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| BRIEFING | TO: | Health and Wellbeing Board |
| | DATE: | Wednesday, 24 th September 2025 |
| | LEAD OFFICER | Steph Watt Health and Care Portfolio Lead, SYICB/RMBC E-mail: steph.watt@nhs.net |
| | TITLE: | HWBB Report for Better Care Fund (BCF) Call-Off Partnership / Work Order 2025/26 |
| Background | | |
| 1.1 | The purpose of this report is to confirm that Rotherham Metropolitan Council (RMBC) and South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (Rotherham Place) have jointly developed a new BCF Call-Off Partnership/Work Order in 2025/26, which reflects local need and priorities. | |
| 1.2 | The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) published the BCF Policy Framework for the implementation of the Better Care Fund (BCF) for 2025-26. | |
| 1.3 | <p>As set out in the BCF Policy Framework, the delivery of the BCF will support key priorities for the health and care system that align with the two BCF objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 1: reform to support the shift from sickness to prevention. Objective 2: reform to support people living independently and the shift from hospital to home. | |
| 1.4 | <p>The government is committed to reforming and strengthening neighbourhood services across health and social care, with the goal of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing more care closer to home increasing the focus on prevention so that people are living healthier and more independent lives harnessing digital technology to transform care | |
| 1.5 | NHS England and the Government have published the BCF Planning Requirements for 2025/26, the vision for the BCF is to support people to live healthy, independent and dignified lives, through joining up health, social care and housing services seamlessly around the person. | |
| 1.6 | <p>The use of BCF mandatory funding streams including NHS minimum contribution, Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and Local Authority Better Care Fund Grant must be jointly agreed by Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and Local Authorities to reflect local health and care priorities, with plans signed off by Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs).</p> <p>To give local areas greater flexibility in how they meet the objectives of the BCF, the previously ring-fenced discharge fund has been consolidated within the BCF. While discharge funding is now consolidated, reducing discharge delays remains a critical shared priority across the NHS and local authorities, and plans should reflect a continued focus on this area. The ICB discharge funding has been consolidated into the NHS minimum contribution to the BCF. Local authority discharge funding has been consolidated into the Local Authority Better Care Grant, formerly known as the improved Better Care Fund.</p> | |

Key Issues

- 2.1 The Better Care Fund will continue to provide a mechanism for personalised, integrated approaches to health, social care and housing that support people to remain independent at home or to return to independence after an episode in hospital. The BCF was established by the Government to provide funds to local areas to support the integration of health and social care.
- 2.2 The BCF Plan for Rotherham has been developed to promote and implement integration, and these schemes are set out in the BCF Call-Off Partnership / Work Order 2025/26 (Appendix 2).
- 2.3 The BCF Planning Requirements 2025-26 illustrates that a formal agreement needs to be established in each local area to enable the Council and the SYICB (Rotherham Place) to work collaboratively in delivering the services. The BCF Call-Off Partnership / Work Order 2025/26 needs to be fully signed by both partner organisations and in place by 30th September 2025.
- 2.4 The BCF Call-Off Partnership/ Work Order 2025/26 has established two Better Care fund pooled budgets. With each organisation hosting one fund, the proposal allows both the Council and SYICB (Rotherham Place) to maximise the benefits of hosting a pooled budget.
- 2.5 A performance management programme has been developed which will allow a close focus on each of the BCF schemes. The schemes have been mapped into two pooled budgets to allow similar services to explore opportunities for further integrated working, and to work together to collect and monitor data, ensuring duplication is avoided.
- 2.6 The BCF Executive Group is the body which has strategic oversight of the whole BCF plan. The BCF Operational Group will gather reviews and interprets performance data, and ensures targets are monitored and met. The officer groups will be held accountable across the system and have key representatives from both RMBC and SYICB (Rotherham Place). Terms of Reference for each of these groups are set out in BCF Call-Off Partnership / Work Order.
- 2.7 This partnership will work across all Partners to ensure effective delivery of the ambitions set out in the BCF metric plans. The SYICB (Rotherham Place) and Council have agreed a risk fund, spread across the two pooled budgets, which will be used to fund any shortfall due to targets being missed, or unexpected overspends.
- 2.8 The details of the two pooled funds are set out in the BCF Call Off Partnership/Work Order. In brief, there are two funds within the £54.5m BCF Plan for 2025/26. One fund, hosted by the SYICB (Rotherham Place), is valued at £20.7m and the other fund, hosted by the Council, is valued at £33.8m. Both funds sit under the same Section 75 Framework Agreement which provides governance for the BCF plan.
- 2.9 The BCF funding includes the minimum NHS contribution of £28.41m, Local Authority Better Grant of £17.86m, Additional LA Contribution of £4.49m and DFG of £3.8m for 2025/26 which amounts to a total of £54.56 million.
- 2.10 In line with previous years the BCF Risk Pool will be utilised to contribute to the increase in demand and to support discharges from hospital.
- 2.11 Risk sharing agreements have been agreed to protect both parties from areas of overspend and financial risk.

| Key Actions and Relevant Timelines | |
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| 3.1 | <p>The BCF Call-Off Partnership / Work Order 2025/26 (Appendix 2) will go through various stages of the approval process as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCF Executive Group – 11th August 2025 • Health and Wellbeing Board – 24th September 2025 • Signed by both partner organisations and in place by 30th September 2025. |
| Implications for Health Inequalities | |
| 4.1 | Addressing health inequalities is integral to the allocation of BCF resource and funded schemes. This includes contributing to achieving the strategic aims of developing healthy lifestyles and prevention pathways, supporting prevention and early diagnosis of chronic conditions and targeting variation. |
| 4.2 | BCF funded schemes which reduce health inequalities include social prescribing, Breathing Space and project support for the implementation of Population Health Management (PHM) priorities. |
| Recommendations | |
| 5.1 | <p>That the Health and Wellbeing Board approves the:</p> <p>(I) Better Care Fund (BCF) Call-Off Partnership / Work Order for 2025/26.</p> |