

BETTER CARE FUND Plan – 2021/22 requirements

For Information

1. Purpose

To provide an update regarding the recently published 2021/22 Better Care Fund (BCF) Policy Framework and planning requirements to complete the local BCF plan for financial year 2021/22 in line with compliance.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Health and Wellbeing Board receives and notes requirements and responsibilities in relation to submission of the Walsall BCF 2021/22 plan.
- 2.2. That the Health and Wellbeing Board notes timescales for submission of the 2021/22 BCF plan, and acknowledge the completed plan will be presented in January 2022 for approval.

3. Report detail

- 3.1 As a national requirement, the 2021 to 2022 BCF Policy Framework was published on 19 August 2021, followed by planning requirements on 30 September 2021 to support local areas in completing joint local BCF plans this financial year.
- 3.2 The Policy Framework outlines minimal change to local programmes during 2021 to 2022, and aims to allow space for local areas to build on progress made during COVID, strengthening across areas such as;
 - Integration of commissioning
 - Delivery of services
 - Delivering person-centred care
 - System recovery from the pandemic
- 3.3 To ensure compliance, local areas must outline joint agreement between Adult Social Care and the Black Country and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group (Walsall) of national conditions and targets against national metrics.

National conditions for 2021 into 2022 are:

 - A jointly agreed plan between local health and social care commissioners, signed off by the Health and Wellbeing Board
 - NHS contribution to Adult Social Care to be maintained in line with the uplift to the Clinical Commissioning Group minimum contribution
 - Investment in NHS-commissioned out-of-hospital services to support discharges

- A plan for improving outcomes for people being discharged from hospital

Revised metrics for 2021 into 2022 are:

- Discharge Indicators
- Avoidable admissions to hospital
- Admissions to residential and care homes
- Effectiveness of re-ablement

Local position/ Next steps

- 3.4 To ensure compliance, locally Walsall must use published templates to complete the BCF plan for 2021/22. This will consist of outlining income and expenditure across the programme, updates against metrics and detailed narrative to outline local aims to meet national priorities and outcomes, aligned to clear local Walsall Together outcomes.
- 3.5 Whilst not received until 30 September 2021, there is still a requirement to meet the submission deadline to the national BCF team of 16 November 2021. Locally, the plan will be subject to agreed internal governance to ensure sign off from the finance group, a sub group of Joint Commissioning Committee and overall approval from Joint Commissioning Committee members on 3 November 2021.
- 3.6 There is acknowledgement by the national team local areas will struggle to seek approval from Health and Wellbeing Boards prior to the deadline. To support this, the national team advised plans can be submitted by 16 November, with approval sought from Health and Wellbeing Boards at a later date. Locally, this will mean Walsall will submit the completed plan by the deadline, presenting the plan to members at the next Board meeting in January 2022. Plans will remain on hold with the National team until the Health and Wellbeing Board give local approval. Whilst this is not an ideal position, the late publication of templates and planning requirements have made it impossible to ensure approval from Board before submission, however to mitigate any risk, assurance mechanisms are in place to ensure appropriate governance before submission on 16 November 2021.

4. Implications for Joint Working arrangements:

- 4.1 The introduction of the BCF has enabled joint working and decision making between Adult Social Care and Black Country and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group; services and schemes funded by the programme support Walsall's approach to integration, ensuring support to reduce delays with hospital discharges, supporting older people on discharge from hospital and supporting independence. The programme also supports the local approach to a healthy population as per the Health and Wellbeing Board strategy, by supporting the outcome of independence to older people needing less help from health and social care services.
- 4.2 Work across the programme continues however as BCF budgets are set year on year, there is a risk councils will struggle to fund specific services from social care budgets if BCF funding is no longer available in the future.

Background papers

Better Care fund 2021/22 Policy Framework

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/better-care-fund-policy-framework-2021-to-2022>

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