

HEALTH AND WELL BEING BOARD
18 SEPTEMBER 2025

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider the Annual Report of the Darlington Better Care Fund for the 2024/25 Programme.

Summary

2. 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).
 3. 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.
 4. 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:
 - a) Enable people to stay well, safe and independent at home for longer
 - b) Provide the right care in the right place at the right time
 5. The 2024/25 Plan has been regional assured and approved. A summary of this assurance is included in Annex 2.
 6. As part of the on-going programme management of the BCF, a joint review of all funded schemes began during July 2025 and will be concluded during September 2025. The rationale for this review was to ensure all schemes continued to deliver against the key priorities of the Programme and continues to provide value for money.
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Recommendation

7. It is recommended that:-

- (a) HWBB members note the approval of the Plan and regional assurance feedback
- (b) Note the programme review underway during July - September 2025

Reasons

8. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-

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

Christine Shields
Assistant Director Commissioning, Performance & Transformation

Background Papers

Darlington 2024/25 Plan summary
Darlington 2024/25 Regional Assurance feedback
Darlington 2024/25 Schemes

Paul Neil – ext. 5960

Council Plan	Aligned
Addressing inequalities	There are no implications arising from this report.
Tackling Climate Change	There are no implications arising from this report.
Efficient and effective use of resources	N/A
Health and Wellbeing	HWBB are owners of the BCF Programme
S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no implications arising from this report.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	N/A
Key Decision	N/A
Urgent Decision	N/A
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

9. The BCF Programme summarises the work across the partnership in delivering the Programme, specifically performance against the required metrics and conditions of funding. The review will further analyse the performance and need against all schemes for the 2025/26 Programme and beyond.

Outcome of Consultation

10. The regional assurance feedback evidences compliance with the national conditions.

Annex 1: Darlington 2024/25 BCF Programme summary

National BCF Programme	<p>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.</p> <p>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:</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																							
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• 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>Annex 3 summarises 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>Annex 3 summarises all of the schemes funded through the programme. This includes schemes specifically focussing on providing the care at the right place at the right time. Examples include those schemes supporting the home first approach.</p> <p><u>Maintaining NHS's contribution to adult social care and investment in NHS commissioned out of hospital services"</u></p>

	<p>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.</p> <table><tr><td></td><td>Minimum Required Spend</td><td>Spend as reported in EoY</td></tr><tr><td>NHS Commissioned Out of Hospital spend from the minimum ICB allocation</td><td>£2,898,026</td><td>£5,400,691</td></tr><tr><td>Adult Social Care services spend from the minimum ICB allocations</td><td>£3,270,142</td><td>£4,097,451</td></tr></table>		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											
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Metrics Performance	<p>The 2024/25 Plan included the 4 metrics against which performance is measured.</p> <p>The EoY return confirms that 3 of 4 targets have been achieved:</p> <table><tr><th></th><th></th><th>For information - actual performance for Q3 (For Q4 data, please refer to data pack on BCX)</th><th>Assessment of whether ambitions have been met</th></tr><tr><td>Avoidable admissions</td><td>Unplanned hospitalisation for chronic ambulatory care sensitive conditions (NHS Outcome Framework Indicator 2.3i)</td><td>176.2</td><td>Target met</td></tr><tr><td>Discharge to normal place of residence</td><td>Percentage of people who are discharged from acute hospital to their normal place of residence</td><td>91.71%</td><td>Target met</td></tr><tr><td>Falls</td><td>Emergency hospital admissions due to falls in people aged 65 and over directly age standardised rate per 100,000.</td><td>201.9</td><td>Target not met</td></tr><tr><td>Residential Admissions</td><td>Rate of permanent admissions to residential care per 100,000 population (65+)</td><td>not applicable</td><td>Target met</td></tr></table> <p>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.</p>			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 2.3i)	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.	201.9	Target not met	Residential Admissions	Rate of permanent admissions to residential care per 100,000 population (65+)	not applicable	Target met
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Expenditure Position	<p>The table below summarises the spend position as reported in the EoY report.</p>																				

	Running Balances	2024-25	
		Income	Expenditure
	DFG	£1,159,844	£1,159,844
	Minimum NHS Contribution	£10,198,154	£10,198,154
	ICF	£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
Programme Summary	The 2024/25 Plan for Darlington evidences continued compliance with the 4 national conditions of funding, and delivers against the core objectives of the programme.		
	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.		

