

Item No. 7	Classification: Open	Date: 3 August 2023	Meeting Name: Health and Wellbeing Board
Report title:		Better Care Fund 2023/24 – 2024/25	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Martin Wilkinson, Chief Operating Officer, Southwark, NHS SEL Integrated Care Board Genette Laws, Director of Commissioning, Children and Adults, Southwark Council	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Health and Wellbeing Board agree to the 2023/24 - 2024/25 Better Care Fund (BCF) planning templates (appendices 1 and 2).
2. That the Health and Wellbeing Board agree the BCF 2022/23 year end return submitted to NHSE (appendix 3).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Note: this report was discussed at the Health and Wellbeing Board on 20/07/2023 and agreed in principle. Unfortunately, it was not possible to formally agree the report as the meeting was held on a hybrid basis and was not technically quorate for decision making purposes, as only members who are physically present can vote on or take decisions on items and less than 5 members were physically present.

The report is unchanged from the previous meeting apart from minor updates to appendix 2 on two issues to reflect feedback received from the national assurance process: Firstly, on the expenditure template we were asked to allocate a contingency for the 2024/25 Additional Discharge Fund, which has now been dispersed across existing schemes (but will still be subject to mid-plan review). Secondly, on the metrics template we were asked to expand on our rationale for the re-ablement target. Both changes have been accepted by the assurers and we have been advised that no further queries are expected.

3. 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 local NHS commissioners to agree a pooled budget and an associated plan for community based health and care services. It is a requirement that the BCF plan is agreed by the Council,

Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Health and Wellbeing Board and submitted to NHSE for assurance and agreement.

4. At its meeting on 30th January 2023 the board received an update on the BCF, including details of the £2.56m Adults Social Care Discharge Fund that had been added to the 2022/23 fund by government in December. The report also updated the board on discussions relating to the BCF strategy for 2023/24, including the option of expanding the BCF on a voluntary basis. It was also noted that pending the formal details of the national 2023/24 planning process there had been in principle agreement to roll forward 2022/23 budgets.
5. The 2023/24 – 2024/25 BCF Policy Framework and planning guidance was issued on April 4th and required submission of a BCF plan meeting the requirements by 28th June 2023. The completed planning templates (appendices 1 and 2) have been agreed through the BCF Planning Group and the respective governance processes of the council and the ICB. They have been submitted on a provisional basis to NHSE, subject to agreement by this Health and Wellbeing Board meeting. This governance route was agreed with the chair as preferable to the alternative of holding an extraordinary board meeting in June or delegating agreement to the chair or other members of the board.
6. It is also a requirement that the BCF year-end report is agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board. This is attached for 2022/23 in appendix 3.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

2023/24 to 2024/25 BCF

7. Key issues for consideration are set out in the BCF plan narrative template (appendix 1). Further detailed information is set out in the BCF Finance and Metrics template (appendix 2).
8. The current BCF is a two year plan, which provides welcome stability in planning terms compared to previous 12 month planning rounds. However, there will be a mid-term refresh of plans before 2024/25 plans are finalised and targets set. Any material changes will be reported to the board in line with BCF governance requirements.
9. The total value of the BCF is £54.2m in 2023/24 and £58.8m in 2024/25, within which the Additional Discharge Fund, ringfenced for supporting transfers of care from hospital, is £3.9m and £7.2m respectively.

10. The plan describes the approach to delivering the twin BCF goals to:
- **Enable people to stay well, safe and independent at home for longer** (focussing on hospital and care home admissions avoidance)
 - **Provide the right care in the right place at the right time** (focussing on transfers of care from hospital)
11. Key points to note from the templates include:

- The majority of the budgets and schemes agreed for 2023/24 relate to core community based health and social care services that it has been agreed will roll forward from 2022/23.
- The Additional Discharge Fund in 2023/24 rolls forward a number of the Q4 schemes from the 2022/23 Adult Social Care Discharge Fund.
- Further budget changes, including the use of annual growth, savings and the incorporation of service budgets into the BCF are set out on page 7 of appendix 1. This includes a reduction of £109,000 in the ICB additional contribution relating to the @home nursing budget which has been transferred to the core BCF @home budget.
- The ICB minimum contribution to the core BCF increased by 5.66% (£1.5m).
- The plan contains 5 key metrics and targets as set out in the template, including a new target on admissions to hospital due to falls and existing targets on avoidable admissions (Ambulatory Care Sensitive admissions), discharge to normal place of residence, care home admissions and reablement. A new target on delayed transfers of care from hospital is expected to be announced later in the year.
- The plan includes a capacity and demand analysis relating to intermediate care for step down support from hospital and referrals from community settings to prevent avoidable admissions. This will be further developed during 2023/24 as the issues with our integrated community data set are resolved.

