provides an overview of how the BCF is funded and delivered locally.

Overview of the Better Care Fund

- 1.2 Established in 2015, the BCF is the flagship health and social care integration fund, delivered through partnership working and agreement at system and place level. Local authorities and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) are required to work together to develop and implement BCF plans with local partners.
- 1.3 The Board will be aware that each year the BCF Policy Framework is published or updated, which sets out the national conditions each Health and Wellbeing Board area must meet and evidence to NHS England and the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) through submission of a BCF planning template and a narrative plan.

- 1.4 The presentation in Appendix A provides an overview of the BCF, the funding contributions and summarises how the funds are spent locally to meet the national conditions.

Performance Update

- 1.5 Locally our BCF plan for 2023/25 focusses our activities to improve our performance in the five key areas which are measured against the National Performance Metrics. These being:
- a. Reducing Avoidable Admissions (General and Acute);
 - b. Improving the proportion of people discharged home to their usual place of residence;
 - c. Reducing permanent admissions to residential and care homes;
 - d. Increasing effectiveness of reablement; and
 - e. Reducing emergency admissions due to falls.

Performance in 2023/24 against these is detailed in section 4 of this report.

Requirements for 2024/25

- 1.6 An Addendum to the BCF Policy Framework was published on the 28 March 2024 and detailed the requirements and changes for 2024-25, which include submitting an updated Planning Template detailing:
- ambitions against the existing metrics, except for the reablement target (detailed in 1.5 d above) which has now been dropped;
 - updated demand and capacity plans in line with Market Sustainability and Improvement; and Urgent and Emergency Care Plans; and
 - plans for use of the Improved BCF (iBCF).
- 1.7 At the point of writing this report, the allocation for the Disabled Facilities Grant and conditions relating to the Discharge Fund are still to be confirmed.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 Funding contributions for 2024/25 are detailed in the table below.
- 2.2 The Board is asked to note that a total budget of £374.313m is included in our current two-year BCF section 75 agreement. This is £0.467m less than the total in the table below, which reflects the updated 2024/25 budget for the Disabled Facilities Grant which has only just been confirmed.

	2024/25			Notes or changes to 2023/24
	Pooled Contribution	Aligned Allocation	Total Budget	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Minimum NHS ring-fenced from ICB allocation	47,762	116,799	164,562	Nationally set allocation increased by 5.66%
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	5,589	-	5,589	Allocation increased from £5.124m
Warwickshire County Council Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF)	15,133	-	15,133	Allocation has remained the same for the last 3 years, creating a cost pressure
ICB Discharge Fund	4,970	-	4,970	Allocation has increased by £1.45m
WCC Discharge Fund	3,536	-	3,536	Allocation has increased by £1.41m
Warwickshire County Council	-	180,988	180,988	Aligned base social care budgets increased by £5.05m or 2.8%
Total Pooled Contribution	76,990			
Total Additional Aligned Allocation		297,788		
Total Budget			374,780	

2.3 As the Board is aware, the iBCF allocation is temporary and must be confirmed on an annual basis. In order to counter the risk inherent in temporary funding, all new initiatives are either temporary or commissioned with exit clauses. There are, however, a number of areas where the funding is being used to maintain statutory social care spending and this would require replacement funding if the BCF was removed without replacement. This risk continues to be noted in Warwickshire County Council's annual and medium-term financial planning.

3. Environmental Implications

3.1 None.

4. Supporting Information

4.1 Summary of performance against the national areas of focus using the most recent data available:

Metric	23/24 performance where available	Target	Status
Reducing Avoidable Admissions (General and Acute)	Quarter 1 Actual: 1,383 Quarter 2 Actual: 1,323 Quarter 3 Actual: 1,493 Quarter 4 Actual: 839 (Jan and Feb only)	1,213	Over (worse than) target
Improving the proportion of people discharged home to their usual place of residence	Quarter 1 Actual: 95.0% Quarter 2 Actual: 95.0% Quarter 3 Actual: 95.0% Quarter 4 Actual: 95.0%	95.8%	On target
Reducing permanent admissions to residential and care homes; and	Quarter 1 Actual: 253 Quarter 2 Actual: 250 Quarter 3 Actual: 222 Quarter 4 Actual: 198	176.5	Over (worse than) target
Increasing effectiveness of reablement	2022/23 Actual: 94.4% 23/24: Data for 23/24 not available until May 24	94.2%	Target achieved
Reducing emergency admissions due to a fall	Quarter 1 Actual: 681 Quarter 2 Actual: 620 Quarter 3 Actual: 659 Quarter 4 Actual: 627	466.25	Over (worse than) target

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

Better Care Fund Plan 2024/25 Assurance Process

- 5.1 Similar to previous years, NHS England will approve updated BCF plans submitted in the form of the BCF Planning Template in consultation with the Department for Health and Social Care and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. BCF Narrative Plans are not required to be updated.
- 5.2 Assurance processes will confirm that national conditions are met, ambitions are agreed for all national metrics, demand and capacity plans are robust and that all funding is pooled, with relevant spend agreed. Assurance of plans will be led by Better Care Managers (BCMs) with input from NHS England and local government representatives and will be a single stage exercise. A cross-regional calibration meeting will be held after regions have submitted their recommendations, bringing together representatives from each region. Once approved - NHS England, as the accountable body for the NHS minimum contribution to the fund, will write to areas to confirm that the NHS minimum funding can be released.

Assurance activity	Date
BCF planning requirements received	28 March 2024
Optional draft BCF planning submission submitted to BCM	During May
BCF planning submission from local HWB areas (agreed by ICB and WCC) sent to national BCF Team at NHS England	10 June 2024
Scrutiny of BCF plans by regional assurers and regional moderation	15 July 2024
Cross regional calibration	Mid July 2024
Approval letters issued giving formal permission to spend (NHS minimum)	31 July 2024
All section 75 agreements to be signed and in place	30 Sept 2024

- 5.3 To meet these timescales, it is proposed that a Sub-Committee of the HWBB is held on 13th June 2024 to approve the final version of the BCF Plan for 2024/25 prior to submission.

Appendices

Appendix A – Overview of the Better Care Fund.

Background Papers

None.

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): County wide report

Other members: Councillors Barker, Drew, Holland and Rolfe