

Public Health

4th Floor, 222 Upper Street, N1 1XR

Report of: Director of Adult Social Services

Meeting of: Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 31st October 2023

Ward(s): all wards

Subject: Better Care Fund (BCF) Plan.

1. Synopsis

1.1 This report seeks Health and Wellbeing Board approval of the Islington 2023-25 Better Care Fund (BCF) plan. Under the BCF, local authorities and NHS Integrated Care Boards are required to enter into annual pooled budget arrangements and agree an integrated spending plan for the BCF funding. The total Islington BCF in 2023-24 is £42.6 million, which includes an additional funding allocation of £2.8m to improve hospital discharge.

1.2 The report provides an overview of the two-year (2023-25) BCF Plan, which continues to act as a strategic enabler in the development of the Islington Borough Partnership. In effect, in Islington, the Borough Partnership is the vehicle for driving further integration, and the BCF supports that work.

1.3 The BCF plan includes proposed local targets for the national BCF metrics that measure the performance of the integrated health and care system. The targets set represent an ambitious aim to continue with the post-pandemic recovery and have been developed in partnership with social care and NHS colleagues.

1.4 In most previous years BCF plans were required for a single year, however, this year a two-year plan is required. For 2023-24 the Islington BCF Plan is largely a continuation of the expenditure plan for 2022-23 with adjustments for inflation, and new allocations to support improved hospital discharge.

2. Recommendations

2.1 This report recommends that the Islington Health and Wellbeing Board

- Notes the Islington Better Care Fund (BCF) 2022-23 performance; and the impact that the Better Care Fund continues to have in supporting further integration of health and care services in Islington.
- Agrees the Islington Better Care Fund (BCF) 2023-25 Plan; noting that the submission was already approved for submission by the Chair of the HWB to meet the national timeframes.
- Delegates to the Director of Adult Social Care the power to make further decisions in relation to the 2023-25 Islington BCF Plan and associated national reporting within the parameters set out in section 3 below.

3. Background

3.1 Framework

3.1.1 The Better Care Fund (BCF) is a national programme that aims to further develop integrated health and social care for residents. Under the BCF, NHS Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) (formerly Clinical Commissioning Groups) and local authorities are required to enter into annual pooled budget arrangements and agree an integrated spending plan to be approved by each organisation and then by the Health and Wellbeing Board. The BCF Plans will then be assured by NHS England and local government representatives.

3.1.2 Locally, the Better Care Fund represents one of several pooled budgets held between the Local Authority and the ICB. Islington is proud of its tradition of integrated working. We want to build on this and continue to grow the partnership approach to ensuring our residents received the joined up care they want and need. This strategy is driven by the Borough Partnership, and the BCF plays an important role in supporting this work.

3.1.3 Every year, the Department for Health and Social Care publish a BCF Policy and Planning Requirements. These set out the conditions and framework under which BCF plans must be created, delivered, and include mandatory BCF plan templates and a timetable for submission. As in previous years, the BCF policy set out two overarching objectives to be delivered through BCF plans:

- enabling people to stay well, safe, and independent at home for longer.
- providing the right care, at the right place, at the right time

3.1.4 The BCF Policy also set out two key priorities that align with the overarching objectives:

- Improving overall quality of life for people, and reducing pressure on Urgent and Emergency Care, acute and social care services through investing in preventative services
- Tackling delayed discharge and bringing about sustained improvements in discharge outcomes and wider system flow

3.1.5 Unlike in previous years, all areas are required to submit a two-year, rather than one-year, BCF plans. The plans must be submitted by completing two templates. The first template is a 'Narrative Plan' setting out the overall approach to integrating health and social care in Islington which as noted above, is largely driven by the work of the Borough Partnership.

3.1.6 The second template is the 'Planning Template.' This requires an expenditure plan, setting out how the Islington BCF funding will be allocated, proposed targets for the BCF Metrics and a completed intermediate care demand and capacity analysis.

3.1.7 The Islington BCF submission has been approved by both the ICB and the Chair of the HWB in order to meet the deadline. The plan is subject to final Health and Wellbeing Board approval. This report therefore summarises the key elements of the Islington BCF plan and seeks Board approval of the plan.

3.2 Income and Expenditure

3.2.1 As above, we are submitting a plan for 2 years. This income is summarised below.

Source	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Disabled Facilities Grant	£1,939,775	£1,939,775	£1,939,775*
IBCF Contribution (from LBI)	£14,500,901	£14,500,901	£14,501,901
NHS Minimum Contribution (from ICB)	£22,045,222	£23,292,982	£24,611,365
Local Authority Discharge Funding	-	£2,033,004	£3,374,787
ICB Discharge Funding	-	£793,500	£1,537,960
TOTAL	£38,485,898	£42,560,162	£45,965,788

*Final DFG amounts for 2024-25 are not yet confirmed

3.2.2 As shown above, the NHS minimum contribution continues to increase each year. In addition, for 2023-24 there is the new Discharge Funding coming to the Local Authority and the ICB.

3.2.3 The BCF has mandated categories of expenditure that we use below to show how the income above is allocated.

Application	2023-24
Residential Placements	£12,847,404
Home Care or Domiciliary Care	£11,834,408
Community Based Schemes (predominantly Whittington Health services like District Nursing)	£3,859,046
Bed based intermediate Care Services (services provided at St Pancras and elsewhere)	£3,824,344
Home-based intermediate care services (Discharge to Assess, Take Home and Settle)	£2,621,394
DFG Related Schemes	£1,939,775
High Impact Change Model for Managing Transfer of Care (Hospital Social Work, D2A assessment and support)	£1,752,408
Prevention / Early Intervention (Voluntary sector services like HOYD, Stroke Association, Age UK)	£1,124,034
Assistive Technologies and Equipment (Community Equipment)	£1,064,596
Urgent Community Response (Whittington Rapid Response)	£910,000
Personalised Care at Home (joint funded care)	£401,156
Enablers for Integration (joint roles at the council and ICB)	£286,597

Carers Services (contribution to the Islington Carers pooled budget)	£95,000
Grand Total	£42,560,162

3.2.4 There is a key issue in relation to the use of the Discharge Funding. The councils and the ICB in NCL have struggled to reach an agreement on the use of the discharge funding for 23/24 and 24/25.

