

**Title: Delegated sign-off of the Better Care Fund (BCF) 2025/26 Planning Submission****Wards Affected: All****To: Health and Wellbeing Board On: 6 March 2025****Contact: Justin Wiggin, Senior Locality Manager (South & West), NHS Devon****E-mail: [justin.wiggin@nhs.net](mailto:justin.wiggin@nhs.net)**

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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 This paper outlines the process for ensuring the Torbay Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) meets its requirement to submit a Better Care Fund (BCF) 2025/26 Planning submission to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) by 31 March 2025.

**2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 In order to meet the tight deadline (31 March 2025) set by government we recommend that the Chairman of the HWBB be given delegated authority to sign off the BCF 25/26 planning submission, subject to these plans being tabled and formally approved by HWBB on the 19 June 2025.

**3. Supporting Information**

- 3.1 HWBBs are expected to send a final BCF 2025/26 Planning submission to the national Better Care Fund team and regional better care managers by the 31 March 2025.
- 3.2 The guidance and supporting plans and templates to complete this work have only recently been shared with us by the DHSC. Since then, colleagues in both Torbay Council, NHS Devon, and Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust (TSDFT) have been working in partnership to complete these plans and get them signed off within the challenging timescales that have been given to us. This work is in ongoing.
- 3.3 Local authorities and ICBs must, in their joint HWBB BCF plans, show how health and social care services will support improved outcomes against the fund's two principal policy objectives:
- to support the shift from sickness to prevention; and
  - to support people living independently and the shift from hospital to home.

As set out in the BCF policy framework, HWBBs will be expected to agree goals against three headline metrics as part of their planning return:

- Emergency admissions to hospital for people aged 65+ per 100,000 population;
- Average length of discharge delay for all acute adult patients, derived from a combination of:
  - proportion of adult patients discharged from acute hospitals on their discharge ready date (DRD);
  - for those adult patients not discharged on DRD, average number of days from DRD to discharge; and
- Long-term admissions to residential care homes and nursing homes for people aged 65+ per 100,000 population.

3.4 HWBs will need to submit for assessment:

- a narrative plan;
- a completed planning template which articulates their goals for the three headline metrics in line with the BCF requirements and guidance; and
- an intermediate care (including short-term care) capacity and demand plan.

Together, these make up a HWBB area's submission of its BCF plan.

3.5 Following representations from local authorities, a decision has been made by national BCF partners based on feedback from local areas that the final HWBB submission can be signed off by HWBBs post submission.

3.6 However, to meet the 31 March deadline we recommend that the Chairman of the HWBB be given delegated authority to sign off the BCF 25/26 planning documents, alongside the council's Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer, and Director of Adults and Community Services, subject to these plans being tabled and formally approved by HWBB on the 19 June 2025.

3.7 Parallel sign off process are taking place within NHS Devon, and TSDFT, so that we can jointly submit our BCF 2025/26 plans for Torbay reflecting our ICS/ICB partnership arrangements.

### **Background Papers:**

None but the BCF 2025/26 Final Planning Submission papers noted above will be shared with HWBB at its meeting on the 19 June 2025, for formal sign off.