

COVERING NOTE BETTER CARE FUND 24/25

The Better Care Fund (BCF) is one of the government's national vehicles for driving health and social care integration. It requires Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and local government to agree a joint plan, owned by the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB). These are joint plans for using pooled budgets to support integration, governed by an agreement under section 75 of the NHS Act (2006).

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) published a Better Care Fund Policy Framework for the implementation of the Better Care Fund (BCF) in 2023-25. The Better Care Fund (BCF) Policy Framework sets out the Government's priorities for 2023-25, including improving discharge, reducing the pressure on urgent and emergency care, social care, supporting intermediate care, unpaid carers and housing adaptations.

A plan for 2023-25 was approved on 14th June 2023 by the Health and Wellbeing Board and this submission allows local areas to revise the second year of the 2-year plan to set metrics, update discharge plans, review capacity and demand estimates and to confirm BCF spending plans based on final 2024/25 allocations.

There is no requirement for a separate narrative plan submission, as the 2023-25 narrative plan detailed at Appendix 2 will still apply and the national conditions and planning requirements set as part of the original 2-year plan remain.

The BCF Plan 2024/25 detailed at Appendix 1 meets national conditions in respect to minimum contributions, improved Better Care Fund (iBCF) and the Disabled Facilities Grant as well as the national condition to invest in NHS commissioned out-of-hospital services.

Recommendations

The Board are recommended to:

Approve the Better Care Fund Plan 2024/25.

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