

HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3 SEPTEMBER 2025

DARLINGTON BETTER CARE FUND 2024/25 END OF YEAR PROGRAMME REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update Health and Housing scrutiny committee on the Annual Report of the Darlington Better Care Fund for the 2024/25 Programme.
2. Provide an update on the next steps across the Programme.

Summary

3. The use of BCF mandatory funding streams (NHS minimum contribution, Improved Better Care Fund grant (iBCF) and Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) must be jointly agreed by integrated care boards (ICBs) and local authorities to reflect local health and care priorities, with plans signed off by health and wellbeing boards (HWBs).
4. The Better Care Fund (BCF) Policy Framework sets out the Government's priorities for 2023-25, **including improving discharge, reducing the pressure on Urgent and Emergency Care and social care, supporting intermediate care, unpaid carers and housing adaptations.**
5. The vision for the BCF over 2023-25 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:
 - **Enable people to stay well, safe and independent at home for longer**
 - **Provide the right care in the right place at the right time**
6. The framework confirms the four national conditions for funding:
 - Jointly agreed Plan
 - Enabling people to stay well, safe and independent at home for longer
 - Provide the right care in the right place at the right time
 - Maintaining NHS's contribution to Adult Social Care and investment in NHS commissioned out of hospital services"

7. As well as the four national conditions of funding, the plan includes the delivery against 4 key metrics of:
 - (a) Avoidable Admissions: Per 100,000 population
 - (b) Falls: Emergency Hospital Admissions due to falls in people aged over 65
 - (c) Discharge to Usual Place of Residence: Percentage of People who are discharged from acute hospital to their normal place of residence
 - (d) Residential Admissions: Long term support needs of people aged 65 and over met by admission to residential and nursing care homes
8. Funding for the 24/25 Programme is set out below. This includes Discharge Funding being part of the Pooled Budget for the first time.

Running Balances	2024-25	
	Income	Expenditure
DFG	£1,159,844	£1,159,844
Minimum NHS Contribution	£10,198,154	£10,198,154
iBCF	£4,488,137	£4,488,137
Additional LA Contribution	£299,320	£299,320
Additional NHS Contribution	£0	£0
Local Authority Discharge Funding	£1,048,716	£1,048,716
ICB Discharge Funding	£808,146	£808,146
Total	£18,002,317	£18,002,317

9. Annex 1 of this report provides a summarised version of the 2024/25 End of Year Plan.
10. Annex 2 provides detail of the assurance (approval) feedback received from the BCF National Team.

Next Steps

11. As part of the ongoing programme management of the BCF, a joint review of all funded schemes began during July 2025. The rationale for this review was to ensure all schemes continued to deliver against the key priorities of the Programme and provided value for money.

Recommendations

12. It is recommended that:-
 - (a) Members note approval of the Darlington 24/25 Plan;
 - (b) Note the programme review underway during July /August 2025.

Reasons

13. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:

- (a) The 2024/25 Plan has been endorsed by the Pooled Budget Partnership as part of the agreed governance arrangements
- (b) Following completion of the review a report of the findings will be available.

Christine Shields
Assistant Director Commissioning, Performance and Transformation

Background Papers

- (i) Darlington BCF 2024/25 Plan Template
- (ii) Darlington BCF 2024/25 Plan Narrative

Paul Neil: Extension 5960

Council Plan	Aligned
Addressing inequalities	Both the BCF Programme Plan and schemes within consider these key areas
Tackling Climate Change	None
Efficient and effective use of resources	New ways of delivery care
Health and Wellbeing	The Better Care Fund is owned by the Health and Wellbeing Board
S17 Crime and Disorder	Not applicable.
Wards Affected	All.
Groups Affected	Frail elderly people at risk of admission/re-admission to hospital.
Budget and Policy Framework	Budgets pooled through section 75 agreement between DBC and Darlington CCG
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	No impact.

