

SUNDERLAND'S 2023/24 AND 2024/25 BETTER CARE FUND SUBMISSION

Report of Assistant Director for Integrated Commissioning

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide the Sunderland Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) with an overview of Sunderland's Better Care Fund (BCF) submission for 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- 1.2 To seek agreement from the HWB on the proposed content of BCF planning documentation in-line with the national requirements for approval.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The BCF is a national integration transformation programme that aims to support improved transformation of local health and care provision through better integration of NHS and Local Authority-funded health and care services.
- 2.2 The BCF is supported by a [policy](#) and [planning](#) framework, which sets out national expectations for Integrated Care Boards (previously Clinical Commissioning Groups) and Local Authorities, to guide the annual BCF planning process and to ensure minimum levels of investment are protected within local planning arrangements.
- 2.3 The 2023-25 BCF planning round marks some key changes in agreeing BCF plans, this includes:
 - an earlier BCF planning round (2023-25 submission is in June, compared to September as in previous years). This has the potential to enable closer alignment with ICB and Local Authority priority and operational planning processes, and supports a forward planning approach.
 - a two-year planning framework (compared to one-year previously), supporting a longer planning and implementation period that can better support key areas of transformation.
 - the mainstreaming of the [Adult Social Care Discharge Fund](#) (ASCDF), (first released in December 2022), that is provided to both Local Authorities and ICBs to support an optimal reduction in delayed discharges.
- 2.4 The over-arching vision of the BCF complements the [Healthy City Plan](#), and is set out as per the below:

“To support people to live healthy, happy and dignified lives, through joining-up of health, social care and housing services seamlessly around the person”.

- 2.5 This vision is underpinned by two policy objectives:
- **Objective 1:** Enable people to stay well, safe and independent at home for longer.
 - **Objective 2:** Provide the right care at the right time in the right place.
- 2.6 Within these objectives are key priorities that include: improving discharge; reducing pressures on urgent and emergency care and social care; and supporting intermediate care, unpaid carers and housing adaptation schemes.
- 2.7 As with previous BCFs, HWBs are required to sign-off BCF plans at place, ensuring the proposed plans meet the BCF ambitions (as set out in 2.5 to 2.6) and four national conditions stipulated within the BCF policy and planning requirements, these are:
- **National Condition 1:** Plans must be jointly agreed by the ICB and Local Authority, ensuring appropriate ICB and Local Authority Chief Executive sign-off prior to the HWB sign-off process.
 - **National Condition 2:** Areas must agree how they will commission support that will enable people to stay well, safe and independent for longer, in-line with objective 1 (see section 2.5)
 - **National Condition 3:** Areas must agree how they will commission support to ensure that people receive the right care at the right time, in-line with objective 2 (see section 2.5).
 - **National Condition 4:** Maintain the NHS financial contribution to adult social care and NHS commissioned out of hospital services.
- 2.8 In addition to the minimum NHS contribution (national condition 4), Local Authority grant funding, received through the Improved Better Care Fund and Disabled Facilities Grant, and the additional ASCDF funds outlined in section 2.3, must be pooled into the BCF and be underpinned by an agreed Section 75 Partnership arrangement. Sunderland's 2023-25 BCF anticipated investment profile is outlined in section 4.1 (subject to confirmation of grant funding), and this will sit alongside 'additional contributions' made at the discretion of ICB and Local Authorities, to further support BCF ambitions (see section 4.2-4.3). It should be noted that additional contributions are not subject to the BCF national conditions, enabling broader areas of transformation to form part of the BCF, without the limitations of the policy and planning requirements.
- 2.9 The BCF is nationally monitored in several ways that include oversight of assumptions built-into financial models, reporting on actual vs planned spend, and reporting against metric outlined in table 1. The metrics represent proxy measures of impact, to assess the effectiveness of the BCF in delivering on the two policy objectives.

