



Report of Jane Robinson, Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services, Durham County Council, Dr Stewart Findlay, Chief Officer, County Durham Clinical Commissioning Group

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with an update on Better Care Fund (BCF) plans for 2020–21 following the announcement of the BCF Policy Statement published on 3 December 2020.

Executive summary

- 2 The Better Care Fund (BCF) represents a unique collaboration between NHS England, the ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Local Government Association (LGA).
- 3 The BCF brings together ring-fenced budgets from Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) allocations, the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and funding paid to local government for Adult Social Care Services.
- 4 Most of the pooled resources for the BCF come from existing activity across the health and social care system. There is a required CCG minimum contribution, uplifted each year. Additional funding paid to local authorities including the Winter Pressures Grant and Improved Better Care Fund are used to meet adult social care need, reducing pressures (including seasonal) on the NHS ensuring that the social care provider market is supported.
- 5 On 3 December 2020 the Government announced that areas would not be required to submit plans for assurance in 2020–21 and they should roll forward schemes from 2019–20 where appropriate following local agreement.

- 6 The BCF normally has a framework planning and quarterly reporting which are approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board. However, national requirements for 2020/21 have been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendation(s)

- 7 Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are recommended to:
- (a) Note the contents of this report;
 - (b) Ratify the continuity of provision;
 - (c) Delegate authority for the allocation of expenditure for the BCF 2020-21 to lead officers.

Background

- 8 The BCF is the only mandatory policy to facilitate integration through a pooled budget and provides a mechanism for joint health and social care planning and commissioning which brings together ring fenced budgets from Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's) and funding paid to local government for adult care services.
- 9 County Durham's BCF allocation for 2020-21 is £82.2m (inflationary uplift on the CCG contribution to the BCF 2020-21 of circa 5.0%) This includes:
 - (a) Minimum CCG contribution;
 - (b) Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF – which now incorporates the Winter Pressures Grant);
 - (c) Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG):
- 10 During the initial response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Health & Wellbeing Boards (HWB's) were advised that BCF policy and planning requirements would not be published and that they should prioritise continuity of provision, social care capacity and system resilience and spend from ring fenced BCF pots based on local agreement in 2020-21 pending further guidance.
- 11 Given the ongoing pressures on systems, Departments and NHS England and NHS Improvement agreed that formal BCF plans would not have to be submitted to NHS England and NHS Improvement for approval in 2020-21. This was confirmed in a short policy statement by the Government on 3 December 2020.

Better Care Fund 2020-21: National Conditions

- 12 The National conditions for the BCF in 2020-21 are that:
 - (a) Plans covering all mandatory funding contributions are agreed and minimum contributions are pooled in a Section 75 agreement;
 - (b) The contribution to social care from the CCG via the BCF is agreed and meets or exceeds the minimum expectation;
 - (c) Spend on CCG commissioned out of hospital services meets or exceeds the minimum ringfence;
 - (d) CCG's and local authorities confirm compliance with the above conditions to the Health & Wellbeing Boards:

- 13 Spending plans will not be assured regionally or formally approved. Local Authorities and CCG's should ensure that robust local governance is in place to oversee BCF funds.
- 14 Areas will need to maintain records of spending against schemes funded through the BCF and will be asked to report actual & income and expenditure as normal year end reporting, as well as details of spending on maintaining social care spending from the CCG minimum contribution and out of hospital services, in line with national conditions.
- 15 HWB areas are not expected to submit local trajectories for the BCF national metrics for 2020-21 but should continue to work as a system to make progress against them.

BCF Work Programmes

- 16 There are seven main programmes within the local BCF plan which focus on health and social care initiatives which facilitate and enable integration or closer working between the NHS and the County Council as follows:
 - (a) **Short Term Intervention Services** – the provision of a range of service responses including intermediate care and reablement which promote recovery from illness, prevent unnecessary admission to hospital or permanent admission to residential or nursing care homes; facilitate safe and timely discharge and support from hospital and maximise opportunities for promoting independent living;
 - (b) **Equipment and Adaptations** for independence – joint funding of the home equipment and adaptations. Increased opportunities for the use of assistive technology to help people remain or return to their own home after a crisis which has adversely impacted upon their health and care needs;
 - (c) **Supporting Carers** – a recognition of the value and contribution that carers make to the health and social care system and economy. Both the NHS and social care are committed to improving carer support in order to enable carers to maintain their caring role and look after their own health and wellbeing;
 - (d) **Supporting Independent Living** – this includes mental health and recovery services which focus on the wider determinations of health such as accommodation and employment which relates to positive mental health and wellbeing. The programme aligns with the NHS Long Term Plan for health and care joined up locally around people's needs, prioritising prevention, access, integration, quality and positive experiences of care;

- (e) **Social Inclusion** – focussing on an asset based approach, there is a need to increase community capacity and resilience through working with the Voluntary and Community Sector in order to transfer services at a pre-health and care delivery stage through access to universal services, facilities and resources which promote wellbeing, respond to social isolation and help to avoid or delay the development of needs for health and care
- (f) **Improving the Care Market** – both the NHS and social care are committed to the availability and delivery of high quality commissioned care, some of the challenges arising from COVID-19 impact upon the BCF for 2020-21 include the increased financial burdens on a fragile care market, which further emphasises the importance of an integrated approach to commissioning and the availability of a suitably skilled workforce to meet the care and support needs of Durham’s residents;
- (g) **Transforming Care** – whilst this emphasises new paradigms for integrated care delivery, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic sets a focus upon managing recovery, preparation for subsequent waves and improving resilience to address any demand surge over the Winter months. An integrated Governance Framework is in place to unite stakeholders behind the vision for integration and a shared understanding between partners, joining up service delivery where it makes sense to the service user, which is effective, efficient and outcome focussed with an emphasis on community based solutions promoting a whole system approach to early intervention and prevention.

Risk Share Arrangements

- 17 The arrangement for previous iterations of the BCF plan has been that each organisation manages its own risks and it is proposed that this will continue for 2020-21.

Conclusion

- 18 This report seeks to provide members of the HWB with an overview of the Better Care Fund arrangements for 2020-21 following the Government announcement on 3 December 2020.
- 19 Updates to the BCF Policy Framework and Planning Requirements for 2021–22 will be provided following publication.

Author

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None.

Finance

The BCF 2020/21 Pooled Budget is £82.2m.

Consultation

As necessary through the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 require the Council to ensure that all decisions are reviewed for their particular impact upon people.

Climate Change

Consideration of the impact by climate change in decision making and reporting has been considered.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

Although spending plans will not be assured regionally or formally approved, the Local Authority and the CCG must ensure that robust local governance is in place to oversee BCF Funds.

Procurement

None.