

READING HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

DATE OF MEETING:	16th JULY 2021		
REPORT TITLE:	Better Care Fund (BCF) 2020/21 End of Year Return		
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ORGANISATION:	READING BOROUGH COUNCIL / BERKSHIRE WEST CCG		

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the progress made and assurance of spend in respect of the Better Care Fund (BCF) 2020/21 in the form of an End of Year Return. We are required to provide assurance that the National Conditions have been met in respect of the BCF funding. The Report provides assurance that these conditions have been met and the return has been submitted in line with the deadline of 24th May 2021.
- 1.2 On behalf of the Reading Health and Wellbeing Board, the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health, Seona Douglas, in consultation with the Lead Member for Health, Wellbeing and Sport, Cllr Graeme Hoskin (Chair of the Reading Health and Wellbeing Board) approved the return, and this report requests the Health & Wellbeing Board to note the compliance against the Better Care Fund's National Conditions for 2020/21 and the reports submission.
- 1.3 The Better Care Fund End of Year return for the period from 1st March 2020 to 31st March 2021, is attached at *Appendix 1*.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 To note the contents of the End of Year Return for Better Care Fund (BCF) 2020/21 and the compliance with the BCF National Conditions.
- 2.2 To note the return has been formally signed-off and submitted by the deadline of 24th May 2021.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Better Care Fund (BCF) acts as a vehicle to facilitate system integration of health and social care by providing targeted funding to promote joint working to achieving shared outcomes. It requires Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's) and Local Authorities (LA's) to pool budgets and to agree an integrated spending plan for how they will use their Better Care Fund allocation to promote/deliver on integration ambitions.
- 3.2 In 2020/21, Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs) were advised by the Better Care Fund that due to the pandemic, the Better Care Fund Policy and Planning requirements would not be published, and that they should prioritise continuity of provision, social care

capacity and system resilience and spend from the ringfenced BCF funding based on local agreement, pending further guidance. Given the ongoing pressures on systems, Local Authorities, NHS England and NHS Improvement agreed that formal BCF plans would not have to be submitted for approval in 2020 to 2021.

Whilst spending plans would not be assured regionally or formally approved, Local Authorities and CCGs were asked to ensure robust local governance was in place to oversee BCF funds. This includes placing the funding into a pooled fund governed by an agreement under Section 75 of the NHS Act 2006 with an appropriate governance structure, that reports in to the HWB. It is through this governance structure that the End of year Return for 2020/21 is submitted for formal acknowledgement of the financial outturn and that the National Conditions for the Better Care Fund were met in 2020/21.⁽¹⁾

4. THE PROPOSAL

The Report is presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board, to confirm that the National Conditions of the BCF for 2020/21 have been met based on the information provided and further detailed in the formal return. See Appendix 1.

4.1 Current Position:

4.1.1 Better Care Fund 2020/21 Year End Return

The national conditions for the BCF in 2020-21 and confirmation that these are met are as follows:

- a) Plans covering all mandatory funding contributions have been agreed by HWB. Spend on Out of Hospital (Discharge) services meet or exceed the minimum ringfence, and minimum contributions from the LA and CCG are pooled in a Section 75 agreement (an agreement made under section 75 of the NHS Act 2006). **A section 75 Agreement was signed off and is in place for both RBC and Berkshire West CCG for 2020/21 to pool BCF funding, which supported 31 Schemes across Social Care, Community Health, Acute (Hospital Discharge) and Mental Health Services in the borough.**
- b) The contribution to Social Care from the CCG via the BCF be agreed and meet or exceed minimum ringfence. **The minimum ringfenced amount from Berkshire West CCG was exceeded and the contribution from the CCG to Social Care was £10.6m**
- c) Spend on CCG commissioned out of hospital (OOH) services to meet or exceed the minimum ringfence. **The minimum ringfenced amount for CCG commissioned out of hospital (OOH) services was £2.7m. Spend on out of hospital services (OOH) was £5.1m, in line with the plan.**
- d) CCGs and local authorities to confirm compliance with the above conditions to their Health and Wellbeing Boards. **Confirmed.**

¹<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/better-care-fund-policy-statement-2020-to-2021/better-care-fund-policystatement-2020-to-2021#nhs-commissioned-out-of-hospital-services>

4.2 Recommendation

That the H&WBB note the compliance with the BCF National Conditions for 2020/21, and acknowledge the submission of the BCF End of Year Report to meet the return deadline of 24th May 2021.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The Better Care Fund is utilised by Reading Borough Council and the Berkshire West CCG to support a variety of Health and Social Care schemes that are aligned with both the Reading Health and Wellbeing Board strategic priorities and those of the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) for Berkshire West.

5.2 The Better Care Fund schemes contribute to the Corporate Plan Priorities as follows:

Healthy environment - supporting people on hospital discharge pathways, ensuring that they have the appropriate equipment (where necessary) and that they are able to return to their normal place of residence as quickly as possible.

Thriving Communities - BCF funded schemes such as Carers Funding - Grants, Voluntary Sector, Information and Advice, Community Reablement services and many more, aimed at supporting members of our community to remain healthy and active, and avoid unplanned hospital admissions.

Inclusive economy - The integration programme of work for Reading has a focus on reducing health inequalities in the borough through a range of projects. Some of the schemes supported by the BCF such as Street Triage and the Narrowing the Gap II schemes aim to address issues that impact on people who may be vulnerable or disadvantaged.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 *The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).*

6.2 This report summarises the financial outturn of the Better Care Fund for 2020/21. No new services are being proposed or implemented that would impact on the climate or environment.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 The Better Care Fund End of Year submission for 2020/21 has been considered at the Reading Integration Board (RIB). Voluntary Care Sector services are represented at RIB, along with representatives from a range of health service providers, who have had opportunity to view and comment on the return. Healthwatch Reading are also system partners, represented at RIB, and they bring the service users' voice when considering projects and initiatives.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 There are no new proposals or decisions recommended / requested that will or could have a differential impact on: racial groups; gender; people with disabilities; people of a

particular sexual orientation; people due to their age; people due to their religious belief therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 **Compliance with BCF 2020/21 National Conditions:** The report sets out in section 4.1.1. How the authority and the CCG have met the National Conditions for the Better Care Fund, in line with the planning guidance for 2020/21.
- 9.2 **Section 75 Agreement:** There is an agreement between the Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for 2020/21, covering the period of the BCF 2020/21 return. Once the BCF Planning and Guidance is released for 2021/22, Section 75 document will be agreed, as appropriate, between the CCG and the council, in line with the BCF National Conditions for 2021/22.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Table 1 below provides a summary of Better Care Fund budget for 2020/21:

Reading Better Care Fund 2020-21	Amount
Disabled Facilities Grant	£1,197,341
Clinical Commissioning Group Contribution	£10,606,122
iBetter Care Fund	£2,613,472
Additional LA Contribution	£305,000
Total	£14,721,935

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 *Appendix 1: The Better Care Fund 2020/21 End of Year Return: BCF_202021_Yearend_ReadingHWB(Final)*

Link for Appendix 2: HICM refresh July 20 - Consultation PDF

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/HICM%20refresh%20July%202020%20-%20Consultation%20PDF.pdf>

Link for Appendix 3: BCF Policy Statement 2020-21 (03-12-2021)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/better-care-fund-policy-statement-2020-to-2021/better-care-fund-policy-statement-2020-to-2021#better-care-fund-2020-to-2021>