

**REPORT TO:** Health & Wellbeing Board

**DATE:** 9<sup>th</sup> July 2025

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Sue Wallace-Bonner, Executive Director of Adult Services, Halton Borough Council

**PORTFOLIO:** Adult Social Care

**SUBJECT:** Better Care Fund (BCF) 2024-25: Year End Report

**WARD(S):** Borough Wide

## 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To update the Health and Wellbeing Board on the Better Care Fund 2024-25 Year End report, for information, following its submission on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board: -

1) *Note the contents of the report and associated appendix.*

## 3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 3.1 BCF Year End Report 2024-25

The BCF Year End Report for 2024-25 is attached at **Appendix 1** and details the following information: -

#### 3.1.1 Tab 3 – National Conditions

In addition to confirming that the Section 75 for the BCF Plan has been finalised and signed off, there are four national conditions which are confirmed as being met: -

- A jointly agreed plan is in place;
- The plan aims to support the BCF Policy Objective in respect to enabling people to stay well, safe and independent at home for longer;
- The Plan aims to support the BCF Policy Objective of providing the right care in the right place, at the right time; and
- It aims to maintain the NHS's contribution to Adult Social Care and investment in NHS commissioned out of hospital services.

#### 3.1.2 Tab 4 – Metrics

There are four national metrics that needed to be reported upon. We have reported that we have meet three out of four of them.

In respect to the metric relating to **Residential Admissions** we have reported that data is not available to assess progress against the target at present. This is because there have been changes to statutory returns and this has impacted on the Council's reporting systems and we could not guarantee the accuracy of this data at this stage.

3.1.3 **Tabs 5.1 & 5.2 Capacity and Demand Guidance & Assumptions and Actual Activity**

As part of the BCF Plan for 2024/25, details were included in respect to estimated demand in relation to people discharged from Hospital to Intermediate Care Services and those requiring access to Intermediate Care from the Community, in addition to Urgent Community Response services.

The end of year report contains details on actual activity/admissions to these services during January – March 2025, along with any changes to the estimates that we had included within the original plan.

3.1.4 **Tab 5 – Income Actual**

This lists the actual income received in 2024/25, against the planned income and includes the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) underspend (£419,584) which was carried forward from 2023/24.

3.1.5 **Tab 7b – Expenditure Tab (NB. 7a – Expenditure Guidance: This tab just contains guidance for completing Tab 7b)**

This tab contains details of related spend for each of the schemes in our BCF Plan for 2024-25. It also includes the number of outputs delivered during the year, where this information was required.

3.1.6 **Tab 8 – Year End Impact Summary**

This summary confirms that the overall delivery of the BCF in our locality has improved joint working between health and social care and our schemes for 2024-25 were implemented as planned and had a positive impact.

Two main successes highlighted were: -

- *Collaborative Leadership & Shared Governance*
  - There is a history of pooled resources in place. This has continued to be in place/has been maintained throughout the year with agreed governance arrangements in place, supported by the Joint Working Agreement (Section 75) between Halton Borough Council and NHS Cheshire & Merseyside (Halton Place).
- *Joint Commissioning & Pooled or aligned resources*
  - Integrated commissioning arrangements supported through the Better Care Fund has successfully delivered a number of schemes including the home first approach for hospital discharge ensuring resources were allocated to maintain improved capacity.

Two main challenges highlighted were: -

- *Digital records, data and shared information*
  - Plans still in development for integrated care records – work is ongoing regionally, but progress is slow.
- *Sustainable Care Provider Market*
  - Challenges in ensuring the care market as a whole remains viable and sustainable remains an ongoing challenge due to a number of pressures in respect to finances available and also workforce. This is a national

issue and is not just specific to Halton. Work continues with providers to support them in addressing the challenges that are faced.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None identified.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Better Care Fund sits within the wider pooled budget arrangement and the financial context of the local health and social care environment. The pooling of resources and integrating processes and approach to the management of people with health and social care needs will support effective resource utilisation.

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

##### **6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence**

Developing integration further between Halton Borough Council and the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside (Halton Place) will have a direct impact on improving the health of people living in Halton. The plan that is developed is linked to the priorities identified for the borough by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

##### **6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy**

None identified.

##### **6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families**

None identified.

##### **6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need**

Linked to the Council priority relating to improving health, promoting wellbeing and supporting greater independence, the plan will also aim to help those who are most in need within our community.

##### **6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future**

None identified.

##### **6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community**

None identified.

#### **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Management of risks associated with service redesign and project implementation are through the governance structures outlined within the Joint Working Agreement in place between Halton Borough Council and NHS Cheshire & Merseyside.

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 - 31.3.25	Copy available on request	Sue Wallace-Bonner <a href="mailto:Susan.Wallace-Bonner@halton.gov.uk">Susan.Wallace-Bonner@halton.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0151 511 8825