



HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

THURSDAY 23 MARCH 2023

REPORT TITLE:	BETTER CARE FUND (BCF) PLAN
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CARE AND HEALTH

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides assurance to the Health and Wellbeing Board that the 2022/23 Better Care Fund (BCF) Plan met the requirements and was approved by the National Health Service England (NHSE).

It affects all Wards and is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to note and accept Wirral's BCF Plan for 2022/23.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 It is a mandatory requirement that BCF Plans are submitted to the NHSE.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The submission of the BCF Plan is mandatory, which excludes the consideration of other options.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The pooled fund equates to 58.4m. The Council contributes 21.4 m with an additional 4.7m for Disabled facilities Grants (DFG). The Section 75 agreement funds services that enable people to stay safe, well and independent at home for longer and protects frontline social care delivery. The BCF is an enabler for integration, supports admission avoidance, a Home First approach and is responsive to place based priorities. The pooled fund and integrated commissioning and service delivery arrangements enable a focus on the best outcomes for people and it is necessary to have robust mechanisms in place to review their impact from an Integrated Care Board (ICB) perspective and to meet national, mandated BCF guidance. A Section 75 pooled fund agreement must be updated to set out the detail of budget areas that are being pooled in 2022/23 and the associated governance. There is a mandatory legal requirement to have a Section 75 agreement in place to draw down the elements of the pool relating to the BCF. Healthy Wirral remains the key programme for the delivery of health and care outcomes in Wirral.

National Conditions

- 3.2 The BCF Plan for 2022/23 required: -
- a narrative plan Appendix 1
 - a completed BCF planning template, including: – planned expenditure from BCF sources (Background Papers)

Mandated Financial Contributions

- 3.3 The contribution to social care spending from the minimum Integrated Care Board ICB contribution is maintained in line with the percentage uplift in the ICB minimum contribution to the BCF. The uplift will correspond with the minimum expectation for social care spend in 2022/23. The purpose of this condition is to ensure that support from the NHS for social care services with a health benefit is maintained in line with the overall growth in the ICB minimum contribution to the BCF.

BCF National Conditions

- 3.4 Wirral's Plan provided evidence that the national conditions of the fund as set out below were met, as well as ambitions and plans for performance against BCF national metrics and any additional contributions to BCF Section 75 agreements. (Appendix 1 and Background Papers).

- A jointly agreed plan between local health and social care commissioners and signed off by the Health and Wellbeing Board. It is permissible for plans to be accepted retrospectively.
- NHS contribution to Adult Social Care to be maintained in line with the uplift to ICB minimum contribution. This will include reablement services to promote independence, support for carers and early intervention and prevention services.
- Investment in NHS commissioned out-of-hospital services.
- Plan for improving outcomes for people being discharged from hospital.

The plan reported on: -

- Additional funds included and pooled within the Section 75. Whilst these contributions are not subject to the conditions of the BCF, there is a requirement to record them in the planning template.
- The impact the BCF has had on reducing health inequalities and equality for people with protected characteristics.
- Provision of a range of responsive services to vulnerable people and the protection of frontline social care delivery.
- The preventative role it played in enabling people in Wirral to be as independent as possible.
- The detail of budget areas that are being pooled in 2022/23 and the associated governance.

Improved Better Care Fund (IBCF)

- 3.5 IBCF funding can be allocated across any or all the four purposes of the grant in a way that Local Authorities working with ICBs determine best meets local needs and pressures. No fixed proportion needs to be allocated across each of the purposes. The grant conditions for the IBCF also require that the Local Authority pool the grant funding into the local BCF. This funding does not replace, and must not be offset against, the NHS minimum contribution to Adult Social Care (national condition two). Winter monies are now included within the IBCF and are no longer limited to winter, this has enabled us, on the basis of estimated current demand, to invest in good quality and sustainable social care services. Examples include funding awarded to MIND, to avoid admission to hospital, Age UK to support safe and sustainable discharge and additional social work capacity. These schemes increase independence and reduce pressures on the NHS.

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

- 3.6 DFG funding continues to be allocated through the BCF. The statutory duty to provide DFGs to those who qualify for them is placed on local housing authorities. Wirral's plan demonstrated that sufficient funding is allocated from the DFG to continue to meet their statutory duty to provide adaptations. The DFG is pooled into the BCF to promote joined-up approaches to meeting people's needs to help support more people of all ages to live in suitable housing so they can stay independent for longer. MEDEQUIP service consolidates the impact of adaptations through the provision of a range equipment that avoids admissions, expedites discharges and enables people to remain at home for longer.

Home First

- 3.7 Wirral's plan provided evidence that local partners had an agreed approach to support safe discharge, the principles of the Home First approach had been adopted including funding for reablement.

Care Act Duties

- 3.8 The BCF contributes to the delivery of Care Act duties and supports the principles adult social care reform 'People at the Heart of Care' through the provision of support to carers and increasing the capacity to deliver statutory social work assessments.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Whilst the forecast for the current budget is reported as balanced, there is a risk that a pressure could be realised due to the extension of the D2A beds, this will be closely monitored. It is however possible the pressures will be mitigated by the allocation of National Discharge Funding. Any financial risks associated with BCF are reported on at the monthly Place Based Partnership Board (PBPB).

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 In June 2013, The Better Care Fund (BCF) was announced requiring the NHS and local government to create a local single pooled budget to incentivise closer working around people, placing their wellbeing as the focus of health and care services, and shifting resources into social care and community services for the benefit of the people, communities and health and care systems.
- 5.2 The Better Care Fund requires integrated care boards and local authorities to agree a joint plan, owned by the Health and Wellbeing Board. These are joint plans for using pooled budgets to support integration, governed by an agreement under section 75 National Health Service Act 2006.
- 5.3 The submission of a BCF Plan is mandatory. Failure to do so would expose the ICB and the Local Authority to scrutiny from NHSE.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no resource implications as the mandated financial contribution from the Local Authority is pre-determined by NHSE.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The submission of a BCF Plan is mandatory. Failure to do so would expose the ICB and the Local Authority to scrutiny from NHSE.
- 7.2 The report was approved by the Regional Team on 19 October 2022. We received approval from the BCF National Fund on on the 9 January 2023.
- 7.3 The financial position and any associated risks are reported to the Place based Board on a monthly basis.

7.4 Service delivery risks are discussed at the monthly Council/ICB meeting and are escalated to the Place Base Board meeting if necessary.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 In developing the plan, the involvement of local NHS Trusts, social care providers, voluntary and community service partners and local housing authorities enabled us to demonstrate our alliance-based approach to integrated, person-centred services across health, care, housing and wider public services locally and our overarching approach to support people to remain independent at home.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 This report has no equality implications, however BCF associated actions may have an impact and these will be subject to a separate assessment.

9.2 The PDF file may not be suitable to view for people with disabilities, users of Assistive Technology or mobile phone devices. Please contact the report author if you would like this document in an accessible format.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no environmental or climate indications that will be generated by any recommendations included in this report.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The BCF primarily funds local services at a neighbourhood level, offering both employment opportunities for local people and one of the primary goals of the BCF is to reduce inequalities experienced by people in receipt of the services it funds.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Bridget Hollingsworth**
Head of Integrated Services
telephone: 0151 666 3609
email: bridgethollingsworth@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – BCF Narrative Plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Completed BCF planning template, including planned expenditure from BCF sources.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

It is a National, mandatory requirement that the End of Year Template is approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Health and Wellbeing Board (S75 Agreement)	29 September 2021
Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee (Pooled Fund Arrangements)	13 October 2021
Health and Wellbeing Board (Better Care Fund)	9 February 2022