

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 30 January 2023	Meeting: Health and Wellbeing Board
Report title:		Better Care Fund and Adult Social Care Discharge Fund	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		<p>Martin Wilkinson, Chief Operating Officer, Southwark, NHS SEL Integrated Care Board</p> <p>Genette Laws, Director of Commissioning, Children's and Adults' Services, Southwark Council</p>	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Health and Wellbeing Board:
 - 1.1. notes the approval letter for the 2022/23 Better Care Fund (BCF) plan submitted in September (appendix 1).
 - 1.2. notes the new national Adult Social Care Discharge Fund for 2022/23 that has been incorporated into the BCF (paragraph 6) and endorses the Southwark plan submitted for use of this funding (appendix 2).
 - 1.3. notes the additional NHS funding for hospital discharge announced on 13th January to be managed alongside the BCF (paragraph 7).
 - 1.4. notes that the national 2023/24 BCF policy framework and planning guidance have not yet been published.
 - 1.5. notes the current plan is for no further voluntary expansion of the BCF above minimum required levels (paragraph 12).
 - 1.6. comments on the intention to focus on developing collaborative approaches for services for people with SMI (Severe Mental Illness) and adolescent mental health (14 to 25 years) outside the BCF mechanism (paragraph 12) .

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Better Care Fund

2. The Better Care Fund (BCF) was first established in 2015/16 as a national policy initiative to drive forward the integration of health and social care services by requiring local councils and CCGs to agree a pooled budget and an associated plan for community based health and care services. The fund is focussed on schemes that prevent avoidable admissions and facilitate safe discharge from hospital. It is a requirement that the BCF plan is agreed by the Council, Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Health and Wellbeing Board and is submitted to NHSE for assurance and agreement.
3. The Board approved the 2021/22 BCF Plan at its meeting on 21/09/2022. The plan was submitted to NHSE and considered in line with national planning requirements.
4. NHSE approved the Southwark plan on 5th January as set out in the approval letter attached (appendix 1). The letter mentions the need to finalise a Section 75 pooled budget agreement between the council and ICB that reflects the BCF plan, and the Adult Social Care Discharge Fund plan, before the end of January.
5. At the Board meeting in September 2022, it was agreed that there would be a report back in early 2023 updating on the BCF process, including early thinking on any further expansion plans for the 2023/24 BCF. Noting that further expansion this year will build on voluntary contributions from spend (held outside of the BCF) on services that were already in the BCF, e.g. £1.448m for Integrated Community Equipment Services, so that the full spend is inside the BCF.

Discharge Funding

6. The government established a new Adult Social Care Discharge Fund in November 2022 specifically for increasing the capacity of the system to discharge patients who are medially fit for discharge. For Southwark the value of the funding is £2.56m, with £1.31m dispersed to the council via a specific grant and £1.25m provided via an ICB borough allocation. It is a requirement that this funding is pooled in the 2022/23 BCF with a joint plan for its use that has been agreed by the council and ICB, approved by NHSE and incorporated into the BCF Section 75 agreement. It is also a requirement that the Health and Wellbeing Board endorses the plan, although due to the very short turnaround time between publication of guidance the submission this could be made under delegated authority and reported to the next meeting. The Southwark Discharge Funding template is attached (appendix 2). The plan is in the process of being implemented and is subject to fortnightly NHSE monitoring returns.

7. On 13th January, the government announced further discharge funding for Integrated Care Boards to fund step-down discharge services, with a potential allocation of £1.1m indicated for Southwark for 2022/23. Whilst not part of the BCF the use of this funding will need to be closely aligned with existing joint discharge plans.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

2023/24 and 2024/25 BCF

8. The national BCF team have indicated that the intention is to have a two year BCF plan from 2023/24, which will be a welcome development for planning purposes. It is expected that the ICB contribution to the BCF will be maintained with a 5.66% uplift. It is also anticipated that the discharge funding will continue to be incorporated into the BCF.
9. Unfortunately, at the time of writing this report, the national BCF Policy Framework and associated planning guidance had not been published. This makes it difficult to make firm recommendations about the BCF Plan for 2023/24.
10. The Joint Commissioning Oversight Group (JCOG) and BCF Planning Group has held detailed discussions about options for further expanding the BCF above minimum levels by incorporating additional services into the remit of the pooled budget. An agreed set of principles and criteria informed these discussions.
11. Members of JCOG and BCF Planning Group agreed that budgets should only be pooled when there is a clear agreed priority to develop an integration programme for that segment of the population and/or in an area of service delivery. It was also agreed that where developing pooled budgets is a priority it is not necessarily the case that expanding the BCF is the best mechanism for doing this. Bespoke pooled budgets that are not subject to the national administrative delays and restrictive planning and assurance requirements associated with the BCF may be preferred, especially if the core BCF focus on older people's hospital discharge and admissions avoidance is not a good fit with the focus of services under consideration.
12. The conclusion of the discussion was to focus in 2023/24 on increased collaboration in services for adults with SMI (severe mental illness) and adolescent/young people's mental health (age 14 to 25). This will not be part of the BCF for the reasons set out in the above paragraph. It is also worth noting that a separate s75 agreement could build on the s75 for young people's mental health between the council and SLaM, as well as the programme of work between the council, SELICS and SLaM in relation to adults with complex mental health needs. No further voluntary expansion of the BCF is currently proposed for 2023/24.

