

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD 20 FEBRUARY 2024

BETTER CARE FUND (BCF) QUARTER 3 NATIONAL RETURN & BUDGET MONITORING

Board Sponsors

Mark Fitton & Simon Trickett

Authors

Victoria Whitehouse – Better Care Fund Commissioning Manager
Richard Stocks - Senior Finance Business Partner

Priorities

This report is relevant to the following Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy priorities:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prevention & inequalities | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Homes, Communities & Places |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mental Health & Wellbeing | <input type="checkbox"/> Jobs & Opportunities |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Healthy Living at All Ages | |

Safeguarding

This report has a direct impact on safeguarding children or adults.

The Better Care Fund supports the timely, safe and appropriate discharge of patients from the Acute and Community Hospitals. It also aims to enable people to stay well, safe and independent at home for longer, through a number of different initiatives and services and supports reductions in hospital admissions.

Item for Decision, or Information & Assurance

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decision | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information/assurance |
|-----------------------------------|---|

Recommendation

- 1. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to note the Better Care Fund Quarter 3 national return which was submitted to NHS England on 9 February 2024 and the Quarter 3 budget monitoring position in line with national requirement submission deadlines.**

Background

- 2. The Better Care Fund (BCF) is one of the government's national vehicles for driving health and social care integration. It requires integrated care boards (ICBs) and local government to agree a joint plan, owned by the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB).**

3. The vision for the BCF over 2023-2025 is to support people to live healthy, independent, and dignified lives, through joining up health, social care and housing services seamlessly around the person. This vision is underpinned by the two core BCF objectives set out in the national conditions. Worcestershire's BCF 2023 - 2025 plans have been developed in line with meeting the national conditions and ambitions to commission services that have an impact on the metrics.

BCF Quarter 3 Reporting

4. As stated in the BCF planning requirements 2023-25, the national programme informed the system of quarterly reporting recommencing in Quarter 2. For Quarter 3, the reporting template has been refreshed to include information on spending and activity to date against certain schemes as outlined in the 2023-25 BCF plan including expenditure and activity data for the Disabled Facilities Grant.
5. Worcestershire's submission has been completed and returned to NHS England on 9 February 2024 to meet the mandatory national submission deadlines and can be seen at **Appendix 1**. It was discussed at the September Health and Wellbeing Board meeting that the deadlines for the reports unfortunately are not within the timescales of the board meetings. Therefore, the reports are submitted to meet the national deadlines but are to be discussed retrospectively at the next board meeting. Actions can then be taken forward for the following quarterly reporting period. The national BCF team have acknowledged feedback from local systems regarding the reporting periods being misaligned with Health and Wellbeing Board dates. They are striving towards publishing a timetable schedule of submission dates for 2024 once the guidance has been completed.
6. The Quarter 3 reporting template collects information to ensure that the BCF plans in Worcestershire continue to meet the required national conditions.
 - National Condition 1: Plans are to be jointly agreed by the ICB and local council.
 - National Condition 2: Enabling people to stay well, safe and independent at home for longer.
 - National Condition 3: Provide the right care in the right place at the right time.
 - National condition 4: Maintaining the NHS's contribution to adult social care and investment in NHS commissioned out of hospital services.
7. The report also updates on the current local position to meet the metric ambitions developed in the plan and some narrative to highlight any challenges and achievements experienced throughout the quarter that may have impacted on the performance. In Worcestershire the report demonstrates that the system is currently on track to meet four out of the five metric targets from the data available at the time of submission. There are current challenges impacting on the residential admission's metric indicators. This remains largely based upon the local demographic, with an increase of complexities in need. Which has increased demand across all long-term accommodation-based services including extra care and supported living from all admission routes. This is alongside prolonged periods of high demand within all the hospital discharge pathways to support the flow through the urgent care system through critical pressure periods. Partners throughout the Health and Social Care system in Worcestershire will continue to scrutinize all long-term admissions to help understand routes into this sort of provision. It is important to note that although there are challenges in meeting the residential admissions indicator, the discharge to usual place of residence remains on track, in fact exceeding the target. Similarly, the reablement metric is also above the target to support the home first focus approach from the acute and community hospitals in Worcestershire. This is regardless of increased demand throughout the hospital discharge pathways.

