

REPORT TO: Health & Wellbeing Board

DATE: 6th October 2021

REPORTING OFFICER: Director of Social Services

PORTFOLIO: Adult Social Care
Health & Wellbeing

SUBJECT: Better Care (Pooled) Fund

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To receive a brief overview of the work carried out over the year in order to ensure that the Better Care (Pooled) Fund was balanced at the end of the financial year 2020/21.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That the Board note the contents of the report.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background

In April 2013, Halton Borough Council (HBC) and NHS Halton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) entered into a Joint Working Agreement (JWA), hosted by HBC and pursuant to Section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006, for the commissioning of services for people with Complex Care needs. This agreement was supported by a pooled funding arrangement.

With the introduction of the Better Care Fund (BCF) during 2015, a revised JWA took effect from April 2015, which included the BCF allocation, along with the Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) for capital projects.

3.2 Although the JWA was working well and pressures within pooled budget were managed effectively as a system, during the financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20 considerable pressures were placed onto the pool. In the main this was in relation to an overspend position on Continuing Health Care (CHC) and Community Care budgets.

As such, work took place during 2019/20 to separate out the CHC and Community Care budget elements, from the pooled budget arrangements. The new 3-year JWA was introduced from 1.4.20, running until 31.3.23, which reflected the changes in the arrangements of the pool, in order to ensure we were able to continue to work jointly/collaboratively on the challenges that face the health and social care system within the Borough.

3.3 At the end of the financial year 2019/20, we reported a final outturn position of £117k overspent, against a pooled budget of c. £22.4m (inc. DFG). As we had exceeded the budget, action was needed to bring the budget back in line during 2020/21.

3.4 As a result of Pandemic, although there were significant challenges across the system during 2020/21, under the direction of the Pooled Budget Manager, work was undertaken by colleagues across HBC and CCG to review the BCF schemes within the pooled budget, identify areas for savings and introduce new ways of working/reconfigure services within the Borough to relieve pressures across the system, including financial pressures.

Examples of this included:-

- Introduction on an additional '500' hours of block purchased, highly mobile and responsive domiciliary care commissioned from Premier Care – the lead provider. This recruited staff from outside of the borough. This arrangement continues to be a central component to achieving the Reablement First approach by releasing capacity in the established Reablement service, providing Reablement capacity if needed and significantly reducing the reliance on transitional beds.
- The strengthening of the Reablement First approach has facilitated more people out of hospital into the community with support. Processes through the service have reduced length of stay and therefore increased available capacity and been able to release a number of bed based environments.
- Rapid assessment and a speeding up of the pathway through Intermediate Care bed based services utilising discharge to assess approaches has significantly reduced length of stay, maintained the number of people benefitting from this service and reducing the overall number of beds required .

The Board should note that during 2021/22 we are continuing to focus released resources on enhancing community health and social care to support people in their own homes.

3.5 This work was overseen by the Better Care Development Group (BCDG), whose key responsibilities include being responsible for the oversight, management, monitoring and use of the Pooled Fund.

Regular updates were also provided to the Executive Partnership Board (EPB) whose overall aim is to ensure that an integrated system is developed and effectively used in the commissioning of delivery of personalised, responsive and holistic care to those who are most in need within our community.

3.6 Although additional financial support, associated with the Hospital Discharge Programme, will have provided some financial support into the pooled budget, it is only by working together collaboratively and in partnership, we have been able to provide a range of options to support people in their lives by jointly designing and delivering services around the needs of local people. This has aided our ability to be ensure that services are sustainable, particularly with the continued challenges that we are presented with and are appropriately resourced.

3.7 The work carried out during the past 12-18 months, resulted in an end of financial year 2020/21 position of £157k under budget, after deducting the overspend carried forward

from 2019/20, this left an underspend position of £40k, against an overall pooled budget of c. £21m.

3.8 Moving forward the EPB and BCDG are engaging in the development of place and utilising their experience of joint work and pooled budget management.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None identified.

5.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Better Care (Pooled) Fund currently provides funding for (list not exhaustive):-

- Intermediate Care Services (Bed Based & Community)
- Equipment
- Capital Projects (DFG)
- Carers Support
- Numerous community based schemes
- Maintaining Adult Social Care provision

5.2 The Better Care (Pooled) Fund for 2021/22 is c. £22.6m (inc. DFG).

5.3 As a result of the new ways of working through the continued development of the One Halton approach, there may be an opportunity to extend the current joint working arrangements and associated pooled funding arrangements within the context of One Halton place development.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

None identified.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

None identified.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

The Better Care (Pooled) Fund in Halton supports the Council's strategic priority of improving health.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

None Identified.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None Identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 None identified.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None identified.

9.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

9.1

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Joint Working Agreement – HBC & NHS Halton CCG	Available on request	Sue Wallace Bonner Susan.wallace-bonner@halton.gov.uk