

REPORT TO: Health & Wellbeing Board

DATE: 22nd March 2023

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director - Adult Services, Halton Borough Council

PORTFOLIO: Adult Social Care

SUBJECT: Halton Borough Council and NHS Cheshire & Merseyside: Joint Working Agreement (Better Care (Pooled) Fund)

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To present a brief overview of the Joint Working Agreement (JWA) between Halton Borough Council (HBC) and NHS Cheshire & Merseyside (CM), which will take effect from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024, and which will replace the current JWA, which is due to expire on 31st March 2023.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDED: That the Board

(1) Note the contents of the report.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Introduction

Halton began its journey of joint working/integration between Health and Adult Social Care back in 2003 with a pooled budget being established for Intermediate Care and Equipment services, in addition to specific grants allocations.

Following the emergence of ¹NHS Halton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) further work progressed to establish/consolidate joint working arrangements between HBC and NHS Halton CCG, which culminated in the organisations entering into an initial 3 year Joint Working Agreement (hosted by HBC) from April 2013 (Pursuant to Section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006) for the commissioning of services for people with Complex Care needs.

Since it's original development, the JWA and associated Pooled Budget has gone through a number of changes, including the inclusion of the Better Care Fund in 2015 and the separating out of the Continuing Healthcare and Community Care budget elements in 2020.

3.2 Joint Working Agreement (JWA) & Governance Arrangements

This Agreement provides the legal framework in which HBC and NHS CM work

¹ As a result of the Health and Care Act 2022, NHS CCGs ceased to exist in statutory form from 30th June 2022 and were replaced from 1st July 2022 with Integrated Care Board (ICBs). Halton's Joint Working Agreement transferred from NHS Halton CCG to NHS Cheshire & Merseyside on 1st July 2022.

together in order to achieve their strategic objectives of commissioning and providing cost effective, personalised, quality services to the people of Halton. As part of the Joint Working Agreement, HBC and NHS CM have entered into a Pooled Budget arrangement. This pool currently contains the expenditure on delivering care and support services for adults with complex needs. During 2014, partners within Halton worked collaboratively, within the national guidance and framework to develop Halton's original Better Care Fund (BCF) Plan, at which point it was agreed that the BCF would be incorporated into the existing Pooled Budget arrangements.

There is a robust governance framework in place for the JWA and Pooled Budget, which includes the One Halton Operations & Delivery Sub-Committee (ODSC), which is responsible for the direction, oversight, monitoring and use of the Pooled Budget.

The ODSC is supported in this duty by the Better Care Commissioning Advisory Group (BCCAG). The BCCAG will review in detail information pertaining to Pool impact, quality, performance, activity and finances, and make recommendations to the ODSC on remedial action plans or future use of the Pool as appropriate.

In addition to the ODSC, a One Halton Finance and Performance Sub-Committee has been established, which whilst having wider functions and duties relating to Place-based finance and performance, also has the following responsibilities in respect of the Better Care (Pooled) Fund:-

- To consider financial and performance information relating to the Pooled Fund and reviewing and recommending remedial actions where there is variation against agreed plans.

3.3 Benefits of Joint Working

By working together collaboratively and in partnership we are able to achieve and sustain good health and wellbeing for the people of Halton and are 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 rather than focusing on the boundaries of our individual organisations. This aids in our ability to ensure that services are sustainable, particularly with the continued challenges that we are presented with.

If we didn't undertake this approach then it has the potential to have a negative impact on the Health & Social Care system within the Borough, for example:-

- A lack of cohesive approach could lead to fragmentation of service delivery and lack of ownership.
- No clear picture of the demand and capacity on services shared by system leaders, which could lead to our inability to develop robust plans for the future service needs of local people.
- Lack of choice/information for service users and possible duplication of provision.

This would have the potential to ultimately lead to a lack of confidence in the system and our inability to deliver high quality services in order to ensure that service users receive the outcomes that they want.

3.4 **Future Opportunities**

Working jointly/collaboratively is key to our approach in Halton.

Both HBC and NHS CM remain committed to developing our integrated approach to service delivery and transformation to improve the Health and Wellbeing of Halton residents.

With this in mind, at the time of writing this report, we are seeking agreement to extend the current JWA for 12 months to allow time for a fuller review of the agreement to take place, which would include exploring opportunities for where the arrangements could possibly be extended.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None identified.

5.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 At the time of writing this report, HBC and NHS CM are in the process of finalising the Better Care (Pooled) Fund budget for 2023/24.

5.2 With effect from 1st April 2023, the pooled budget will include:-

- Better Care Fund and Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF)
 - Includes spend in areas such as Intermediate Care Services, Carers, Equipment Services, Care Homes, Domiciliary Care, Telecare, Supported Discharge, Community Respiratory and Rehabilitation Services
- Disabled Facility Grant

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**

Those people who are in receipt of long term care whether that is funding from Health or Social Care are those people in our communities with some of the most clinically complex and severe on going needs, so it is essential we have effective mechanisms in place to ensure that people we provide services to receive appropriate outcomes.

The integrated system and pooled budget arrangements will continue to ensure that the resources available to both Health and Social Care are effectively used in the delivery of personalised, responsive and holistic care to those who are most in need.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

None identified.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The JWA complies with the financial standing orders of HBC and NHS CM and the regulatory and monitoring arrangements contained within.

7.2 At the time of writing this report, there are changes taking place in respect to the One Halton governance arrangements which will/may impact on the associated governance arrangements outlined in paragraph 3.2.

HBC and NHS C&M will ensure that any changes made will still provide for a robust governance framework in place for the management and monitoring of the JWA and Pooled Budget.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None associated with this report.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no environmental or climate implications as a direct result of this report.

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

10.1	Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
	Joint Working Agreement – HBC & NHS Cheshire & Merseyside 1.4.23 - 31.3.24 (Draft)	Copy available on request	Sue Wallace Bonner Susan.Wallace-Bonner@halton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 511 8825