ANNEX 1

Summary of 2024/25 BCF Plan

National BCF Programme	The Better Care Fund (BCF) Policy Framework sets out the Government’s priorities for 2023-25, including improving discharge, reducing the pressure on Urgent and Emergency Care and social care, supporting intermediate care, unpaid carers and housing adaptations.																							
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enable people to stay well, safe and independent at home for longer• Provide the right care in the right place at the right time																							
Ownership	Health and Wellbeing Boards																							
National Conditions of Funding	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Jointly agreed Plan2. Enabling people to stay well, safe and independent at home for longer3. Provide the right care in the right place at the right time4. Maintaining NHS's contribution to adult social care and investment in NHS commissioned out of hospital services"																							
Programme Metrics	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Avoidable Admissions: Per 100,000 population2. Falls: Emergency Hospital Admissions due to falls in people aged over 653. Discharge to Usual Place of Residence: Percentage of People who are discharged from acute hospital to their normal place of residence4. Residential Admissions: Long term support needs of people aged 65 and over met by admission to residential and nursing care homes																							
National Funding	<table><tr><td>BCF funding contributions</td><td>2023 to 2024 (£m)</td><td>2024 to 2025 (£m)</td></tr><tr><td>Minimum NHS contribution</td><td>4,759</td><td>5,029</td></tr><tr><td>iBCF</td><td>2,140</td><td>2,140</td></tr><tr><td>Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)</td><td>573</td><td>625</td></tr><tr><td>Additional DFG funding</td><td>50</td><td>0 (note)</td></tr><tr><td>Discharge Fund</td><td>600</td><td>1,000</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>8,122 (+5.2%)</td><td>8,794 (+8.3%)</td></tr></table>			BCF funding contributions	2023 to 2024 (£m)	2024 to 2025 (£m)	Minimum NHS contribution	4,759	5,029	iBCF	2,140	2,140	Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	573	625	Additional DFG funding	50	0 (note)	Discharge Fund	600	1,000	Total	8,122 (+5.2%)	8,794 (+8.3%)
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Darlington BCF Plan 24/25																								
Darlington Governance Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HWBB• Health and Housing Scrutiny• Pooled Budget Partnership Board*• Delivery Group																							

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversight Group <p>For this planning round, all HWBB system areas were required to develop a Plan for the 2024/25 period. This plan was developed by partners from the above forums.</p> <p><i>* As part of the PBPB workplan, a task and finish group has been established regarding Intermediate Care across the system, focusing on reviewing the current offer, and revising this moving forward. This is a joint initiative involving LA, ICB, NHS and the VCSE.</i></p>
Meeting the Aims and Core Objectives	<p>The core aims and objectives of the Darlington BCF Programme are embedded throughout the 2024/25 Plan. All of the schemes are aligned to the key objectives of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable people to stay well, safe and independent at home for longer • Provide the right care in the right place at the right time <p>Throughout the year the operational Delivery Group meet to ensure existing schemes continue to deliver against these aims and scrutinise any new proposals to ensure alignment.</p> <p>In addition, and introduced as part of the wider 2023/25 Programme, all new proposal are reviewed by the system wide oversight group, allowing input and comments from partners across the system. This ensures the schemes funded are delivery against key priorities.</p> <p>The Pooled Budget Partnership for Darlington meet on a bi-monthly basis, and receive updates from the Delivery Group, with a key focus being on ensuring the programme continues to deliver against the aims and core objectives.</p>
Compliance with Conditions of Funding	<p><u>Jointly agreed Plan</u></p> <p>The Darlington Plan for 2024/25 has been developed and agreed jointly with colleagues from ICB and the LA. This was evidenced at the meeting of the Pooled Budget Partnership Board of 9th June.</p> <p><u>Enabling people to stay well, safe and independent at home for longer</u></p> <p>Tab 6a in the Planning template details all of the schemes funded through the programme. This includes schemes specifically supporting independent living, an example being supporting the Lifeline service in providing Out of Hours support.</p> <p><u>Provide the right care in the right place at the right time</u></p> <p>Tab 6a in the Planning template details all of the schemes funded through the programme. This includes schemes specifically focussing on providing</p>

the care at the right place at the right time. Examples include those schemes supporting the home first approach.

Maintaining NHS's contribution to adult social care and investment in NHS commissioned out of hospital services"

As set out on the planning requirements a minimum level of spend, from the ICB allocations, has to be invested in ASC and NHS commissioned out of hospital services. The minimum levels and planned spend are shown below.

	Minimum Required Spend	Spend as reported in EoY
NHS Commissioned Out of Hospital spend from the minimum ICB allocation	£2,898,026	£5,400,691
Adult Social Care services spend from the minimum ICB allocations	£3,270,142	£4,097,451

Metrics Performance

The 2024/25 Plan included the 4 metrics against which performance is measured.