Annex 2: 2024/25 Regional Assurance Feedback

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		EVALUATION		
DFG		£1,319,439	Darlington describe their local process to review BCF scheme on an annual basis which includes a measure of VFM etc. Despite challenges given the small financial uplift in 25/26 investment has been made to deliver their integrated community falls strategy. Capacity in their RIACT service has been increased to ensure access to specialist stroke support. A Mental Health Peer review is planned for 25/26 to inform Care Transfer hub management of MH discharge delays.	
NHS Minimum Contribution		£11,134,656		
Local Authority Better Care Grant		£5,536,853		
Additional LA Contribution		£0		
Additional ICB Contribution		£0		
Total		£17,990,948		
CAPACITY-DEMAND			AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT	
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			
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

Annex 3: Darlington BCF Plan – scheme summary

Title	Summary
Dementia Advisor schemes	Support for carers and people with dementia
Dementia Friendly Darlington Co-ordinator	Coordination of DFD strategy and activities
Supporting Mental Health Services in Care Homes/Acute Mental Health	Protection of community services
Mental Health Support Workers	Support workers aligned to adult mental health team, working primarily in the community
Community Integrated Care Core Beds (Rydal)	Intermediate Care beds
Community Hospitals - CDDFT	Community Hospital beds
RiACT Health Staff	Intermediate care services and reablement service
Stroke Coordinator	Service available for stroke survivors in Darlington and offers advice and support to patients in the community
Stroke and Neuro Community Services - SALT	Speech and Language Therapy available in the Community
Falls and osteoporosis	Support services
Workforce development	Training for reablement staff
Reablement staff	Dom care staffing
Increase in physical activity	Provision of exercise activity at Extra Care Homes/Sheltered schemes
Sensory Loss rehabilitation	Equipment and rent for Vane House and support workers

Telecare (OOH response team)	Co-ordinate and install Telecare and Lifeline devices following an assessed need
Assistive Technology	Develop use of Aids in services of falls prevention, dementia
Blue Badge OT assessments	Referrals for BB assessments to understand mobility needs to ensure remain part of the community
Community Equipment Service	Capital equipment including hoists
Palliative Care	Care support
CAB Welfare Rights Service	Welfare and advice registered patients across GP services, including benefit advice, money management
Specialist Advocacy (DAD)	Service for people registered under NHS Darlington aged 18+ ensuring access to advocacy service
Short Breaks for Disabled Children	Personalised support/care at home
Adult Carers	Support services for adults caring for adults
Adult Carer Breaks	Provision of carer breaks across voluntary sector
Medicines Optimisation in Care Homes	Proxy ordering of Care Home medication from GPs electronically
Young Carers	Information and support from humankind
Implementation of the Care Act	Care Act duty
Home from Hospital	Transfer from hospital to home, making space
Packages to facilitate discharge	Rapid response/SBS
Reduction in admission to 24h care	Care managers for on ward discharge(MDTs)

Rapid Response	48 hour support following discharge pending assessment
Adult Carers Support Co-ordinator	Working with SMEs to raise awareness of carers in employment
Safeguarding social worker	To alleviate service pressures
Learning impairment network	Network led by DAD to engage across the sector on issues including discharge, carer roles
Digital Care Home Support	Tailored digital CH support
Urgent community response (UCR) support	Support towards achievement of the 2 hour UCR and 2 day reablement standards
Equipment and adaptations	OT equipment
Equipment and adaptations	Partnership across LA/ICB in Tees Valley and Durham providing community equipment
Healthcall	Digital Monitoring of Patients
Out of hospital contingency	Contingency
ASC contingency	Contingency
Adaptations and equipment	DFG and equipment DFG adaptations, via schemes connect
Discharge to assess additional capacity	Funding allocated towards the continuation of the D2A pathway.
Adult Social Care	Additional hours within key SW teams (5hrs per week per person involved)
Brokerage	Strengthen current brokerage arrangements and build additional capacity to support discharge flow from acute settings. Extension 1 WTE Agency worker
Domiciliary Care - Mileage Payments	Mileage payments for Home Care - payment of enhanced mileage to encourage recruitment and retention of care workers

Domiciliary Care - Rapid Response Service	Increase capacity to enable timely hospital discharge and prevent avoidable hospital admissions
Residential & Nursing care	Additional int./short stay bed capacity in res. And nursing homes
Ambulance Discharge Costs	Hospital Discharge service expansion
D2A Therapy/Trusted Assessor	Expansion of the therapy trusted assessor role
Transfer of Care Hub - DMT Expansion	Expansion of the Discharge Management Team
DOLs - Best Interest Assessments	Safeguarding
Winter Pressures	Supporting service pressures during winter period
OT Service	Supporting OT Service
Reablement	Funding for the management and assessors across the reablement team
Short Break Stays	In house carers
Residential Care	Placements
Dom Care	Home care
Discharge from Hospital	Home group led mental health discharge trust wide
Darlington Carers Support	Specialist support to parent carers
Darlington Hospital Discharge	Improving carer support at discharge
Care Homes connected digital services team	Supporting care homes with new clinical pathways

Discharge contingency	Contingency
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