



HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

21 SEPTEMBER 2023

REPORT TITLE:	BETTER CARE FUND (BCF) PLAN 2023/25
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CARE AND HEALTH

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of the proposed content of the Better Care Fund (BCF) Plan for 2023/25 and asks the Health and Wellbeing Board to approve the plan. It describes how the plan will achieve the government's priorities for 2023/25 and support the ambitions of the Healthy Wirral Plan. It sets out the detail of the budget areas to be pooled in 2023/24 as part of the mandatory Section 75 agreement with the Integrated Care Board.

This is a key decision which affects all wards.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

1. Approve and validate the content of the BCF Plan for 2023/25 (the BCF 2023/25 Plan was approved by the NHSE in August).
2. Be assured that the plan will achieve the government's priorities for 2023/25 and support the ambitions of the Healthy Wirral Plan
3. Note the detail of the budget areas to be pooled in 2023/24 as part of the mandatory Section 75 agreement with the Integrated Care Board.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 There is a mandatory requirement to develop a BCF Plan which sets out how the Council and the ICB will deploy BCF funding to achieve the government's priorities for 2023/25 and support the ambitions of place-based plans. The plan must be approved and validated by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The BCF plan and pooled fund arrangements are contributing to ensuring people and carers remain as independent as possible for as long as possible and people are discharged from hospital to the right place at the right time. In the absence of a plan and a Section 75 agreement the Council and the Integrated Care Board will be unable to draw down funding and would be in breach of NHSE requirements. There have been significant pressures within the health system and the care market, the BCF has mitigated some of these pressures and should the plan not be approved these pressures would be likely to increase. It is therefore recommended that the BCF Plan for 2023/25 is approved. The plan and the Section 75 arrangements do not expose the Council to increased financial risk.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The BCF was established in 2013 to support integrated working across health and social care, housing and the community, voluntary and faith sector to support person-centred care, sustainability, and better outcomes for people. The Better Care Fund (BCF) represents a collaboration between:

- Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- NHS England
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)
- The Local Government Association (LGA)

- 3.2 The BCF plan articulates, at a place-based level, how the BCF is used to successfully deliver the integration of health and social care in a way that supports person-centred care, sustainability and better outcomes for people and carers.

- 3.3 The Better Care Fund (BCF) Policy Framework sets out the Government's priorities for 2023-25. These include improving discharge, reducing the pressure on Urgent and Emergency Care and social care, supporting intermediate care, unpaid carers and housing adaptations.

- Enable people to stay well, safe, and independent at home for longer.
- The provision of care and support at the right time and in the right place.

- 3.4 The vision for the BCF over 2023-25:

- Is delivering the Right Care in the Right Place at the Right Time.

- Manages demand and reduces the cost of care.
- Has clear accountability and governance arrangements.
- Has resilience and flexibility to emerging issues in service delivery.

3.5 Wirral's well established commissioning arrangements have enabled us to focus on arranging and shaping services for 2023/25 which realise this vision and enable people to live healthy, independent, and dignified lives, through joining up health, social care, and housing services seamlessly around the person. Some examples are set out below:

- Enable people to stay at home for as long as possible, this is supported by our ongoing commitment to developing a high-quality, flexible, and responsive care market, the expansion of enabling technology and home adaptations.
- An improved offer to carers.
- Avoid admissions to hospital through the expansion of our crisis response services, falls prevention and virtual wards which support people who are frail and have respiratory problems.
- Assessments and reviews which focus on the persons strengths and assets in their communities enabling more of our citizens to feel in control of their care and support. This will be supported by the expansion of our new approach to assessments (3 Conversations) and easier access to direct payments (PA Register) and personal health budgets.
- Enhancing our offer to people with a learning disability and/or autism including step down services.
- Working in tandem with children and families' services to ensure a holistic approach to care and support is maintained.
- Optimise the role of the Community Voluntary and Faith sector in the achievement of our priorities supported by the development of a hospital based Single Point of Access.
- Ensure our system is equipped with services that support business continuity and resilience during periods of high pressure.
- Reduce inequalities and health inequalities by implementing the neighbourhood model.
- Maintain a multi-disciplinary approach with ongoing support for our integrated teams.
- Focus on prevention and reablement by mobilising the Reablement Service.

3.6 The 23/25 BCF plan reflects and helps to achieve the outcomes of the Healthy Wirral Plan:

- Create a place that supports the Health and Wellbeing of everyone living in Wirral in the places that they live.
- Through understanding our populations' health, we enable more people to remain healthier and independent for longer and live well.
- Families and communities are empowered and supported to raise healthy and resilient children and young people and give them the best start in life.
- Wirral people and their families feel informed and involved in managing their health and in accessing their care seamlessly from organisations that talk to each other.

