

REPORT TO: Health & Wellbeing Board

DATE: 25th March 2026

REPORTING OFFICER: Director, Commissioning & Provision (Interim)

PORTFOLIO: Adult Social Care

SUBJECT: Better Care Fund (BCF) Plan 2025/26 – Quarter 3 Update

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To update the Health and Wellbeing Board on the Quarter 3 (Q3) 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 Q3 report which was submitted in line with the national requirements.

As at the end of Q3, 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 September was below the planned levels and therefore we are on track to meet the goal set. NB. At the time of submission, data was only available up to the end of September.

In respect to Discharge Delays, like Emergency Admissions, at the time of submission data was only available up to the end of September, however local data shows improvements in No Right to Reside and time taken to discharge patients.

In respect to Residential Admissions, based on Client Level Data (CLD), as at the end of Q2 (end of September 2025), 46 permanent long term admissions have been made, which equates to a rate of 181.3 per 100k population. At the time of submission Q3 CLD was currently being compiled, but we are confident that the numbers at the end of 2025/26 will come under target - lower the number of permanent admissions is better.

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 Q3 was lower than 75% of the planned income. This is mainly due to changes in the invoicing procedures for some Health providers, resulting in invoicing delays. These remain unpaid at the end of the third quarter, but will be paid before the end of the financial year so will be included in the end of year BCF return.

3.5 In summary, no issues in relation to spend or activity at the end of Q3 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.