



SHROPSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Report

Meeting Date	19 March 2026			
Title of report	Better Care Fund 2025-26 quarter three template			
This report is for (You will have been advised which applies)	Discussion and agreement of recommendations		Approval of recommendations (With discussion by exception)	x Information only (No recommendations)
Reporting Officer & email	Deborah Webster, Service Manager (Contracts, Quality Assurance, and Business) Deborah.Webster@shropshire.gov.uk			
Which Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy priorities does this report address? Please tick all that apply	Children & Young People	x	Joined up working	x
	Mental Health	x	Improving Population Health	x
	Healthy Weight & Physical Activity	x	Working with and building strong and vibrant communities	x
	Workforce	x	Reduce inequalities (see below)	x
What inequalities does this report address?	Access to services, particularly for carers, people living in rural areas, older age adults and people who need support from health and social care.			

1. Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of the Better Care Fund (BCF) 2025-26 quarter three template for Shropshire. The deadline for submission of the completed template to NHS England was 30 January 2026. In line with national conditions, the approval of the Joint Chairs of Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) was obtained prior to submission, and retrospective approval is now sought from HWB.

2. Recommendations

HWBB approves the BCF 2025-26 quarter three template (see appendix A).

3. Report

3.1. Policy Framework

The [Better Care Fund policy framework 2025 to 2026](#) sets out the Government's aims:

- To be a first step in a broader shift to align with the government's Health Mission and the shift to a neighbourhood health approach.
- To better support patients and service users by enabling people to live more healthy and independent lives for longer.
- To support hospital flow and positively contribute to the NHS' ability to move towards constitutional standards.
- To make the BCF work better for local authorities and the NHS by reducing administrative burdens and providing greater flexibility to meet BCF objectives.

In line with the government's vision for health and care, the BCF Policy Framework also sets out the vision, funding, oversight and support arrangements, focused on two overarching objectives for the BCF in 2025-26:

- reform to support the shift from sickness to prevention.
- reform to support people living independently and the shift from hospital to home.

A national condition of the BCF programme is for quarterly templates to be completed, approved by the local HWB and submitted to the national BCF Team. The deadline for submission of the quarter

two template was 11 November 2025. In line with national conditions, the approval of the Chairs of Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) was obtained prior to submission.

3.2. 2025-26 BCF Plan

Shropshire's 2025-26 BCF Plan consists of:

- A narrative plan.
- A planning template which articulates the goals for the metrics which are used locally and nationally to monitor progress towards the Plan.
- An intermediate care (including short-term care) capacity and demand plan.

For 2025-26 there are three headline metrics:

- Emergency admissions (emergency admissions to hospital for people aged over 65 per 100,000 population).
- Discharge delay (average length of discharge delay for all acute adult patients, derived from a combination of proportion of adult patients discharged from acute hospitals on their discharge ready date (DRD) and, for those adult patients not discharged on their DRD, average number of days from the DRD to discharge).
- Residential admissions (long term admissions to residential care homes and nursing homes for people aged 65 and over per 100,000 population).

3.3. Performance

Quarter three performance data shows that Shropshire is on track to meet its metric plans for all three headline metrics.

A new national BCF Exchange Dashboard is the data source for reporting metric performance reporting. There is local concern about the accuracy and completeness of the data being reported for the residential admissions metric for all local authorities within the Dashboard. This has been communicated to the national BCF team using the quarter three template, requesting that the issues are fully considered and that national reporting methodology is reviewed and updated accordingly.

3.4. Future direction

BCF planning will become part of neighbourhood health planning from 2027-28. NHS England is currently working on the new approach. To give the time required, HWB areas have been asked to develop a one-year BCF plan for 2026-27. NHS England has published the policy framework, and work has begun on the assurance return required. The assurance return is made up of a Narrative Return Template and a Numerical Return Template. These will be presented to the May meeting of HWB for approval.

Risk assessment and opportunities appraisal	Demand and capacity continue to be a key area of focus and monitoring as demand increases. The amalgamation of BCF planning with neighbourhood health planning will give rise to opportunities to strengthen system working and drive progress towards delivery of shared strategic priorities.	
Financial implications	Financial updates are included in the quarter three template (see appendix 1).	
Climate Change Appraisal as applicable	Climate change appraisal is carried out as part of commissioned activity.	
Where else has the paper been presented?	System Partnership Boards	n/a
	Voluntary Sector	n/a
	Other	n/a
List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information) None		

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) or your organisational lead e.g., Exec lead or Non-Exec/Clinical Lead

Councillor Ruth Houghton, Cabinet Member for Adult and Children Social Care

Appendices

Appendix A. BCF 2025-26 quarter three template