

Record of Urgent Executive Decision(s)

1. Subject of decision

Approval of Better Care Fund Plan for 2021/22

2. Name and Title of Decision Maker

Norma Redfearn, Elected Mayor

3. Details of any Conflict of Interest and any Dispensation granted in respect of such Interest

None

4. Executive summary (To be taken from written report)

This report presents a proposed plan for the Better Care Fund (BCF) covering the financial year 2021/22.

The BCF, which has been in operation since 2015/16, is a government initiative to improve the integration of health and care services, with an emphasis on keeping people well outside of hospital and facilitating discharge from hospital.

The BCF creates a pooled fund, managed jointly by the Authority and NHS North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group (the CCG). The total value of the fund is £29,457,097 an increase of 3.8% over 2020/21.

CCGs are required to contribute a defined amount to the fund, to support adult social care. The resulting income from the NHS is £11,651,150. Together with the "Improved Better Care Fund", which is paid direct by Government to the Authority, the BCF supports 21% of adult social care revenue expenditure.

BCF income helps to fund our community based social care services, such as reablement, immediate response home care, CareCall, and loan equipment/adaptations. It also contributes towards our services to support carers, our Community Falls First Responder Service, and to independent living support for people with learning disabilities.

Government guidance for the BCF states that 2021/22 is to be a year of minimal change for the BCF. There are, however, changes to the National Conditions against which plans will be assessed.

National conditions

Three national conditions are unchanged:

- 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 CCG minimum contribution;
- Invest in NHS-commissioned out-of-hospital services.

There is one new national condition:

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

Metrics

The Policy Framework mandates amended metrics to support the updated national conditions.

1. Effectiveness of reablement (as in previous years)
2. Permanent admissions of older people to residential care (as in previous years)
3. Unplanned hospitalisations due to chronic ambulatory care sensitive conditions (replaces a previous metric of all emergency hospital admissions)
4. Hospital discharge metrics. These are new metrics, replacing a previous measure of Delayed Transfers of Care.

This plan provides continuity with the previous BCF plan. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the provision of hospital discharge services based on a “home-first” approach, which was already under way. Our priorities for 2021/22 and beyond are to regain progress in the establishment of the integrated frailty service, which was impacted by the pandemic, and to maintain admission avoidance and hospital discharge services, thus supporting hospital capacity.

BCF plans are required to be signed off by Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWB). The North Tyneside HWB approved the BCF plan on 11th November 2021. The BCF planning requirements were published on 1st October 2021, with a timetable for submission of the BCF plan by 16th November 2021. This very short timescale does not enable the Cabinet to approve the BCF plan before the submission deadline.

5. Alternative Options considered

The alternative to Mayoral approval of the Better Care Fund plan would be for Cabinet to approve the plan. However the Cabinet is not scheduled to meet until 29th November 2021, later than the deadline for submission of the plan to HM Government, which is 16th November 2019. It was not possible to present the plan to an earlier Cabinet meeting, because the BCF Planning Requirements were published only 1st October 2021.

6. Decision(s)

The Mayor approved the Better Care Fund Plan for 2021/22, for submission to the Department of Health and Social Care.

7. Reasons for the Decision(s)

The Better Care Fund plan needs to be submitted to the Department of Health and Social Care by 16th November 2021. The next available Cabinet meeting is on 29th November 2021 so it is not possible to await Cabinet approval. Cabinet approval could not have been obtained at an earlier date because the Better Care Fund Planning Requirements were published only on 1st October 2021. Failure to submit a BCF plan would risk delaying the release of funds to the Authority.

8. Date Decision Made

11th November 2021

To be completed by Democratic Services

9. Is this decision subject to call-in and if so expiry date of call-in period

No.

10. Date of Publication

15 November 2021

11. Implementation Date (if decision not called in)

15 November 2021

*Note – this is an Urgent Decision, as agreed by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and not subject to call-in, as agreed by the Chair of Council.

The reason for urgency is as follows:

The Better Care Fund Planning Requirements were published by HM Government on 1st October 2021, stating a deadline for submission of a BCF plan by 16th November. The planning requirements state that Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWB) should approve the plan; the HWB is scheduled to consider the plan on 11th November.

However, the very short nationally-set timetable does not enable the Cabinet to consider the plan prior to submission. Accordingly, the Elected Mayor has been asked to approve the BCF plan as an urgent decision.

The application of the call-in period to the urgent decision by the Elected Mayor, would prevent the plan being submitted by the deadline of 16th November.