13. A further report on the 2023/24 BCF Plan will be submitted to the Board close to planning submission deadlines, which have not yet been published.

Policy framework implications

14. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) published a Policy Framework for the implementation of the Better Care Fund (BCF) in 2022-23 on 19 July 2022. The government issued the document “BCF Planning Requirements 2022/23” to local systems requiring the development of plans at Health and Wellbeing Board level. The document sets out the purpose of the BCF in terms of driving forward the national integration agenda. The BCF plan submitted reflects local policy on integration as set out in the Partnership Southwark Recovery Plan and is consistent with the national framework. Separate planning guidance was issued for the Adult Social Care Discharge Fund.
15. The BCF policy framework for 2023/24 and associated planning guidance has not yet been published.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

Community impact statement

16. The BCF plan protects current services funded through the core BCF which provide essential community support for people with health and social care needs. This has benefit to all people with protected characteristics, particularly services provided for older people, and people with disabilities and mental ill-health. The BCF also funds a range of voluntary sector services promoting community resilience, including the older people’s community hub.
17. The BCF focuses on the delivery of the objectives of the Partnership Southwark Recovery Plan through the provision of integrated neighbourhood support models increasing community resilience, improving outcomes and addressing health inequalities. The Adult Social Care Discharge Fund focuses on supporting those aspects of the BCF plan that focus on the safe and effective discharge of people from hospital.
18. Other beneficiaries of this investment are the homecare workforce who have been paid the London living wage since April 2018 under Southwark’s ethical care charter. This workforce has a high proportion of women and those from the black and minority ethnic communities.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

19. The BCF narrative plan sets out how it contributes to the equalities objectives of the Partnership Southwark Recovery Plan.

Health impact statement

20. The Better Care Fund and associated discharge funding provides resources for a range of core community-based health and social care services which have the objective of promoting improved health and wellbeing outcomes of all Southwark residents in need of services.
21. The BCF plan sets out how the BCF aligns to the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Climate change implications

22. The BCF and associated Discharge Fund will be delivered in accordance with the recently agree Partnership Southwark policy statement on environmental sustainability which recognizes the green policies of contributing organisations and the collective commitment to reducing the carbon footprint of health and care services in Southwark.
23. It is not considered that the Adult Social Care Discharge Fund has direct climate change implications.

Resource implications

24. The Discharge Funding template in annex 2 sets out how the additional £2.56m will be invested in 2022/23. This is in addition to the core value of the BCF already agreed for 2022/23 of £48.7m.

Consultation

25. The Partnership Southwark Executive were consulted on the Discharge Funding plan during its development.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance (63EN202223)

26. The Strategic Director of Finance and Governance notes the recommendations of this report in paragraph 1. The income streams of the Better Care Fund and Improved Better Care Fund represent significant part of the council's and ICB's income streams. Therefore the intention to have a two year BCF plan in 2023/24 with planning requirements to be published in advance of the financial year is welcomed as described in para 8.
27. The Strategic Director of Finance and Governance notes the additional income streams that has been announced in year as described in para 6 and 7 these are welcomed to ease the pressures within Adults Social Care. However earlier announcement of these income streams at the beginning of financial year would be preferable in the future.

Director of Law and Governance

28. Not applicable

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	NHSE Approval Letter for BCF 2022/23
Appendix 2	Adult Social Care Discharge Fund Template

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Martin Wilkinson, Chief Operating Officer, Southwark, NHS SEL Integrated Care Board Genette Laws, Director of Commissioning, Children's and Adults' Services, Southwark Council	
Report Author	Adrian Ward, Head of Place PMO (Southwark), NHS South East London Integrated Care Board	
Version	1.3	
Dated	19/01/23	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Governance	Not applicable	Not applicable
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
List other officers here	Not applicable	Not applicable
Cabinet Member	No	
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	20 January 2023	