Metrics 2023-24

Metric	Detail
Admissions to residential care homes	Older adults whose long-term care needs are met by admission to residential or nursing care per 100,000 population.
Avoidable admissions to hospital	Unplanned hospitalisation for chronic ambulatory care sensitive conditions.
Falls *New*	Emergency Hospital Admissions due to falls in people over 65.
Discharge to usual place of residence	Improving the proportion of people discharged home, based on data on discharge to their usual place of residence.
Reablement/rehabilitation	Proportion of older people (65 and over) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services.

Table 1. BCF Metric 2023/24

3.0 The 2023/25 Better Care Fund Planning Round

3.1 A high-level summary of the 2023-25 BCF submission timetable is provided in table 2, below.

BCF planning requirements published	5 April
Optional draft BCF planning submission (including intermediate care capacity and demand plan) submitted to BCM and copied to the BCF team (england.bettercarefundteam@nhs.net)	19 May
BCF planning submission (including intermediate care and short term care capacity and demand plan; and discharge spending plan) from local HWB areas (agreed by ICBs and local government). All submissions will need to be sent to the local BCM, and copied to england.bettercarefundteam@nhs.net	28 June
Scrutiny of BCF plans by regional assurers, assurance panel meetings and regional moderation	28 June – 28 July
Regionally moderated assurance outcomes sent to BCF team	28 July
Cross-regional calibration	3 August
Approval letters issued giving formal permission to spend (NHS minimum)	3 September
All section 75 agreements to be signed and in place	31 October

Table 2: 2023/24 BCF planning round timetable.

3.2 In order to ensure that the Sunderland BCF plan maximises the opportunity of a two-year planning framework to improve health and care outcomes, and support improved integration, Sunderland partners have taken the opportunity to embed further assurance processes into its planning approach, this includes:

- Undertaking self-assessments against four high impact change models that are aligned to BCF policy objectives. These include:
 - [Managing transfers of care](#)
 - [Reducing preventable admissions to hospital and long-term care](#)

- [Improving health and wellbeing through housing](#)
- [Home First: Discharge to Assess and homelessness](#)
- Undertaking a rapid stocktake of BCF schemes to ensure BCF expenditure plans are appropriately aligned to local priorities and areas of transformation, whilst also providing greater detail of investment to support national and local impact reporting.

3.3 This is in addition to mandated demand and capacity assessments for intermediate care (including rehabilitation and reablement services), and other short-term services lasting up to 6 weeks (including all other short-term domiciliary services). This element of planning is in place to ensure there is a joint understanding of the demand for health and social care services, and that there is a comprehensive picture of capacity in order to provide assurance that commissioned activity is commensurate with appropriate and timely levels of support that promote increased independence.

3.4 As a further element of the 2023-25 BCF planning process, Sunderland partners have synthesised relevant priorities and actions within wider place-based strategies, in order to strengthen the role of the BCF in catalysing key areas of transformation, and to support more effective streamlining of governance processes within Sunderland's place-based integration model (see section 4.11 and 4.12)

4.0 Sunderland's 2023-25 BCF Submission

Better Care Fund Investment Plans

4.1 The grant allocations to be directly pooled into the minimum BCF income pot are outlined below (based on confirmed and estimated allocations, inline, with BCF guidance). These amounts reflect the requirements of national condition 4.

BCF Funding Contributions	23/24	Est 24/25
Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF)	£18,683,789	£18,683,789
Disabled Facilities Grant	£4,055,399	£4,055,399
Minimum NHS contribution	£29,126,100	£30,774,637
Adult Social Care Discharge Funding	£2,619,438	£4,446,712
Sub-Total (awaiting confirmation of additional contribution, see 4.2)	£50,429,328	£57,960,537

Table 3. BCF Funding 2023-25

4.2 ICB and Local Authority finance leads are currently reviewing historic BCF scheme contributions to sift-out superfluous elements of ICB and LA *additional* spend (2022/23 baseline of additional spend was £137,363,750 and £78,276,008 from NHS and LA, respectively). This is to ensure that Sunderland's BCF is focused on investment that is more closely aligned to the BCF policy objectives and achievement of the associated metrics.

