

REPORT TO: Health & Wellbeing Board

DATE: 14th January 2026

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director - Adults

PORTFOLIO: Adult Social Care

SUBJECT: Better Care Fund (BCF) Plan 2025/26 – Quarter 2 Update

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Health and Wellbeing Board on the Quarter 2 (Q2) BCF Plan 2025/26 following its submission to the National BCF Team.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDED: That

- a) the report and associated appendix be noted.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Following submission of the BCF Plan for 2025/26 in March 2025¹, quarterly monitoring has been mandated from Q1 2025/26 onwards. Attached is a copy of the Q2 report which was submitted in line with the national requirements.

As at the end of Q2, there are no areas of concern being highlighted to the Board.

3.2 Tab 3 – National Conditions

In addition to confirming that we have a Section 75 agreement in place to support the BCF Plan, there are four national conditions which we have confirmed we are meeting, as follows: -

- That we have a jointly agreed plans in place;
- We are implementing the BCF objectives;
- We are complying with the grant and funding conditions, including maintaining the NHS's contribution to Adult Social Care; and
- Complying with oversight and support processes.

3.3 Tab 4 – Metrics

There are three national metrics that are assessed, linked to: -

¹ Letter received from NHS England on 11th June 2025, confirming approval of the Plan following the regional assurance process.

- Emergency Admissions;
- Discharge Delays
- Residential Admissions

In respect to Emergency Admissions the monthly activity between April and July was below the planned levels and therefore we are on track to meet the goal set.

April to July Discharge Delays were lower than planned, but August did see a slight breach, but it was recognised that there were a few very long complex patients that pushed the average up. However, we are still on track to meet the goal set.

Unfortunately data wasn't available at the end of Q2 in respect to Residential Admissions, but data is being compiled and will be available at the end of Q3.

3.4 **Tab 5 – Expenditure**

This section required confirmation of an update to actual income received in 2025-26 as well as spend to date. As can be seen the income received is what was planned.

Expenditure as at the end of Q2 was lower than 50% of the planned income. This is mainly due to a delay in receiving the quarterly contract invoices so these remain unpaid at the end of the Q2. It is expected that these will be received shortly and should be included in the Q3 return.

- 3.5 In summary, no issues in relation to spend or activity at the end of Q2 are currently being reported. Spend and activity will continue to be monitored via the Better Care Commissioning Advisory Group, as part of the joint working arrangements between the Local Authority and NHS Cheshire & Merseyside (Halton Place).

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None identified at this stage.

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 continues to support effective resource utilisation.

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

- 6.1 **Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence**
Exploring opportunities for integration further between Halton Borough Council and the NHS Cheshire & Merseyside will have a direct impact on improving the health of people living in Halton. The BCF Plan 2025/26 that has been 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

None identified.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

None identified.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

None identified.

6.7 Resilient and Reliable Organisation

None identified.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Management of risks associated with the BCF Plan and associated funding is through the governance structures outlined within the Joint Working Agreement.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None identified at this stage.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None identified at this stage.

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

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.