8. Partners throughout the Health and Social Care system in Worcestershire have been working together to develop and provide further detail on the metric ambitions set for Worcestershire and how these relate to performance in other local systems. There are some barriers to this work including the late publication of data sets nationally, which result in ambitions being set on data from 21/22. Some of the metric data is also not nationally published and the ambitions are developed on an algorithm based on the demographics of the people in Worcestershire which makes it difficult to benchmark with other local areas whose demographics are often different. Further information around the metrics and benchmarking for setting the targets for reablement and residential admissions in Worcestershire can be found in **Appendix 2**.
9. Alongside reporting on the metrics performance and assurance the national conditions have been met, the report asks for information on expenditure and activity to date for specific schemes and services delivered using BCF funding. The report is only looking at data for scheme types that provided estimated outputs in the 2023/2025 plan. It also highlights any challenges or changes to the expenditure and outputs that differ from the original plan.
10. Once submitted, a review of all reports will be undertaken by regional and national Better Care Managers (BCMs) which will summarise the responses to questions in the first 4 tabs and allow them a greater understanding of where areas are on track against their plans. They will also review the implementation issues column of the spend and activity tab to gain greater understanding of the common themes among these issues. The findings from these BCM reviews, alongside the aggregation and analysis of reporting data undertaken by the BCF team, feed into a written report of the overall findings from Q3 reporting.

Additional BCF 2023/2024 Reporting

11. In addition to the Quarterly reporting, the requirement to submit monthly returns to the BCF Team continues. These reports require details of how the additional hospital discharge funding has been utilised across the hospital discharge pathways.

2023/2024 BCF Quarter 3 and Forecast Outturn

12. The BCF is forecasting a gross outturn overspend of £1.252m against a budget of £43.223m (2.9%). The overspend is isolated to increases in costs within the Pathway 1 service (£1.201m) and the Pathway 3 service (£0.051m). Increases in activity and care package price (both inflationary and in relation to acuity) are the cost drivers for the forecast overspend. The overspend will be mitigated following the utilisation of one-off funding from each party. The overspend has been forecast throughout the financial year.
13. The two discharge pathways mentioned above are currently under review to attempt to mitigate this area of overspend. The Pathway 1 forecast for the rest of the financial year assumes a maximum of 4 clients a week for a 28-day period. The operational implications of this are currently being worked through to ensure this is a sustainable approach to help reduce the overspend.
14. Further budget monitoring detail on a scheme-by-scheme basis can be seen in **Appendix 3**.

15. The Quarter 3 position includes the amounts of the additional Hospital Discharge Funding. The requirements of the grant stipulate that expenditure and funding must be reported within the BCF, and monthly returns are required to be submitted to the Better Care Fund Team detailing how the additional funding has been utilised. Worcestershire is adhering fully to this requirement.

Impact on health disparities

16. The BCF is crucial in supporting people to live healthy, independent and dignified lives. Through joining up health, social care and housing services to enable people to stay well, safe and independent at home for longer and provide people with the right care, at the right place and time. As previously highlighted, within the BCF 2023-2025 narrative plan, there is a specific section relating to how the BCF plan contributes to reducing health inequalities and disparities for the local population, taking account of people with protected characteristics.
17. An Equality Relevance Screening has been completed in respect of these recommendations. The screening did not identify any potential Equality considerations requiring further consideration during implementation.

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

18. Reporting to Health and Wellbeing Board on a quarterly basis is deemed to follow good practice guidelines.
19. The BCF is a ring-fenced grant. It has been agreed that any overspend, or underspend will be jointly attributable to NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB and Worcestershire County Council.
20. There are no HR implications within this report.

Privacy Impact Assessment

21. Non arising directly from this report

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Specific Contact Points for this report

Mark Fitton, Strategic Director – People Services

Tel: 01905 643553

Email: MFitton@worcestershire.gov.uk

Richard Stocks, Senior Finance Business Partner – Service Finance

Tel: 01905 846514

Email: Rstocks@worcestershire.gov.uk

Victoria Whitehouse, Better Care Fund Commissioning Manager

Tel: 01905 643574

Email: Vwhitehouse@worcestershire.gov.uk

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 – Worcestershire Better Care Fund Quarter 3 Report
- Appendix 2 – Worcestershire BCF Metrics
- Appendix 3 – Worcestershire BCF Schemes 2023/2024 Monitoring

Background Papers

None