4.3 The financial stocktake exercise will additionally identify areas of spend that relate to prevention activity and action on health inequalities, as set out within the high impact change model for reducing preventable admissions and [Core20PLUS5](#) framework. This will include identifying the proportion of investment that reflects:

- Infrastructure investment in population health management approaches to identify those most at risk of admission, including Core20Plus populations.
- Provision of targeted and tailored support for those identified as most at risk.
- Proactive multi-disciplinary working, including personalised care and social prescribing.
- Enabling interventions that facilitate supported self-management through education and empowerment.
- Coordinated and rapid response to crises in the community.
- Targeted activity to support early intervention and prevention of four of the five clinical domains of the Core20Plus5 (i.e. chronic respiratory disease, early cancer diagnosis, severe mental illness and hypertension case-finding).

Better Care Fund Metrics

4.4 All BCF metrics (see table 1) will be underpinned by improved or static trajectories that will challenge performance over the 2-year planning period. Targets against key metrics are still being finalised and will be presented separately at the HWB in June 2023. Current agreed metrics are outlined below for reference.

4.5 Target trajectories for **avoidable emergency admissions** equate to an ambitious 3% reduction in avoidable emergency rates (see figure 1 for avoidable emergency admission trends from 2019-2023).

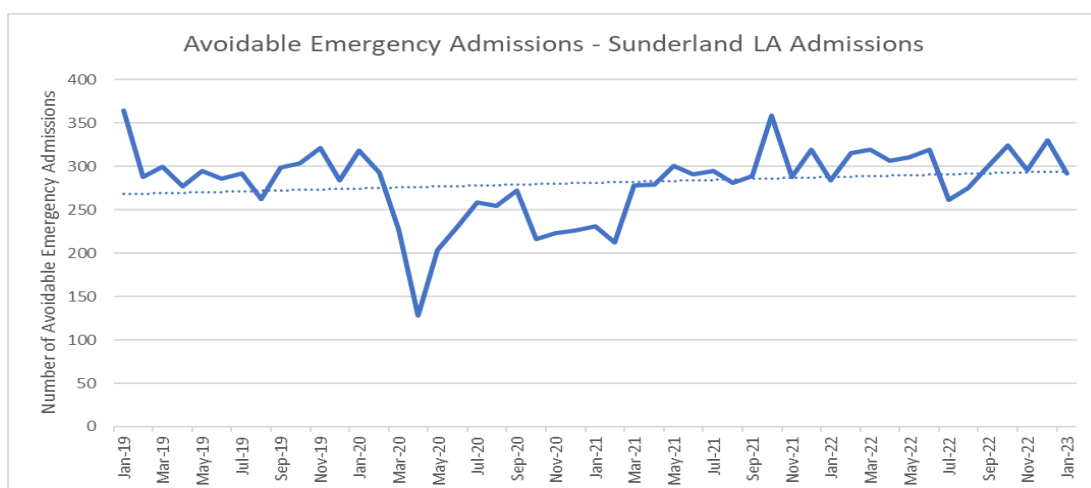


Figure 1: Avoidable emergency admissions data, Sunderland 2019-2023

4.6 The rationale for the target trajectory for avoidable emergency admissions is based on the anticipated impact of:

- the implementation of the Falls Strategy (to be published in the Summer - HWB agenda item for September)
- the roll-out and expansion of virtual wards scheme
- the implementation of Urgent Crises Response and Same Day Emergency Care
- targeted and tailored support for high intensity users of care
- further development of Community Integrated Teams.