The EoY return confirms that 3 of 4 targets have been achieved:

		For information - actual performance for Q3 (For Q4 data, please refer to data pack on BCX)	Assessment of whether ambitions have been met
Avoidable admissions	Unplanned hospitalisation for chronic ambulatory care sensitive conditions (NHS Outcome Framework Indicator 2.3)	176.2	Target met
Discharge to normal place of residence	Percentage of people who are discharged from acute hospital to their normal place of residence	91.71%	Target met
Falls	Emergency hospital admissions due to falls in people aged 65 and over directly age standardised rate per 100,000.	2019	Target not met
Residential Admissions	Rate of permanent admissions to residential care per 100,000 population (65+)	not applicable	Target met

	For the falls metric a project has been initiated across Tees to scope, map, review and redesign the existing pathways across the system responding to Level 1 & 2 falls in the community.																														
Expenditure Position	<p>The table below summarises the spend position as reported in the EoY report.</p> <table><tr><th></th><th colspan="2">2024-25</th></tr><tr><th>Running Balances</th><th>Income</th><th>Expenditure</th></tr><tr><td>DFG</td><td>£1,159,844</td><td>£1,159,844</td></tr><tr><td>Minimum NHS Contribution</td><td>£10,198,154</td><td>£10,198,154</td></tr><tr><td>ICBF</td><td>£4,488,137</td><td>£4,488,137</td></tr><tr><td>Additional LA Contribution</td><td>£299,320</td><td>£299,320</td></tr><tr><td>Additional NHS Contribution</td><td>£0</td><td>£0</td></tr><tr><td>Local Authority Discharge Funding</td><td>£1,048,716</td><td>£1,048,716</td></tr><tr><td>ICB Discharge Funding</td><td>£808,146</td><td>£808,146</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>£18,002,317</td><td>£18,002,317</td></tr></table>		2024-25		Running Balances	Income	Expenditure	DFG	£1,159,844	£1,159,844	Minimum NHS Contribution	£10,198,154	£10,198,154	ICBF	£4,488,137	£4,488,137	Additional LA Contribution	£299,320	£299,320	Additional NHS Contribution	£0	£0	Local Authority Discharge Funding	£1,048,716	£1,048,716	ICB Discharge Funding	£808,146	£808,146	Total	£18,002,317	£18,002,317
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Programme Summary	<p>The 2024/25 Plan for Darlington evidences continued compliance with the four national conditions of funding and delivers against the core objectives of the programme.</p> <p>All funding resources are committed and the performance of the programme will be continually monitored throughout the year by the PBPB, supported by both the operational delivery group and the wider Darlington oversight group.</p>																														

ANNEX 2

Approval feedback of BCF 2024/25 Plan

BCF Plan Assurance Overview				
HWB Name		RECOMMENDATION	NARRATIVE AND GENERAL COMMENTS	
Darlington		Approved	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good overview of BCF funded schemes• Homecare support to be retendered during 25/26 and narrative describes a robust home first approach• The intermediate care offer in Darlington will be expanded during 25/26 to help reduce the reliance on bed based support• Discharge to Assess will be an increased focus• Ambitions for emergency admission rates are aligned with the FT NHS Ops plan return	
NATIONAL CONDITIONS AND PLANNING REQUIREMENTS				
National conditions all met Planning requirements assessed as met				
FINANCE				
DFG		£1,319,439	Darlington describe their local process to review BCF scheme on an annual basis which includes a measure of VFM etc.	
NHS Minimum Contribution		£11,134,656		
Local Authority Better Care Grant		£5,536,853	Despite challenges given the small financial uplift in 25/26 investment has been made to deliver their integrated community falls strategy.	
Additional LA Contribution		£0		
Additional ICB Contribution		£0	Capacity in their RIACT service has been increased to ensure access to specialist stroke support.	
Total		£17,990,948		
CAPACITY-DEMAND				
Discharge	Sufficient capacity across all pathways due to spot purchase			
Admission Avoidance	Sufficient or surplus capacity across all service areas			
	A C&D Dashboard will be implemented during 25/26			
AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ambition for residential care admissions is to return to 23/24 rates with monitoring undertaken as part of the BCF quarterly returns as well as through the Adult Social Care Senior Leadership Team of DBC.• Continue with the processes already in place for decisions on new proposals that meet the BCF objectives (not new) and continue focus on review and evaluation (also not new)				
METRICS				
Emergency Admissions Rate		% Discharged on DRD	Discharge Delay Days	Residential Admissions
Above regional average Above national average Plan to achieve 3.57% growth compared to previous year		Above regional average Above national average	Below regional average Below national average	Averages unavailable ~ requires DQ review 25/26 Plan = maintain estimated 24/25 position due to DQ as above