

NHS England  
Skipton House  
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London  
SE1 6LH

25 October 2017

To: *(by email)*

Cllr Lee Chapman  
Clive Wright  
Simon Freeman  
Gail Fortes-Mayer

Chair, Shropshire Health and Wellbeing Board, and Chief  
Executive, Shropshire Council  
Accountable Officer, NHS Shropshire CCG  
Director of Contracting and Planning, NHS Shropshire  
CCG

Dear Colleagues

### **BETTER CARE FUND 2017-19**

Thank you for submitting your Better Care Fund (BCF) plan for regional assurance. We know that the BCF has again presented challenges in preparing plans at pace and we are grateful for your commitment in providing your plan. The BCF is the only mandatory policy to facilitate integration of health and social care and the continuation of the BCF itself. It brings together health and social care funding, with a major injection of social care money announced at Spring Budget 2017. For the first time, this policy framework for the Fund covers two financial years to align with NHS planning timetables and to give areas the opportunity to plan more strategically.

Your plan has been assessed in accordance with the process set out in the *Better Care Fund 2017-19: Guide to Assurance of Plans*.

I am writing to inform you that, whilst the BCF plan you submitted in September met the principal conditions for approval, including national conditions 1, 2 and 3 and most of the planning requirements, it did not meet all the requirements of the published Integration and Better Care Fund planning requirements for 2017-19 due to a number of outstanding issues identified through the regional assurance process. These issues are set out below. However, given the progress you have made we are confident that you will be able to produce a fully compliant plan by **Thursday 2 November**.

At its meeting on Thursday 5 October, NHS England's Executive Group agreed that your plan has been placed in the '**Approved with conditions**' category. As such, you are granted authorisation to enter into a formal section 75 agreement whereby the funding will be transferred into a pooled fund, but you are required to comply with the conditions that have been applied.

This recognises that whilst your plan is strong, the review process identified a number of areas for improvement which once addressed will enable you to move to a fully approved status.

The BCF planning requirements that are now required to be fully met are:

- Planning Requirement 5 – Implementation of the high impact change model for managing transfers of care
- Planning Requirement 8 – Approach to programme delivery and control
- Planning Requirement 9 – Management of risk

### **Specific conditions associated with approval**

NHS England's approval of your submitted plan is therefore subject to the following specific conditions:

- Planning Requirement 5 - Ensure that statistical information relating to the High Impact Change model and any metrics are completed fully; and confirm that the intended Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust's procurement of domiciliary services will not impact on integrity of the plan.
- Planning Requirement 8 - Ensure that the draft budget in the narrative accords with the figures submitted in the planning template so that there is one consistent set of figures; provide more detail on capturing and sharing learning regionally and nationally; and approach to benefits realisation; and managing underperformance.
- Planning Requirement 9 - Address the issues set out on the management of risk in the narrative part of the document on an agreed approach to risk management; and risk mitigation between partners.

### **What you need to do now**

You should submit a revised narrative plan that addresses the issues as identified above to fully meet the planning requirements.

We require you to return a compliant plan to your better care manager by **Thursday 2 November** for consideration and regional assurance. Our aim is for all areas to have an agreed and fully approved plan in place by **Thursday 30 November 2017** at the very latest. Escalation action and powers of direction will be used in the event of these conditions not being met by the date specified.

### **General conditions associated with approval**

In addition to the specific conditions set out above, your BCF funding will be released subject to the funding being used in accordance with your final approved plan, and the funding being transferred into pooled funds under a section 75 agreement. These general conditions apply to all approved BCF plans.

These general and specific conditions have been imposed through NHS England's powers under sections 223G and 223GA of the NHS Act 2006 (as amended by the Care Act 2014). These sections allow NHS England to make payment of the BCF funding subject to conditions. If the conditions are not complied with, NHS England is able to withhold or recover funding, or direct the CCGs in your Health and Wellbeing Board area as to the use of the funding.

Amounts payable to the CCG in respect of the BCF are subject to the following conditions under section 223GA of the NHS Act 2006:

1. That the CCG will meet the performance objectives specified in its BCF plan; and
2. That the CCG will meet any additional performance objectives specified by NHS England from time to time.

If the CCG fails to meet those objectives, NHS England may withhold the funds (in so far as they have not already been paid to the CCG) or recover payments already made; and may direct the CCG as to the use of the amounts payable in respect of the BCF.

In addition to the BCF funding, the Spring Budget 2017 increased funding via the Improved Better Care Fund (IBCF) for adult social care in 2017-19. This has been pooled into the local BCF. The new IBCF grant (and as previously the Disabled Facilities Grant) will be paid directly to local authorities via a Section 31 grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government. The Government has attached a set of conditions to the Section 31 grant, to ensure it is included in the BCF at local level and will be spent on adult social care.

I hope that some further time and where required, additional support and information will enable you to take the final steps to having a fully approved plan, and move quickly towards implementation. Any ongoing support and oversight with your BCF plan will be led by your local better care manager and the Better Care Support team, on my behalf.

Once again, thank you for your work so far.

Yours faithfully,



Simon Weldon  
**Director of NHS Operations and Delivery and SRO for the Better Care Fund  
NHS England**

Copy (by email) to:

Andy Begley                      Director of Adult Services, Shropshire Council  
Tanya Miles                      Head of Adult Social Care, Shropshire Council

Jo Farrar                          Director General, Department for Communities & Local Government  
Jonathan Marron                Director General, Department of Health  
Sarah Pickup                      Deputy Chief Executive, Local Government Association

NHS England Midlands and East

Paul Watson                      Regional Director  
Stuart Poynor                    Director of Commissioning Operations  
Vikki Taylor                      Locality Director  
Nigel Littlewood                Regional Lead  
Steve Corton                      Better Care Manager

Better Care Support team

Anthony Kealy                    Head of Integration Delivery  
Rosie Seymour                    Deputy Director