4.7 Target trajectories for **the proportion of patients discharged to their Usual Place of Residence**, have been proposed at 92% by quarter 4 2023/24. Trend data for discharge to usual place of residence (fig 2), demonstrates a significant gap between Sunderland and the England average following the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, target trajectories reflect an ambition to close the gap and resume rates in-line with pre-pandemic levels. Rationale to support this projection includes the implementation of the Discharge to Assess model and reconfiguration of community bed-based model to a home-first approach.

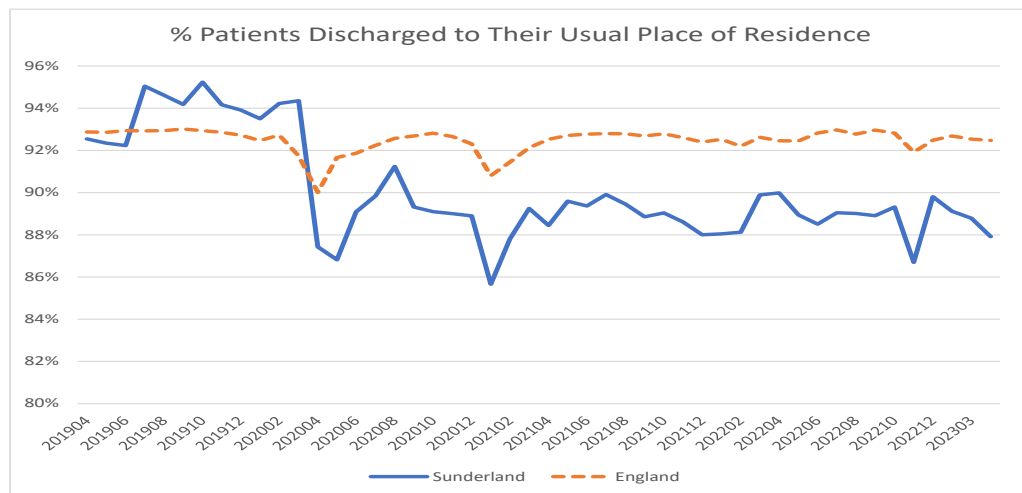


Figure 2. Sunderland and England's Discharge to Usual Place of Residence rate

4.8 The **emergency admissions due to falls in those aged over-65** metric, was introduced in the 2023/24 planning round. A static trajectory is proposed for Sunderland, enabling time for the anticipated impacts and benefits of the Sunderland Falls Strategy to be realised following its Summer 2023 launch. Current admission rates for falls in those aged over-65 have been highlighted in figure 3 below for reference.

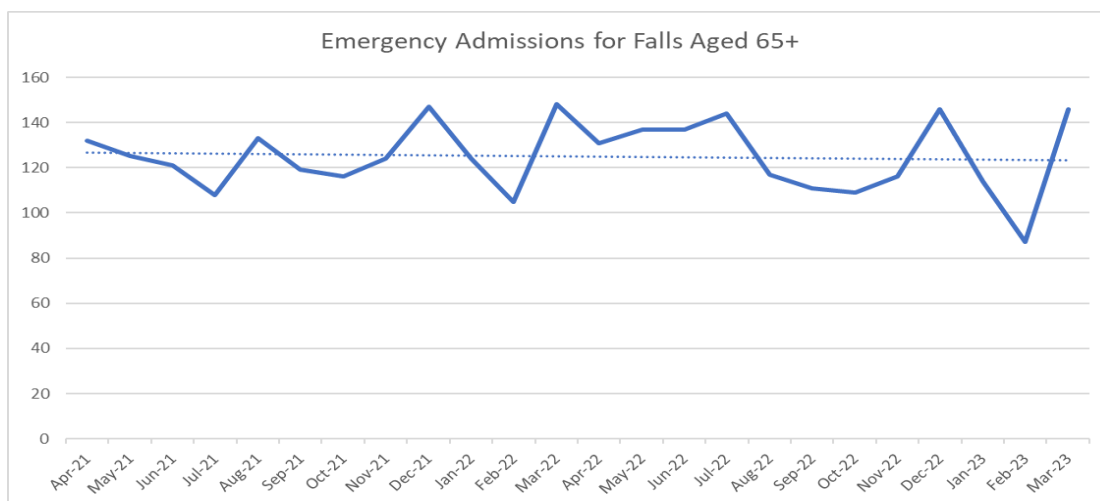


Figure 3: Sunderland's emergency admission for falls in those aged 65 and over 2021-23

4.9 As outlined in section 4.4, finalised metrics will be presented separately at the June HWB, with rationale for proposed target trajectories reflecting the BCF narrative plan (described in 4.10, below).