3.2.5 An alternative approach is being taken in accord with the principles we agreed for open book transparency between partners and the one-off allocation to social care of 50% of the ICB Discharge allocation in 2023-24 (£3.4m).

3.2.6 This has been agreed on the condition of a jointly appointed and funded independent financial expert, to review both the Discharge Fund, BCF and all relevant budgets within both social care and the ICB that the independent financial expert and CFO's feel necessary to resolve this issue, with open book financial reporting and activity reporting on both sides.

3.2.7 This independent expert's work will report jointly to a nominated council CFO –Jon Rowney, Executive Director, Corporate Services, Camden Council, and Phill Wells, ICB CFO and they will be able to make binding recommendations to inform how the 2024-25 BCF and Additional Discharge Fund are spent in an equitable way.

3.2.8 Terms of Reference, a specification and principles for the work including definitive timescales for completion will need to be jointly agreed between CFOs and the independent financial advisor before the final stages of BCF sign off including the sign offs are completed and the £3.4m one off for 23-24 is transferred to councils.

3.2.9 Given the dynamic nature of these plans, we are asking the HWB board to delegate to the Director of Adult Social Services the authority to agree the use of the Local Authority Discharge Fund for 2023-24 and to make agreements regarding the 2023-24 fund.

3.3 Metrics

3.3.1 The Better Care Fund for 2023-24 has five metrics as below.

Metric	2022-23 plan	2022-23 performance	2023-24 plan	Notes
Avoidable admissions	655	636	621	Exceeded target for 22-23
Falls	n/a	339	400	New metric for 23-24. The 2022-23 performance was exceptionally low, so we have set a cautious target, but

				showing a trend of reduction over 4 years.
Discharge to usual place of residence	91.8%	92.8%	92.6%	Exceeded target for 22-23
Residential admissions	80	88	88	We continue to see increasing complexity in care needs following the pandemic and are expecting this measure to increase in 23-24.
Reablement	79%	81%	87%	Exceeded target for 22-23

3.3.2 Note that full details of the metrics including technical specifications are available in the attached documents.

4. Implications

4.1. Financial Implications

4.1.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

4.1.2 The Better Care Fund, as all S75 arrangements, is overseen by the Islington S75 Partnership. This is co-chaired by the Director of Integration at the North Central London Integrated Care Board and the Director of Adult Social Services at the London Borough of Islington. Both organisations have appropriate financial representatives and oversee the spend of the budget through that body.

4.1.3 Any financial implications arising should be considered and agreed as necessary by the Council and/or the Integrated Care Board (ICB).

4.1.4 Any plans or strategies derived or agreed in relation to this report should use existing available resources and therefore not create a budget pressure for the Council or the Integrated Care Board (ICB).

4.2. Legal Implications

4.2.1 The Care Act 2014 amended the NHS Act 2006 to provide the legislative basis for the Better Care Fund. It allows for the mandate to NHS England to include specific requirements relating to the establishment and use of an integration fund.

4.2.2 The NHS Act 2006 allows named partners (NHS bodies and local social services authorities) to contribute to a common fund (pooling resources), which can be used to commission health and social care related services. This power allows a local authority to commission health services and NHS commissioners to commission social care services. It enables joint commissioning and commissioning of integrated services.

4.2.3 The Better Care Fund is a National Programme which requires local authorities and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), to pool budgets through a section 75 agreement.

4.3. **Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030**

4.3.1 There are no environmental implications from this report.

4.4. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

4.4.1 The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

4.4.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required in relation to this report.

5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

5.1. **That the Islington Health and Wellbeing Board**

5.2. **Notes** the Islington Better Care Fund (BCF) 2022-23 performance; and the impact that the Better Care Fund continues to have in supporting further integration of health and care services in Islington.

5.3. **Agrees** the Islington Better Care Fund (BCF) 2023-25 Plan; noting that the submission was already approved for submission by the Chair of the HWB to meet the national timeframes.

5.4. **Delegates** to the Director of Adult Social Care the power to make further decisions in relation to the 2023-25 Islington BCF Plan and associated national reporting within the parameters set out above.

Appendices:

Islington BCF Planning Template 2023-25

Islington BCF Narrative Plan 2023-25

Final report clearance:

Signed by: **John Everson, Director of Adult Social Care**

Date: **11th October 2023**

Report Authors: Dan Windross, Assistant Director, Integration Development & Population Health Directorate. NHS North Central London Integrated Care Board.

Tel: 020 3880 7146

Email: dan.windross@nhs.net

Jodi Pilling, Director of Strategic Commissioning and Strategy – Islington Council.
Islington Council.

Tel: 020 7527 3874

Email: jodi.pilling2@islington.gov.uk

Financial Implications Author: Shakeel Yasin, Assistant Director – Finance. Adult Social Services & Community Engagement and Wellbeing. Islington Council.

Tel: 020 7527 8929

Email: Shakeel.Yasin@islington.gov.uk

Legal Implications Author: Stephanie Broomfield, Principal Lawyer – Islington Council.

Tel: 020 7527 3380

Email: stephanie.broomfield@islington.gov.uk