

## **Summary**

The Better Care Fund (BCF) is a national programme announced by the Government in the June 2013 spending round. The aim of the programme is to incentivise the NHS and local government to work more closely together around people, placing their wellbeing as the focus of health and care services. It is important to note that the funding comes from existing funding streams.

The NHS planning guidance for the Better Care Fund 2016/17 was published w/c 22 February 2016 setting out the requirements for the production of BCF plans.

## **The Better Care Fund**

1. The BCF is one element of the wider NHS strategic planning arrangements set out to deliver the NHS Five Year Forward View, a shared vision for the future of the NHS based around the new models of care and description of how the health service needs to change over the next five years if it is to close the widening gaps in the health of the population, quality of care and the funding of services.
2. The NHS planning guidance also introduces five year Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) as the overarching strategic plan for local health and care systems – Better Care Fund plans in 2016/17 need to be developed in line with the emerging STPs (which are due to be finalised and approved by July 2016).
3. The current financial year (2015/16) is the first year of the BCF which in Surrey has meant the pooling of £71.4m (£65.5m revenue funding, £5.9m capital funding). For 2016/17 the Surrey Better Care Fund will total £73.1m (£66.2m revenue, £6.9m capital).
4. As with 2015/16, the legal framework for the Better Care Fund requires that in each area the Fund is transferred into one or more pooled budgets (established under Section 75 of the NHS Act 2006) and that plans are approved by NHS England in consultation with the Department of Health and the Department for Communities and Local Government.
5. NHS England have set out conditions to the payment of the Better Care Fund - the framework remains broadly stable in 2016-17 with eight conditions local areas will need to meet through the planning process in order to access the funding. These are:
  - i. That the Better Care Fund Plan, covering a minimum of the pooled Fund specified in the Spending Review, should be signed off by the Health and Wellbeing Board itself, and by the constituent Councils and Clinical Commissioning Groups;
  - ii. A demonstration of how the area will meet the national condition to maintain provision of social care services in 2016-17;
  - iii. Confirmation of agreement on how plans will support progress on meeting the 2020 standards for seven-day services, to prevent unnecessary non-elective admissions and support timely discharge;
  - iv. Better data sharing between health and social care, based on the NHS number;
  - v. A joint approach to assessments and care planning and ensure that, where funding is used for integrated packages of care, there will be an accountable professional;
  - vi. Agreement on the consequential impact of the changes on the providers that are predicted to be substantially affected by the plans;
  - vii. That a proportion of the area's allocation is invested in NHS commissioned out-of-hospital services, or retained pending release as part of a local risk sharing agreement; and
  - viii. Agreement on a local action plan to reduce delayed transfers of care.

## Better Care Fund Planning Process

6. The Better Care Fund guidance and templates for 2016/17 were published w/c 22 February 2016 and the following deadlines set:
  - 2 March 2016 – first submission of the ‘BCF Planning Return template’ detailing the technical elements of the planning requirements, including funding contributions, a scheme level spending plan, national metric plans, and any local risk sharing agreement.
  - 21 March 2016 - first submission of narrative Better Care Fund plans alongside a second submission of the BCF Planning Return template.
  - 25 April 2016 - final submission, once formally signed off by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
7. Feedback will be received through a regional assurance process led by NHS England which includes moderation involving the Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services.
8. The national expectation is for 2016/17 plans to build on the Better Care Fund plans approved for 2015/16 – the draft Surrey BCF plan retains the three strategic aims agreed as part of the 2015/16 Better Care Fund plan which guide the approach in Surrey:
  - **Enabling people to stay well** - Maximising independence and wellbeing through prevention and early intervention for people at risk of being unable to manage their physical health, mental health and social care needs;
  - **Enabling people to stay at home** - Integrated care delivered seven days a week through enhanced primary and community services which are safe and effective and increase public confidence to remain out of hospital or residential/nursing care; and
  - **Enabling people to return home sooner from hospital** - Excellent hospital care and post-hospital support for people with acute, specialist or complex needs supported by a proactive discharge system which enables a prompt return home.
9. The Draft Surrey Better Care Fund plan is structured as follows:
  - An overarching, high level narrative plan that includes the case for change; learning from the 2015/16 BCF; our shared vision; and narrative against the national conditions.
  - The BCF Planning Return template covering the finance and metrics
  - An annex providing more detail around the local action plans
  - The final submission will include an overarching action plan in relation to delayed transfers of care (this is currently being developed using local actions plans)
10. Once the Surrey Better Care Fund plan has been agreed for 2016/17, ‘section 75’ partnership agreements will be finalised and agreed between the County Council and each of the Surrey CCGs to enable the establishment of pooled funds.

## What Happens Next

The next steps include:

- Feedback is provided from the regional assurance process based on the draft plans submitted on 21 March 2016
- Finalise the Surrey BCF plan for submission to NHS England on 25 April 2016
- Begin implementation of the Surrey BCF plan 2016/17 from April 2016
- Agree ‘section 75’ partnership agreements to enable the pooling of funds (upon approval of the Surrey BCF plan)