

Staffordshire Health & Wellbeing Board	
Report Title:	Staffordshire Better Care Fund Plan 2019/20
Date:	6 June 2019
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Board Sponsor:	Dr Richard Harling

Recommendations

1. The Board is asked to:
 - a. Consider the recent publication of the Better Care Fund (BCF) Policy Framework for 2019/20.
 - b. Note the financial risk in relation to the funding of some services funded via CCG cash transfers.
 - c. Consider whether further escalation of this risk is required.

Background

2. In March 2019 the Health and Wellbeing Board noted the progress of the Staffordshire BCF during 2017-2019, agreed the extension of the current BCF schemes into 2019/20 and approved the delegation of the final sign-off of the 2019/20 plan to the Co-Chairs of the Board.
3. The policy framework had not been published at this time, however, minimal changes were expected.

BCF Policy Framework 2019/20

4. On 10 April, the Government published the 2019/20 BCF Policy Framework, confirming their ongoing commitment to supporting the integration of health and care. It confirmed that 2019/20 will be a year of minimal change for the BCF with the only notable change being a simplified planning and submission process.
5. The framework sets out the National Conditions, CCG minimum contribution and metrics for the BCF in 2019/20. It confirms that for 2019/20, the same National Conditions as in 2017-19 will apply. These national conditions are:
 - a. Jointly Agreed Plan
 - b. NHS contribution to adult social care is maintained in line with inflation
 - c. Agreement to invest in NHS commissioned out of hospital services
 - d. Management of transfers of care.
6. It confirmed that CCGs will still be required to pool a mandated minimum amount of funding and that local authorities will still be required to pool grant funding from the improved Better Care Fund, Winter Pressures funding and the Disabled Facilities Grant.
7. The national ambition for managing Delayed Transfers of Care (DToC), will continue to be to reduce DToCs to less than 4,000 daily delays nationally. Local DToC targets will continue to be set through the BCF.

8. In terms of the approval process, the Policy Framework confirmed that BCF Plans will be assured and moderated regionally. Plans deemed compliant at this stage will be put forward for approval by NHS England. Notably, permission to spend from the CCG ringfenced contribution will be made by NHS England only after BCF Plan approval.

BCF Funding Risk

9. Indicative funding for the Staffordshire BCF, as presented to HWB in March 2019, is shown below:

Better Care Funding 2019/20	£'000s
CCG RNF transfers to SCC for Adult Social Care (previously SCISH)	17,436
CCG cash transfers to SCC for carers	581
CCG directly commissioned	241
CCG cash transfer for ongoing costs of Care Act	2,012
TOTAL CCG cash transfer	20,271
TOTAL iBCF1	23,201
TOTAL iBCF2	5,003
CCG aligned funding	42,927
TOTAL excl DFG	91,402
Disabled Facilities Grant*	8,172
TOTAL BCF Fund	99,574

**The funding for Disabled Facilities Grants is unknown at this stage, therefore the grant total for 2018/19 has been assumed.*

10. As outlined in the BCF Policy Framework, the BCF National Conditions require an NHS contribution to adult social care. This involves a cash transfer from CCGs to local authorities. In Staffordshire, this CCG cash transfer is anticipated to be in the region of £20.271m in 2019/20, depending on the inflationary uplift.
11. In addition, the BCF mandates a minimum contribution from CCGs into the BCF pooled fund, which in Staffordshire for 2019/20 is anticipated to be £42.927m, again depending on the inflationary uplift.
12. The approval process outlined in the BCF Policy Framework and summarised in paragraph 8 above, presents a risk in relation to both CCG cash transfers to SCC and the CCG minimum contribution to the BCF pooled fund. The CCGs are unable to draw down monies from the NHS England central reserve until a Section 75 legal agreement between SCC and the CCGs is in place and are unable to agree a new Section 75 for 2019/20 until the BCF Plan has been approved and they receive authority to spend the funding.
13. Given that the planning templates and timescales have not yet been issued by NHS England, BCF Plan approval is unlikely to be secured until late summer 2019. SCC and the CCGs are currently funding the BCF schemes “at risk” and will have to continue to do so until plans are approved, and CCG funding released.

14. Given that SCC and the CCGs have agreed budgets for the financial year ahead, this “at risk” expenditure presents a risk of significant overspend; c£20m for SCC and c£43m for the CCGs should they not be able to draw down funding from the NHS England central reserve.

Risk Mitigation

15. It is very unfortunate that yet again deficiencies and delays in the national process have meant that the BCF Plans will be approved in year rather than in advance and therefore that local areas are having to spend “at risk”. This is a national issue affecting all Health and Wellbeing Board areas.
16. The risk has been raised with the West Midlands Better Care Fund Lead who has raised it with the national BCF team to seek an interim solution. In addition, SCC has raised this issue with the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) which has raised it at the national level.
17. Unfortunately to date we have received no guidance from the BCF National Team and the issue is unresolved. The HWB should consider whether further escalation is required. Given the actions already taken, the next stage would be to escalate directly to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

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List of Appendices:

None

List of Background Papers:

None