BCF Year-end Report 2022/23 (appendix 3)

12. The 2022/23 year-end report was submitted to NHSE in May following authorisation by the council and ICB. It is a requirement that it is presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The report sets out confirmation that national BCF conditions were met, BCF targets were delivered and expenditure was in line with the submitted plan. It also identifies areas of successes and challenges. In addition, it provides detailed information on the application of the Adult Social Care Discharge Fund.

Policy framework implications

13. 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 2023 to 2025 on 4th April 2023. The government issued the document “BCF Planning Requirements 2023/25” 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 draft Health and Care Plan and is consistent with the national framework.

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

Community impact statement

14. The BCF plan provides funding for 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.
15. 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 people from the black and minority ethnic communities. This principle is being expanded in the current plan to care home staff through additional funding for the Residential Care Charter.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

16. The narrative plan sets out how the BCF plan contributes to the equalities and health inequalities objectives of the draft Health and Care Plan and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy (see page 30).

Health impact statement

17. The Better Care Fund provides funding 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 health or care services. Page 30 of the plan sets out how the BCF aligns to the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Climate change implications

18. As set out in page 33 of the narrative template the BCF plan will be delivered in line with the Partnership Southwark policy statement on environmental sustainability which incorporates the green policies of partnership organisations.

Resource implications

19. The financial template sets out a detailed schedule of the BCF budgets for 2023/24 to 2024/25 summarised in the table below.

SELICB - Better Care Fund Summary 2023-24 & 2024-25

Better Care Fund	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000
Local Authority Better Care Fund - Core Contribution	20,255	21,401
SELICB Better Care Fund - Core Contribution	7,841	8,285
Local Authority - IBCF	17,847	17,847
Local Authority - DFG	1,686	1,686
Total Better Care Fund - Core	47,629	49,220
Local Authority Additional Contribution	1,287	1,287
SELICB Additional Contribution	1,201	1,201
Total Better Care Fund - Additional Contribution	2,488	2,488
Total Better Care Fund	50,117	51,707
Local Authority Hospital Discharge Contribution	2,502	4,154
SELICB Hospital Discharge Contribution	1,599	2,971
Total Hospital Discharge Contribution	4,101	7,125
Total Better Care Fund	54,218	58,832

Consultation

20. As set out in the section “Bodies involved in preparing the plan” of the narrative plan on page 1.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Strategic Director of Finance (20AS2023-24)

21. The Strategic Director of Finance notes the recommendations of this report and the 2022-23 year end position detailed in Appendix 3. The Strategic Director of Finance also notes the provisional 2023-25 BCF plan highlighted in Appendix 2 which provides a comprehensive breakdown of how funds will be allocated alongside the expected outputs for the two financial years.
22. The pooled budget and income streams now represent a significant proportion of the partnerships core funding, in which the Better Care Fund, Improved Better Care Fund and the Discharge Fund contributes in excess of £40m of the council’s Adult Social Care budget. Therefore, it is important for officers to ensure expenditure is in line with the allocated plan and monitored and reported through the respective governance pathways.
23. The Strategic Director of Finance welcomes the newly introduced two year planning template and guidance which provides additional clarity and financial

confidence into the budget setting process. Given the financial turbulence present in the system, a longer term view on budget planning is encouraged in future years.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	BCF 2023/24 to 2024/25 Narrative Plan Template
Appendix 2	BCF 2023/24 to 2024/25 Finance and Metrics Template
Appendix 3	BCF 2022/23 Year End template

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Martin Wilkinson, Chief Operating Officer, Southwark, NHS SEL Integrated Care Board Genette Laws, Director of Commissioning, Children and Adults, Southwark Council	
Report Author	Adrian Ward, Head of Place PMO (Southwark), NHS South East London Integrated Care Board	
Version	Final	
Dated	26/07/23	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive – Governance & Assurance	N/A	N/A
Strategic Director of Finance		Yes
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		26 July 2023