Better Care Fund Narrative Plan

4.10 A key element of the BCF planning framework is submission of a narrative plan that succinctly describes how identified investment will impact on the overarching policy objectives and associated metrics of the BCF - including transformational action being undertaken to implement the high impact change models identified in section 3.2. This will include:

- a summary of the strategic approach to integration of health, social care and home adaptations to support improved health and wellbeing outcomes. The strategic approach will reflect relevant priorities within the Healthy City Plan, Sunderland Place Plan and Integrated Care Strategy ([Better Health and Wellbeing for All](#)) – creating a clear rationale that is consistent with existing strategic planning frameworks. This will additionally build on the development work identified in section 3.2 and 3.3.
- plans for addressing key areas for development that have been identified within the Year-End BCF Review Submission for 2022/23 (see appendix 1) and the high impact change assessments (section 3.2).
- the approach to supporting unpaid carers, including key actions within the Sunderland Carers Strategy.
- the approach to further join-up commissioning across health and care, including, section 75 development work being undertaken in collaboration with Hill Dickinson LLP; development of a joint commissioning strategy; and key actions identified within Sunderland's Market Sustainability Plan.
- the approach to supporting equality and tackling health inequalities, as described in section 4.3.

4.11 In addition, the narrative plan will describe the proposed governance arrangements for the BCF, which will include:

- appropriate arrangements for overseeing national BCF reporting and monitoring, including:
 - Quarterly reporting on spend and activity data
 - Minimum monthly reporting of performance data
 - Monthly reporting on hospital discharge capacity
 - Fortnightly reporting on spend and activity data in relation to discharge
- Local monitoring and management of the BCF section 75 agreement, which will include:
 - Quarterly performance and financial reporting via the Sunderland Partnership Board and Place Committee
 - Risk/issue management
 - Quarterly reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board
 - Any other partner obligations stipulated within the section 75 agreement, which will include monitoring of key deliverables identified within the BCF planning narrative.

4.12 To support the above, it is proposed that the BCF-monitoring and accountability arrangements are built-into the place-based governance model, as identified in table 3, below. This reflects Sunderland's place-based governance model for health and care integration, supporting more streamlined and consistent reporting arrangements (see Appendix 2).

Place Board/Committee/Forum	Role
Cabinet/ICB Executive	BCF/s75 sign-off and agreed schemes of reservation and delegation
Health and Wellbeing Board	BCF assurance and sign-off
Place Committee	Agreeing NHS-related elements of the BCF prior to ICB Executive
LA Chief Executive (via ICB Place Committee)	Agreeing LA-related elements of the BCF prior to Cabinet
Sunderland Partnership Board (meeting in common with Sunderland Place Committee)	Oversight of s75 Partnership Arrangement as detailed in section 4.11
Adult Collaborative	Oversight of national reporting requirements of the BCF(as detailed in section 4.11) and managing deliverables in-line with schemes of delegation

Table 3. Sunderland BCF governance: role of respective boards and functions at place

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 The Board is recommended to:

- i. Note the process followed in developing the 2023/25 BCF Plan and key points from the plan.

- ii. Note the content of the accompanying BCF presentation, including the proposed funding profile, target trajectories and high-level narrative plan.
- iii. Review and sign off the 2023/25 Sunderland BCF plan
- iv. Agree to submit the plan as per the national deadline of 28 June 2023.

