

NHS England
Wellington House
133-155 Waterloo Road
London
SE1 8UG

30 May 2025

To: Cllr Liz Leffman, Chair, Oxfordshire
Health and Wellbeing Board
Dr Nick Broughton, Sue Harriman,
Integrated Care Board Chief Executive
or Representative(s)
Martin Reeves, Chief Executive,
Oxfordshire County Council

cc. Jane Sproat, Natalie Jones

Dear Colleagues,

Better Care Fund 2025-26 – approval for 25-26 plans and permission to spend NHS minimum contribution

Thank you for submitting your Better Care Fund (“**BCF**”) plan and for the collaborative work among local partners to develop the plan.

As you will be aware, the BCF is a joint programme operated by the Department of Health and Social Care (“**DHSC**”), Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (“**MHCLG**”) and NHS England. As outlined in the [BCF Planning Requirements](#), NHS England is responsible for final approval of the use of the NHS minimum contribution, following a collaborative regional review process which includes input from social care representatives. This letter details the outcome of that process.

I am pleased to let you know that following the review process, your plan has been classified as ‘**approved**’.

BCF conditions for financial year 2025-26

The BCF funding from NHS England for the financial year 2025-26 can now be formally released, subject to continuing to meet the national conditions set out in the [BCF Policy Framework for 2025-26](#) and further detailed in the [BCF Planning Requirements for 2025-26](#) including:

- Delivery of your approved plan, including progress against BCF goals and wider objectives of the BCF,
- BCF funding is used in compliance with grant and funding conditions, including maintaining the NHS minimum contribution to adult social care,
- Compliance with monitoring, oversight and support processes, working with regional and national BCF teams, including submission of jointly agreed quarterly reports to the national BCF team and regional Better Care Manager(s) (“**BCM**”) in line with the BCF reporting cycle and compliance with escalation processes,
- The transfer of BCF funding from NHS England into one or more section 75 pooled funds.

Separately, the conditions relating to the use of the Local Authority Better Care Grant and Disabled Facilities Grant (“**DFG**”), that form that local government contribution to the Better Care Fund, are set out in Section 31 Grant Determinations ([Local Authority Better Care Grant Determination 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#), the Grant Determination Letter for the DFG 2025/26 will be published in due course). This makes clear the purpose and use of this local authority funding and directly relates to the [BCF Policy Framework](#) and [BCF Planning Requirements](#) (see section on the legal framework below).

Legal framework

As set out in the [BCF Planning Requirements for 2025-26](#), the BCF is operated by the Department of Health and Social Care, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and NHS England.

NHS England makes BCF funding available to ICBs under section 223GA of the 2006 Act. Grants to local government (Local Authority Better Care Grant and Disabled Facilities Grant) will be paid to local government under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, with a condition that they are pooled into local BCF plans.

The escalation process set out in the Planning Requirements explains how action may be taken if the ICB or local authority do not comply with conditions. This includes the escalation process if, following enhanced support and oversight, a HWB area does not meet a national condition or there is a material risk that they will not do so.

Next steps

Now that your plan has been approved the NHS minimum contribution may now be spent, subject to compliance with the conditions set out above. Section 75 agreements must be in place across all HWB areas by 30 September 2025.

Ongoing support and oversight regarding the spending of BCF funding will continue to be led by your local BCM(s).

There will be an opportunity for HWB areas to review local goals set out in their approved HWB plan where improvements in data accuracy mean that they might benefit from revision. This will be communicated to local areas as part of the information on the BCF Quarter 1 reporting process. Any changes in local goals will need to be approved by your BCM(s).

It is expected that HWB areas will continue to work in partnership with ICB colleagues to ensure alignment to 2025-26 delivery plans, particularly urgent and emergency care winter planning.

Thank you for your work and best wishes with your implementation and ongoing delivery of the BCF.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Jupp', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ben Jupp

Director of Intermediate Care and Rehabilitation
Interim Senior Responsible Officer, Better Care Fund
NHS England