

	<b>Brent Health and Wellbeing Board</b> 24 July 2025
	<b>Report from Rachel Crossley</b> <b>Corporate Director of</b> <b>Service Reform and Strategy</b>
	<b>Lead Cabinet Member - Councillor</b> <b>Nerva, Adult Social Care, Public</b> <b>Health and Leisure</b>
<b>Better Care Fund Plan Approval 2025/2026</b>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	N/A
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	N/A
<b>List of Appendices:</b>	None
<b>Background Papers:</b>	N/A
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Antoinette Jones Head of Place, Brent Brent Borough Brent ICP Email: <a href="mailto:antoinettejones@nhs.net">antoinettejones@nhs.net</a> ----- Eleanor Maxwell Senior Programme Officer Better Care Fund Lead for Brent Borough Email: <a href="mailto:eleanor.maxwell@brent.gov.uk">eleanor.maxwell@brent.gov.uk</a> Telephone: 020 8937 2195

## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the planning process regarding the Better Care Fund (BCF) planning process for the financial year 2025-26.
- 1.2. An interim update was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) on 2<sup>nd</sup> April. At that time the final plan could not be shared as the HWBB submission date was in advance of approval process with all partners and the submission deadline.
- 1.3. The final BCF plan for Brent, developed in partnership including Northwest London Integrated Care Board (NWL ICB) was submitted on time to NHSE on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March. It was approved in advance by NWL ICB, Rachel Crossley,

Corporate Director of Service reform and Strategy with delegated authority from the HWBB and overseen by Councillor Neil Nerva, Lead Cabinet Member Health. It was formally approved by NHS England on 30<sup>th</sup> May. Work is now underway to finalise the S75 contract between Brent Council and NWL ICB.

## **2.0 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 HWBB members are asked to review and formally approve the BCF Plan for 2025/26.

## **3.0 Detail**

### **Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context**

- 3.1. The BCF Plan aligns with Brent Council's Borough Plan 2023–2027 and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022–2027, contributing particularly to Strategic Priority 5: "*A Healthier Brent*." The plan seeks to reduce health inequalities and deliver place-based health and care services tailored to local needs. It includes schemes designed to meet the outcomes of both the Borough Plan and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

### **Background**

- 3.2. The previous BCF Plan (2023–25) covered two years with a minor update in year two. The 2025/26 plan represents a new plan covering a single financial year. A comprehensive review of all local authority-led schemes was conducted to ensure full compliance with BCF requirements, strategic alignment, value for money, and demonstrable impact.
- 3.3. Development of the plan required joint agreement and formal sign-off by Brent Council and NWL ICB to ensure compliance with national conditions and local priorities.
- 3.4. **Factors considered in the planning process**
- **NHS Minimum Contribution:**  
Increased by 3.9%, a more modest growth than the historical 5.66% uplift.
  - **Overall Funding Status:**  
Most funding remains static
  - **Additional ICB Funding**  
Funding was reduced by 50% to £621,072((from £1,216,000 in 2024/25). This was communicated on 20<sup>th</sup> March - just 10 days before the submission deadline – leaving extremely limited time to make informed and strategic adjustments.
  - **Funding Pressures:**  
Rising operational costs have resulted in a real-terms reduction in available funding. As a result, efforts have primarily focused on

maintaining funding for existing schemes, leaving limited capacity to support new or transformational schemes.

- **Tighter Timescales:**

The submission deadline of 31st March significantly shortened the planning period compared to previous years.

- **Strengthened Governance:**

The Brent BCF Board has enhanced its governance framework, clarifying roles, strengthening accountability, and improving performance monitoring.

- **Improved Budget Management:**

In 2024/25, Brent Council implemented improved processes for budget allocation and tracking, enhancing financial oversight and supporting planning confidence going in the new year.