- 3.7 The management and implementation of the BCF plan currently sits within the jurisdiction of the Joint Health and Care Commissioning Executive Board (JHCCEG). Wirral's Place Director and the Director of Adult Care and Health seek local stakeholder endorsement of the Plan via the Wirral Place Based Partnership Board (WPBPB). It is validated by the Health and Wellbeing Board, where oversight of the plan is held. NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB Executive Committee also need to approve the NHS elements of the plan.
- 3.8 Wirral Place in 2023/25 will be building on the current governance arrangements and placing a greater emphasis on joint commissioning and outcomes delivered. A review of the Terms of Reference for the monthly BCF Joint Oversight Group will be completed and a BCF Dashboard will be developed mapping schemes against core metrics and our wider Health and Care Plan deliverables. The review will ensure National Conditions are met and value for money outcomes against cost assessments are demonstrated. Reports will be provided, as required, to the above.
- 3.9 The Adult Social Care Discharge Fund was introduced in November 2022 (Adult Social Care Discharge Fund Guidance 19 November 2022) and has been extended into 2023/24. This is a national allocation of resources to Local Authorities and the NHS from the Government to support places to improve discharges from hospital. The funding was pooled into the BCF. The allocations are set out in section 4.2 of this report and the BCF plan sets out how the funding will be deployed to achieve this.

Governance

- 3.10 Wirral's 2023/25 Plan was approved by the NHSE in July 2023. It is permissible for the Board to validate the plan after approval.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The table below sets out the contributions from the ICB and Wirral Council. The additional ICB funding does not expose the Council to increased financial risk. The current risk share arrangements remain the same and Individual services will be reviewed to ensure National Conditions are met and value for money outcomes against cost assessments were demonstrated.

2023/24	ICB Contribution	Council Contribution	Total
BCF Schemes	£33,496,971	£25,962,517	£59,459,488
Non-BCF Schemes	£158,047,619	£50,369,000	£208,416,619
TOTAL	£191,544,590	£76,331,517	£267,876,107

- 4.2 The additional contribution from the government to support hospital discharge is set out below.

2023/24	Allocation
Wirral Council	£2,697,262
NHS Cheshire & Merseyside ICB – Wirral Place	£2,457,969
Total	£5,155,231

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Local Authority has a duty under the Care Act 2014 to promote the well-being of its residents and ensure that adequate level of care and support is provided by integrating care and support provision with health provision. The Care Act 2014 also amended the National Service Act 2006 to provide the legislative basis for the Better Care Fund.
- 5.2 The Government through the Better Care Fund policy framework provides financial support for Councils and NHS organisations to jointly plan and deliver local services. It requires Integrated Care Boards and Local Authorities to agree a joint plan, owned by the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB). These are joint plans for using pooled budgets to support integration, governed by an agreement under section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006.
- 5.3 Plans must be agreed by the Integrated Care Boards (in accordance with Integrated Care Boards' governance rules) and the Local Authority, prior to being signed off by the Health and Wellbeing Board. Better Care Fund partners will need to submit a narrative plan and a planning template, providing details of expenditure from Better Care Fund funding sources, capacity and demand, as well as ambitions and delivery plans for Better Care Fund metrics, signed off by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no new resource implications because of this proposal, as it is a continuation of current arrangements.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 In the absence of a plan and a Section 75 agreement the Council and the Integrated Care Board would be unable to draw down funding and would be in breach of NHSE requirements. Given the size of the investment this vehicle is essential. There have been significant pressures within the health system and the care market, services commissioned through the BCF have mitigated some of these pressures and should the plan not be approved these pressures would be likely to increase. The plan and the Section 75 arrangements do not expose the Council to increased financial risk as the risk share arrangements remain the same.
- 7.2 Joint commissioners from the ICB and the Local Authority closely monitor BCF service and budget performance through the Joint Commissioning Executive Group. This enables risks to be managed and mitigated against through the year.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 A range of engagement and consultation processes related to the integration of services and commissioning functions have been undertaken in previous years. Wirral Place in 2023/25 will be building on the current governance arrangements and placing a greater emphasis on collegiate commissioning and listening to service providers and people with lived experience.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Most BCF funded schemes are delivered by local providers, the emphasis is on providing support in the right place and avoiding the need for extensive out of area travel.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Most BCF funded schemes are delivered by local providers creating employment opportunities for Wirral citizens.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 BCF Plan 2023/25 Narrative

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The BCF 2023/25 Plan.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Joint Strategic Commissioning Board	22 June 2023
Health and Wellbeing Board	23 March 2023
Health and Wellbeing Board	9 February 2022