

Healthier Communities Select Committee			
Title	Better Care Fund – Update		
Contributor	Executive Director for Community Services	Item	9
Class	Part 1 (Open)	16 July 2014	

1. Purpose of report

The purpose of this briefing is to provide an update to the Healthier Communities Select Committee in relation to the Better Care Fund.

2. Background

The Better Care Fund (BCF) was announced as part of the 2013 Spending Round. Lewisham submitted its BCF plan on 4 April 2014.

3. Update

- 3.1 NHS England has recently notified all CCGs of the requirement to resubmit their Operational Plans for 2014/15 and 2015/16, including their submission for the Better Care Fund.
- 3.2 NHS England has stated that the BCF plans, submitted on 4 April, have been subject to an assurance process led by Area Teams together with Local Government regional peers. NHS England has said that while the assurance process demonstrated some improvement on the draft plans submitted in February, it also showed that further work is required on many local plans, particularly around the metrics and finance data, and on the extent of provider engagement in the planning process. In light of this, Ministers have confirmed that no BCF plans would be formally signed off in April and that further time should be taken for CCGs and Councils, working with Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs), to refine their plans during June.
- 3.3 Additional guidance was meant to have been issued by the end of the first week of June, along with clarification on next steps and timetable, with the data required by 27 June; this additional guidance and information is still awaited at the time of writing this report.
- 3.4 The Department of Health has issued a press notice, which announced that £1 billion of the BCF would be allocated to local areas to spend on out-of-hospital services according to the level of reduction in emergency admissions they achieve. The press notice states that local areas will agree their own ambition on reducing emergency admissions and they will be allocated a portion of the £1 billion performance money in the fund in accordance with the level of performance against this ambition. The remains of the money from the performance pot not earned through reducing emergency admissions will be used to support NHS-commissioned local services, as agreed by Health and wellbeing Boards.

- 3.5 On 8 July ADASS subsequently issued a press notice expressing concern about the further conditions placed on the BCF and of any reduction in the funding of social care as a result of this change.
- 3.6 Revised guidance for local areas to shape the further development of local Better Care Fund plans will be set out shortly. This will include information on the revised performance payment scheme, as well as specific areas where local plans need to be strengthened through providing further detail on local plans.

4. Next steps

It is proposed that a further update taking into account any changes and information provided from additional government guidance, will be presented to the Healthier Communities Select Committee in September 2014.

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