### **Impact of Funding Reduction in Additional ICB Contribution**

- 3.5. On 20th March 2025, NWL ICB confirmed a 50% reduction in Additional ICB Funding for Brent. This equates to a loss of £864,925 when comparing the total funding available under the 2024/25 plan (inclusive of Section 75 funding of £270,000).
- 3.6. The Borough-based team, in collaboration with the Director of Adult Social Care and the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) Managing Director, have undertaken a detailed analysis to conduct a risk assessment to identify the implications and appropriate mitigation options. A review to understand options to mitigate the impact is ongoing and working with system partners.
- 3.7. In 2024/25, only 3 schemes were funded through the Additional Contribution, significantly limiting flexibility for cost reduction:
  1. Step-down beds
  2. LA staff in the reablement team
  3. Physiotherapy team at CLCH delivering the rehabilitation function of integrated reablement service.
- 3.8. The majority of cost savings were realised by withdrawing funding from the third scheme—the physiotherapy function—on the basis that it had the least immediate impact on hospital discharge pathways. Additionally, one step-down bed was decommissioned for a nine-month period. A comprehensive risk assessment has been completed and shared with stakeholders. In response, a project has been initiated to review the current service model and pathways for Rehabilitation and Reablement. This includes:
  1. Developing short-term options to ensure rapid access to therapy
  2. Designing a long-term, sustainable service model that meets future demand
- 3.9. Despite mitigation efforts, the funding reduction will negatively impact Brent residents, leading to increased waiting times, missed opportunities for optimal intervention, and higher long-term care costs.

## 4.0 Stakeholder and Ward Member Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1 All BCF schemes commissioned by the local authority have been reviewed and agreed upon by the required stakeholders.
- 4.2 There are no further stakeholder and ward member consultation or engagement comments specific to this paper.

## 5.0 Financial Considerations

### 5.1 Funding

This table details the income within the BCF.

#### BCF Income - 2024/25 and 2025/26

Funding Source	Plan 24/25	Plan 25/26	Difference 25-26 to 24-25 (+ve = increase, -ve = decrease)	Notes
DFG	£6,597,406	£6,597,406	£0.00	
Better Care Grant (new name for the IBCF and LA discharge funds combined)	N/A	£16,462,867	£0.00	Now all recurrent funding - very positive development supporting longer term planning.
LA Discharge Funding (now Better Care Grant)	£3,118,175	N/A		Now part of Better Care Grant, previously non recurrent.
iBCF Contribution (now Better Care Grant)	£13,344,692	N/A		Now part of Better Care Grant, previously recurrent funding.
NHS Minimum - Total (now also includes the ICB Discharge Funding)	£28,844,015	£32,418,883	£3,574,868.00	3.9% uplift v LY. Detailed breakdown in grey below.
NHS Minimum - LA	£10,114,127	£10,511,117	£396,990.00	This is the minimum figure set within the BCF by NHSE and part of the governance for the planning process. Uplift is not applied equally between NHS and LA portions.
NHS Minimum - Health	£18,729,888	£18,782,861	£52,973.00	
EX ICB Discharge - LA	N/A	£2,873,080	£0	Split to demonstrate the breakdown between LA and Health Commissioning
EX ICB Discharge - Health	N/A	£251,825		
NWL ICB Discharge Funding	£3,124,905	N/A		
Additional NHS Contribution	£1,216,000	£621,072	£-594,928.00	50% reduction, plus 2.6% uplift. This does not include the £270,000 removed from the BCF and transferred to LA via S75 in 24/25 and at risk for 25/26.
<b>Total</b>	<b>£56,245,193</b>	<b>£56,100,228</b>	<b>£-144,965.00</b>	
	<b>Total Plan in 24/25</b>	<b>Total Plan in 25/26</b>	<b>Total funding change between 24/25 and 25/26</b>	

Total LA Funding change between 24/25 and 25/26	£-197,938.00
Total Health Funding change between 24/25 and 25/26	£52,973.00

## 6.0 Legal Considerations

- 6.1 There are no legal implications at this time. A new Section 75 agreement will be required to cover the 2025/26 period and is in development currently.

## **7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations**

- 7.1 There are no specific EDI considerations arising from this report. All services will continue to be delivered to eligible residents across Brent.

## **8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations**

- 8.1 There are no specific climate and environmental considerations relating to this paper.

## **9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)**

- 9.1 There are no specific Human Resources / Property considerations relating to this paper.

## **10.0 Communication Considerations**

- 10.1 There are no specific communication considerations relating to this paper.

### **Report sign off:**

*Rachel Crossley*

**Corporate Director of Service Reform and Strategy**