

Westmorland and Furness Council

Report Title:	2023-2025 Better Care Fund Update
Meeting:	Westmorland and Furness Report
Meeting Date:	22 April 2024
Report Author:	Cath Whalley, Director of Adult Social Care, Westmorland and Furness Council; Ed Tallis, ICB Director of Place, North Cumbria; Jane Scattergood, Director of Health and Care Integration, South Cumbria
Lead Cabinet Member(s):	Cllr Patricia Bell – Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Care Cllr Andrew Jarvis – Cabinet Member for Finance
Wards Affected?	All
PUBLIC, PART EXEMPT OR FULLY EXEMPT	Public
List of Appendices (if any)	Appendix A – Draft Better Care Fund Tables Appendix B – Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB Better Care Fund Review Specification Appendix C – Better Care Fund Quarter 3 Submission

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on Westmorland and Furness 2023-2025 Better Care Fund and asks the Board to approve in principle revised funding tables in appendix A.
- 1.2 The report asks for delegations to be put in place for 2024/25 in relation to the approval of the 2023-2025 Better Care Fund plan updates, quarterly updates and to agree virements to the agreed plan within the financial year to respond to ongoing reviews.
- 1.3 The report notes the Lancashire & South Cumbria ICB Better Care Fund review specification that has been agreed through the delegated process agreed by the Board on 5th December 2023.
- 1.4 The report notes the Quarter 3 Better Care Fund submission made to NHS England 10th February 2024.

2. Recommendation

For the reasons set out in this report, it is recommended that -

- 2.1 That the Board approve in principle the revised 2023-25 funding tables in Appendix A
- 2.2 That the Board formally agree to delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chairs of the Board to make required

2023-2025 Better Care Fund updated planning submissions and Quarterly Reports to NHS England/Better Care Fund Team.

2.3 That the Board formally agree to delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chairs of the Board, the authority to agree variations and/or changes to the Better Care Fund plan during the 2024-2025 delivery plan period to ensure flexibility to meet challenges most effectively within the health and social care system.

2.4 That the Board notes the contents of the Quarter 3 submission.

3. Information: the Rationale and Evidence

3.1 The Better Care Fund (BCF) is a joint plan between Westmorland & Furness Council, Lancashire & South Cumbria ICB and North East and North Cumbria ICB.

3.2 Since 2015 The Better Care Fund has been a pooled fund arrangement by NHS and Local Authority partners that was designed to incentivise integrated delivery of health and social care. The Better Care Fund has evolved over that period and is now a collection of different grants to achieve core objectives.

3.3 At the time of writing funding allocations for some of the grant components are still to be confirmed for 2024/25. For the purposes of the report assumptions for the predicted changes in grant values have been used but are subject to change. The predicted values per grant area are set out below.

- Minimum NHS Contribution - £20.608m. This is funding made up from the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board and the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board. This is split into two parts; the Adult Social Care services spend £13.913m and the NHS Commissioned Out of Hospital Spend £6.696m.
- The improved Better Care Fund which is a grant directly paid to the local authority of £9.304m.
- The Disabled Facilities Grant, directly paid to the local authority of £3.039m
- The Additional Discharge Fund. This is in two parts, a grant that is directly paid to the local authority (£2.174m) and a contribution from the two relevant Integrated Care Boards (£1.784m).

3.4 The notable evolution for 2024/25 is the proposed additional funding to support significant developments in intermediate care (see appendix A local authority adult social care discharge grant). The funding will support both bed based and community short term support services that will support people to return home more quickly after a hospital stay, maximise their independence

and support the ethos of prevention. As well as achieving better outcomes for the people of Westmorland and Furness it is anticipated this will also support improved flow of hospital discharges and reduce the number of people who are in hospital who are discharge ready.

- 3.5 For improved clarity of reporting the number of scheme lines in appendix A has been reduced for simplification as a number of scheme lines were supporting the same or similar areas of activity.
- 3.6 The four national conditions for the Better Care Fund will remain as below.
- 3.7 National condition 1: a jointly agreed plan between local health and social care commissioners with the final sign off required by the local Health and Wellbeing Board. This includes an agreement on the use of mandatory BCF funding streams, an assessment of capacity and demand for intermediate care services and ambitions for making progress against the national metrics. This requires the Council along with its partners; The Lancashire & South Cumbria Integrated Care Board and The North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board to agree the plan that can be submitted to the Westmorland and Furness Health and Wellbeing Board for their sign off which enables the plan to be submitted to NHS England/Better Care Fund Team. Noting the spend of the Better Care Fund will be split between the Council and the Integrated Care Boards.
- 3.8 National condition 2: implementing the policy objective “enabling people to stay well, safe and independent at home for longer”. There should be a focus on promoting people’s independence in the community and addressing the health, social care and housing needs of those who are at risk of reduced independence. This focus should draw on the High Impact Change Models for reducing preventable admissions to hospital and long term care and improving health and wellbeing through housing.
- 3.9 National condition 3: implementing the policy objective “providing the right care, at the right place at the right time”. This includes ensuring people are discharged to the right place, at the right time, and with the right support that maximises their independence and leads to the best possible sustainable outcomes.
- 3.10 National Condition 4: maintaining NHS contribution to adult social care (in line with the uplift to the NHS minimum contribution to the BCF) and investment in NHS commissioned out of hospital services.
- 3.11 Beyond the 4 conditions (and the separate grant conditions of the Adult Social Care Discharge Fund), areas have flexibility in how the fund is spent across health, care and housing schemes or services, but need to agree ambitions on how this spending will improve performance against the BCF 2023 to 2025 metrics

