

Briefing Note

Planning Guidance for the Better Care Fund 2016/17

On 23rd January 2016 the Department of Health and Department for Communities and Local Government published the Better Care Fund Planning Requirements for 2016-17.

The document needs also be read alongside:

- BCF Policy Framework 2016/17 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/better-care-fund-how-it-will-work-in-2016-to-2017>
- BCF Local Financial Allocations 2016/17 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/part-rel/transformation-fund/bcf-plan/>
- NHS Mandate for 2016/17 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486674/nhse-mandate16-17.pdf

The BCF return template for the 2016/17 BCF plan has not yet been published, but is expected imminently.

How will the Planning Guidance be used?

NHS England expect local authorities to use the planning guidance to structure their plans and delivery of BCF for 2016/17. Timescales for submission of plans is:

- 2nd March 2016: BCF planning return; to include agreed funding, scheme level spending plan, national metric plans and any local risk sharing agreements.
- 21st March 2016: High level narrative plan and revised BCF planning return.
- 25th April 2016: Final BCF plans submitted, having been signed off by Health and Wellbeing Boards.

The national assurance process for BCF Plans for 2016/17 has been removed. Instead regional teams will work with the Better Care Support Team to provide the assurance process.

Key Changes in BCF for 2016/17

- The removal of the performance for pay element of the fund
- Two new national conditions:
 - (i) an “agreement to invest in NHS commissioned out of hospital services, which **may** include a wide range of services including social care”. This replaces the payment for performance element of the fund. These fund are ring-fenced in line with the specified BCF allocations amount. Local areas who did not need their emergency admission target are expected to consider putting an appropriate proportion of the ring-fenced budget into a local risk sharing agreement;
 - (ii) a new requirement for a plan, with locally determined stretch targets, for reducing delayed transfers of care (DTOC). This appears to be a broad plan, focussing on community assets, flow through the system, and emphasising the need for integrated, collaborative whole system working
- The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) will continue to be allocated through the BCF. However, the Adult Social Care Grant will be included in a single DFG payment for 2016/17. This is to strengthen the housing element of the BCF, with a new national condition that requires local housing authority representatives to be involved in developing and agreeing BCF plans.

What stays the same?

- Existing national conditions remain (plus the two new national conditions outlined above):
 - Jointly agreed plans
 - Maintain provision of social care services
 - Better data sharing between health and social care, based on the NHS number
 - 7 Day services to support discharge
 - Joint approach to assessment and care planning, with an accountable lead professional
- Metrics remain the same (plus a local DTOC metric, as outlined above):

- Non-elective admissions
- Admissions to residential and care homes
- Effectiveness of reablement

We await clarity on

- The template for the BCF plan return

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