

Slough Borough Council

Report To:	Slough Wellbeing Board
Date:	23 January 2024
Subject:	Better Care Fund (BCF) update
Chief Officer:	Marc Gadsby
Contact Officer:	Mike Wooldridge, Integration Delivery Lead, NHS Frimley
Ward(s):	All
Exempt:	No
Appendices:	BCF Narrative Plan 2023/24

1. Summary and Recommendations

This report is to present Slough's Better Care Fund Plan 2023/25 to the Wellbeing Board. The report provides a summary of the BCF programme including finance, governance and our approach and priorities for integration in Slough.

Recommendations:

The Wellbeing Board is recommended to note the contents of the Better Care Fund Plan and the areas of joint investment by the partners from the pooled budget. These schemes are aimed at supporting Slough residents to live independently at home, avoid unnecessary admissions to hospital where possible, and if they are admitted to hospital, experience a timely and well-coordinated discharge and transfer from hospital back home.

Reason:

Health and Wellbeing Boards hold the statutory oversight and decision-making for the BCF in each local authority area. Local joint partnerships are established in most Wellbeing Board areas in to oversee the operational decision-making and make recommendations to the Health and Wellbeing Board. For Slough this is through the local Health and Social Care Partnership.

2. Report

Introduction

The Better Care Fund programme is developed, agreed and managed between Slough Borough Council and the Frimley Integrated Care Board. Working together with local stakeholders and delivery partners it aims to improve, both directly and indirectly, the health and wellbeing outcomes for the people of Slough. The annual BCF Plan is written and produced in accordance with the national policy framework to demonstrate that it meets the criteria and conditions that apply to the BCF and is subject to a

national assurance process. Slough’s plan was formally approved on 18 September 2023 in a Letter of Approval to the Chair of the Wellbeing Board from NHS England.

The Better Care Fund directly supports delivery of priority three within Slough’s Joint Wellbeing Strategy, that is the integration of Health and Social Care. It also supports the Corporate Plan 2023-27 strategic priority for ‘A town where residents can live healthier, safer and more independent lives’ particularly in addressing health inequalities but also in respect of ‘maximising independence, confidence and capacity for self-management ... to enable people to live the life they want, stay independent at home for longer and reduce the need for emergency and statutory services’ (page 14).

The BCF programme for this year and next is guided by priorities we have jointly set out and agreed for Slough. A workshop was held between partners in December 2024 looking at the management of frailty and complex needs in Slough. This covered three broad areas of activity:

- Maximising independence at home
- Admission avoidance
- Discharge and Flow from hospital to community

Professionals across a range of organisations and disciplines came together to discuss what was working well from their perspective and where we had gaps or areas that needed to be developed and improved. Priority areas identified were:

- Building connections and communications around what is available
- Remote monitoring and assistive technology
- Dementia services support
- Reablement capacity and development
- Information and how to access services
- Social connections, reducing isolation, promoting wellbeing

Background

Background and supporting information is within the contents of the BCF narrative plan (see appendix A).

3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 Financial implications

Financial contributions to the Better Care Fund 2023/24:

	ICB Contribution	Council Contribution
Minimum ICB contribution	£11,202,790	
Disabled Facilities Grant		£1,140,680
Additional DFG (Sept '23)		£99,536
iBCF		£3,989,414

	ICB Contribution	Council Contribution
Discharge Fund (LA)		£559,310
Discharge Fund (ICB)	£508,807	
Total	£11,711,597	£5,788,940

The total value of the BCF Pooled Budget for 2023/24 is **£17,401,001**

With the additional DFG funding announced in Sept 2023 this increased to a total of **£17,500,537**

The value of the BCF Pooled Budget for 2024/25 is an estimated **£19,139,161**

The expenditure is across 50 schemes listed and described in appendix B. These are agreed and managed between the partners of the pooled budget agreement under section 75 agreement (NHS Act 2006).

3.2 Legal implications

There are legal implications arising from how funds are used, managed and audited within a Pooled Budget arrangement under section 75 of the NHS Act 2006. The Council and Frimley ICB have a section 75 contract agreement drawn up and signed between the partners.

The section 75 enables NHS bodies and local authorities to enter into arrangements which are prescribed in secondary legislation. The NHS Bodies and Local Authorities Partnership Arrangements Regulations 2000, as amended, is the relevant secondary legislation that sets out details of the permitted arrangements as follows:

- NHS bodies can carry out local authorities' health-related functions together with their NHS functions
- local authorities can carry out NHS functions together with their local authority health-related functions
- NHS bodies and local authorities can establish and run a pooled fund which is made up of contributions by the partners, and out of which payments may be made towards carrying out the functions that are within the scope of the arrangements
- such arrangements can only be formed if it is likely to lead to an improvement in the way in which the functions are exercised
- any partnership arrangements entered into under section 75 of the NHS Act 2006 do not affect the liability and accountability of NHS bodies or local authorities for the exercise of any of their functions (s.75(5))

3.3 Risk management implications

The Health and Social Care Partnership acts the Programme Board for the BCF and oversees and monitors risks in relation to the BCF programme. A risk register

identifies, and scores risks of delivery of the programme together with actions to mitigate or manage those risks.

3.4 Environmental implications

None identified.

3.5 Equality implications

The BCF aims to improve outcomes and wellbeing for the people of Slough through effective protection of social care and integrated activity to live healthier, more independent lives in the community and reduce emergency and urgent health demand.

The BCF narrative plan (appendix A) includes a section on how the plan contributes to reducing health inequalities and disparities for the local population.

Impact assessments are undertaken as part of planning of any new scheme or investment to ensure that there is a clear understanding of how various groups identified within the Equalities Act (2010) may potentially be affected.

3.6 Procurement implications

There may be procurement implications when commissioning and procuring services with BCF funding. The agreed commissioning lead, whether ICB or local authority, would take advice and follow their own procurement procedures in line with public contracts regulations to ensure value for money and social value.

3.7 Workforce implications

As we move towards closer integration of health and social care service there are potential future workforce development implications. The pooling of budgets and closer collaborative working to deliver integrated care is creating new ways of working in partnership with others and BCF programme is therefore aligning together with other change programme activities happening across the wider Frimley Integrated Care System as well as the local integration of services happening at place.

3.8 Property implications

None

4. **Background Papers**

Appendix A - BCF narrative plan 2023-25

Appendix B - BCF expenditure plan 2023-25