



11 September 2024

Subject:	Sandwell Better Care Fund Plan 2024-25
Presenting Officer and Organisation	Better Care Fund Programme Manager, Paul Moseley Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council/ Black Country Integrated Care Board paul_moseley@sandwell.gov.uk
Purpose of Report	Information

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To consider and comment upon the Sandwell Better Care Fund Plan 2024- 25

2. Links to Workstreams Set out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Healthy Communities	<p>The Sandwell Better Care Fund (BCF) programme maintains important connections with Housing services. In addition to funding aids and adaptations through the Disabled Facilities Grant, significant BCF funding supports the council's Floating Support service, Extra Care provision, reablement flats, community flats to facilitate timely hospital discharges whilst also supporting hospital avoidance and the local implementation of Discharge to Assess (D2A).</p> <p>The BCF programme also funds a Welfare Rights post hosted by the Housing directorate, providing support to individuals to maximise their access to benefit entitlements.</p> <p>Additionally, the BCF programme has established the Community Offer service which enhances community resilience by promoting healthier lifestyles, supporting</p>
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	prevention, and delivering community asset-based services.
Primary Care	No direct links to workstream
Integrated Town Teams	The BCF programme supports our care homes to receive enhanced training and support to care for vulnerable residents effectively, reducing emergency hospital visits and ambulance call-outs.
Intermediate Care	<p>Sandwell's collaborative and integrated approach to delivering effective intermediate care services supports people leaving hospital to regain and maintain their independence. We have enjoyed considerable success in working with our system partners to accelerate the pace of change and provide preventative, outcome-focused, and cost-effective intermediate care services. Some of the steps we have taken include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shifting the balance of investment from traditional community step-down and intermediate care beds to creating more home-based rehabilitation, therapy and reablement packages that wrap support around people in their own homes. • For people who cannot immediately return home we established the 80-bedded Harvest View Integrated Social Care and Health Centre which provides person-centred intensive reablement and therapy in 'a home from home' environment to people requiring a short period of personalised support to enable them to return to living independently at home. <p>We have also invested an additional £500,000 of recurrent BCF funding to increase admission avoidance (step-up) capacity in the community health teams which helps to reduce avoidable hospital admissions and supports people to maintain their independence at home for as long as possible.</p> <p>To facilitate integrated, person-centred care for people leaving hospital, The Sandwell BCF programme also established the Integrated Discharge Hub. The Hub co-ordinates hospital discharges and onward care planning across health and social care.</p>
Care Navigation	No direct links to workstream

3. Context and Key Issues

- 3.1 The Sandwell Better Care Fund (BCF) programme provides vital funding and protection for Adult Social Care and Community Health services, enabling us to support our most vulnerable individuals and communities as our local health and care system continues to manage the legacy impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic alongside the growing pressures resulting from increased demand and demographic challenges.
- 3.2 The BCF supports key Health and Wellbeing Strategy workstreams, focusing on shifting the balance of care activity from hospitals to community settings. By redesigning community services and care pathways, the BCF aims to support individuals at home rather than in hospitals or community wards.
- 3.3 Strengthening partnerships with the voluntary and community sector (VCS) is a key BCF priority, focusing on asset-based approaches to support vulnerable populations. The program invests around £1.2 million annually in VCS services, including care and support options, welfare benefits advice, community connections, practical support post-discharge, confidence-building, self-sustaining networks, and care navigation.
- 3.4 The Sandwell Better Care Fund Plan for 2024-25 was approved by NHS England in August 2024.

4. Engagement

The BCF Plan was developed in collaboration with partners from Sandwell Council, Black Country ICB, Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals Trust and Sandwell Council for Voluntary Organisations.

5. Implications

Resources:	The total BCF Pooled Budget allocation for 2024/25 is £70,159,831 - an increase of £1,980,076 compared to the 2023/24 total of £68,179,755.
Legal and Governance:	The Better Care Fund (BCF) is one of the government's key national vehicles for driving health and social care integration. It requires integrated care boards (ICBs) and local government to agree a joint plan for using pooled budgets to support integration, which is governed by an

	agreement established under section 75 of the NHS Act (2006).
Risk:	It is a requirement for a S75 Agreement to be in place to enable access to the BCF funding. There is a current S75 Agreement in place for Sandwell.
Equality:	No implications. Services commissioned from Sandwell BCF funding are required to undertake Equality Impact Assessments.
Health and Wellbeing:	The Sandwell BCF programme contributes to improvements in the Health and Wellbeing outcomes for the people of Sandwell.
Social Value:	Schemes funded by the Sandwell BCF programme provide social value through local employment opportunities for health and care professionals and income for local businesses.
Climate Change:	No climate change implications arising directly as a result of this report.
Corporate Parenting:	No corporate parenting implications arising directly as a result of this report.

6. Appendices

Appendix One – Presentation

7. Background Papers

Better Care Fund Policy Framework 2024-25:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/better-care-fund-policy-framework-2023-to-2025/2023-to-2025-better-care-fund-policy-framework>