

REPORT TO: Health & Wellbeing Board

DATE: 11 October 2023

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director - Adult Services

PORTFOLIO: Adult Social Care

SUBJECT: Halton Borough Council and NHS Cheshire & Merseyside: Joint Working Agreement (Better Care (Pooled) Fund)

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To present a brief overview of the updated two year Joint Working Agreement (JWA) between Halton Borough Council (HBC) and NHS Cheshire & Merseyside (CM), taking effect from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2025, and which replaces the previous one year JWA which was approved by both organisations in March 2023.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

RECOMMENDED: That the Board note the contents of the report.

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 **Introduction/Background**

Halton began its journey of joint working/integration between Health and Adult Social Care back in 2003 with a pooled budget being established for Intermediate Care and Equipment services, in addition to specific grants allocations.

Since it's original development, the JWA and associated Pooled Budget has gone through a number of changes, including the inclusion of the Better Care Fund in 2015 and the separating out of the Continuing Healthcare and Community Care budget elements in 2020.

3.2 **Joint Working Agreement (JWA) & Governance Arrangements**

Following approval in March 2023 of the one year JWA, national guidance was issued in respect to the requirements regarding the Better Care Fund Plan and that is was intended to be a two year plan (2023/25). Also further discussions took place between HBC and NHS CM regarding the governance arrangements in respect to the pooled budget arrangements which resulted in agreement to formally remove management of the Pooled Budget etc. from the One Halton Partnership governance arrangements.

In the main, this change has resulted in the establishment of a Joint Senior

Leadership Team (JSLT) between HBC Adult Social Care and NHS CM.

The JSLT is responsible for the direction, oversight, monitoring of the BCF Plan and associated Pooled Budget. The JSLT is supported in this duty via the Better Care Commissioning Advisory Group (BCCAG). The BCCAG reviews in detail information pertaining to BCF Plan, impact of the Pool Budget, quality, performance, activity and finances, and make recommendations to the JSLT on remedial action plans or future use of the Pool as appropriate.

The new governance arrangements along with links to the two year Better Care Fund Plan has been reflected in the new JWA.

3.3 **Benefits of Joint Working**

By working together collaboratively and in partnership we are able to achieve and sustain good health and wellbeing for the people of Halton and are able to provide a range of options to support people in their lives by jointly designing and delivering services around the needs of local people rather than focusing on the boundaries of our individual organisations. This aids in our ability to ensure that services are sustainable, particularly with the continued challenges that we are presented with.

If we didn't undertake this approach then it has the potential to have a negative impact on the Health & Social Care system within the Borough, for example:-

- A lack of cohesive approach could lead to fragmentation of service delivery and lack of ownership.
- No clear picture of the demand and capacity on services shared by system leaders, which could lead to our inability to develop robust plans for the future service needs of local people.
- Lack of choice/information for service users and possible duplication of provision.

This would have the potential to ultimately lead to a lack of confidence in the system and our inability to deliver high quality services in order to ensure that service users receive the outcomes that they want.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None identified.

5.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Better Care (Pooled) Fund budget for 2023/24 is circa. £30m.

5.2 With effect from 1st April 2023, the pooled budget will include:-

- Better Care Fund and Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF)
 - Includes spend in areas such as Intermediate Care Services, Carers, Equipment Services, Care Homes, Domiciliary Care,

Telecare, Supported Discharge, Community Respiratory and Rehabilitation Services

- Hospital Discharge Funding
- Disabled Facility Grant

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

None identified.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

None identified.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Those people who are in receipt of long term care whether that is funding from Health or Social Care are those people in our communities with some of the most clinically complex and severe on going needs, so it is essential we have effective mechanisms in place to ensure that people we provide services to receive appropriate outcomes.

The integrated system and pooled budget arrangements will continue to ensure that the resources available to both Health and Social Care are effectively used in the delivery of personalised, responsive and holistic care to those who are most in need.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

None identified.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The JWA complies with the financial standing orders of HBC and NHS CM and the regulatory and monitoring arrangements contained within.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None associated with this report.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no environmental or climate implications as a direct result of this report.

10.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

10.1

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Joint Working Agreement – HBC	Copy available on request	Sue Wallace Bonner Susan.Wallace-

& NHS Cheshire & Merseyside 1.4.23 -31.3.25		Bonner@halton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 511 8825
---	--	--