3.12 The Better Care Fund for 2024/25 will support a number of key services delivered by the Council and Health partners that ensures that the relative organisations can meet their statutory requirements and meets the health and social care needs of the population of Westmorland and Furness. These include (but not limited to):

- Support for unpaid carers
- Development of new Intermediate Care Services
- Community equipment and assistive technology
- Care management (social workers and occupational therapists)
- Reablement
- Advocacy
- Commissioned packages of care
- Supporting the social care market
- Community services to support hospital discharge

3.13 At the Board meeting on the 5th December 2023 the external review of the Better Care Fund to be commissioned by the Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB was discussed. It was agreed by the Board to put in place a delegated process to agree the specification for this review. Through this delegated process positive discussions took place between partners and the specification was agreed (appendix B). The specification supports a review of the Better Care Fund that is mindful of the existing review that is already in progress, respects local governance and will have regard to local population needs and desired outcomes.

3.14 As part of the requirements of the Better Care Fund the Westmorland and Furness system is required to submit quarterly reports to NHS-England/Better Care Fund Team. The latest quarter three report (appendix C) was submitted in February 2024.

3.15 The quarter 3 report details the system is on course to meet all the set Better Care Fund targets regarding: avoidable admissions, discharge to normal place of residence, falls, residential admissions and reablement. There do however remain some challenges regarding two of the metrics where corrected updated targets have not yet been applied by the Better Care Fund Team. This issue is currently being worked through. The report also affirms all four national conditions are being met.

4. Link to Council Plan Priorities: (People, Climate, Communities, Economy and Culture, Customers, Workforce)

- 4.1 The Better Care Fund supports the Council's priorities for People, Communities, Customers and Workforce by: ensuring that those who deliver care and the people who are in need of care will be supported to the best of our ability to help empower them to achieve their ambitions. Working with voluntary and third sector to support with the delivery of the aims of the Better Care fund. Customers will play a crucial role in the development and co-production of many of the service areas supported by the Better Care Fund. The Better Care Fund will support a health and care workforce that is focused on delivering great services and whom are valued in their role.
- 4.2 Whilst the Westmorland and Furness Better Care Fund Plan is currently under development, it will be cognisant of the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy and will be mindful with the key needs assessment data in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

5. Consultation Outcomes (with services, ward councillors & public consultation where required)

- 5.1 None that are specific to the Better Care Fund. However individual services areas supported by the Better Care Fund have and will continue to engage and/or consult with key stakeholders, including customers as part of their development.

6. Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 The Board could decide not to agree the delegations from the BCF submission process, this could result in a failure to complete required submissions by the required dates which may potentially place funding at risk.

7. Financial Implications and risk

- 7.1 At the time of writing funding allocations for some of the grant components are still to be confirmed for 2024/25. The draft 2024/25 Pooled Better Care Fund for Westmorland and Furness totals £36.909m. This includes funding from ICBs in relation to their contribution to the pooled fund for their allocation of health funding for discharges in Westmorland & Furness. It comprises the following different areas of funding:

Funding	£m	MTFP 24/25 £m	Change £m
BCF Minimum NHS Contribution	20.608	19.904	0.704
Disabled Facilities Grant	3.039	2.043	0.996
Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF)	9.304	9.304	0.000
Adult Social Care Discharge Fund (also part of the iBCF)	2.174	2.174	0.000
ICB Discharge Allocations	1.784	1.784	0.000
Total	36.909	35.209	1.700

- 7.2 The Minimum NHS Contribution of £20.608m includes the Adult Social Care minimum mandated investment totalling £13.913m. This funds Adult Social Care activity funded within Council, plans for which are agreed through the

Health & Wellbeing Board in conjunction with health partners in line with spend in other areas aligned to the different source of funding for the Pooled BCF. The funding is £0.704m more than estimated when the 2024/25 revenue budget was agreed by Council. As per the detail in Appendix A the allocations to the individual schemes have been updated to reflect the revised funding figure.

- 7.3 The Disabled Facilities Grant figure approved as part of the 2024/25 capital programme was £2.043m. As part of Q1 monitoring this will be increased to reflect the £0.996m increased grant. This grant is ring fenced for this purpose.

8. Legal & Governance Implications

- 8.1 As made clear in the 2023 to 2025 Better Care Fund Policy Framework the Health and Wellbeing Board owns the Better Care Fund joint plan. Accordingly, it is responsible for monitoring the joint plan throughout the year.

9. Human Resources Implications

- 9.1 The Better Care Fund is utilised by the Council to progress a number of initiatives to maximise independent living and funds a number of Council officers who provide care services to achieve the desired outcomes within the report.
- 9.2 Westmorland & Furness Council has a responsibility under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated regulations to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that there are arrangements in place to ensure a healthy and safe working environment for all Council related activity or services commissioned by the County Council.
- 9.3 Whilst there are no direct health and safety implications from the report itself, all Better Care Fund expenditure schemes within the responsibility of the Council require appropriate health and safety management, risk assessments, controls and monitoring arrangements to be in place as per the commitments published in the 2023/24 Annual Health & Safety Policy Statement agreed by Cabinet in April 2023.

10. Equality & Diversity Implications (including the public sector equality duty, Armed Forces Families, Care Leavers and Health inequalities implications)

- 10.1 Each of the individual schemes supported by the Better Care Fund will consider equality and diversity implications as required.

11. Background Information & Sources (used in preparation of this Report)

- 11.1 2023 to 2025 Better Care Fund Policy Framework -
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/better-care-fund-policy-framework-2023-to-2025>