

# Financing and investment



This section explores how adult social care providers can plan investment, unlock efficiency savings and ensure long-term affordability.

Confronted with financial instability and an unsustainable commissioning framework, Be Caring initiated strategic reforms focused on long-term viability.

Once the model was identified, proactive engagement with commissioners helped secured more stable contracts and investment. Those monies were effectively utilised in paying carers better, strengthening digital infrastructure, workforce development and contingency planning.

Beyond stabilising finances, Be Caring unlocked significant efficiency savings by adopting a neighbourhood-based delivery model. Long-term affordability was further supported by multi-year partnerships and a commitment to ethical leadership through its employee-owned structure.

The organisation is also commercialising its new CAREVIEW 360 system to deliver the neighbourhood prime provider model, creating new revenue opportunities and promoting sector-wide best practice.

This section is split into the following topics:

- planning the investment
- ensuring long-term affordability
- unlocking value and efficiencies
- how commissioned funding supports quality care
- key decisions, key learning and advice, recommendations.

# Planning the investment

**“We aim to utilise the money in the best way possible to value the workforce, deliver value for money and drive quality. For this to be possible, the consistency of income is absolutely crucial.”**

**Sharon Lowrie, Chief Executive Officer, Be Caring**

Be Caring’s transformation required a fundamental rethink of how care services were funded and structured. Historically, low hourly rates and inconsistent funding, particularly in Manchester, led to losses of around £500,000 over five years.

Recognising this unsustainable model, Be Caring initiated strategic discussions with commissioners, advocating that their approach supported by shift pay for carers would provide mutual benefits.

Contingency planning was a critical component of the investment strategy. Be Caring negotiated with commissioners to implement one-week notice periods when people were admitted to hospital or ceased care unexpectedly. This ensured continuity of income and protected the workforce from sudden financial shocks.

Additionally, a portion of funding uplifts, such as the 14% increase received from Manchester, was allocated to a contingency pot. This was used to maintain staff income during periods of client absence (for example, when people were in respite care, hospital or on holiday), allowing carers to be redeployed to other meaningful tasks.

As part of their improvement journey, Be Caring also secured external grant funding, such as from the Rayne Foundation, to support the development of career pathways for care workers. This enabled Be Caring to enhance its training offer and support progression within the sector.

Neighbourhood prime provider model contracts were first secured in Leeds, then expanded to Manchester, Newcastle, Bradford and Sheffield, creating a more stable financial foundation. Internally, resources were reallocated to support the transition, including:

- investment in workforce engagement and training
- development of digital systems for rota optimisation and monitoring.

Be Caring’s investment planning balanced strategic risk with open commissioner engagement and a focus on long-term sustainability.

# Ensuring long-term affordability

**“We were losing money in the way we were being commissioned and the quality wasn’t great. Knowing we couldn’t deliver the model we wanted because of the commissioned funding, I called my chairman and said, we either work differently, or we withdraw.”**

**Sharon Lowrie, Chief Executive Officer, Be Caring**

Be Caring’s long-term financial sustainability is underpinned by a multi-pronged strategy that balances cost control with care quality and workforce stability.

Central to this is a three-pillar financial plan: expanding its neighbourhood prime provider model to new areas, commercialising its digital outcomes-tracking platform CAREVIEW 360 and securing multi-year partnerships with commissioners.

CAREVIEW 360 enables real-time monitoring and accurate planning, helping to align commissioned care with actual delivery that fully accounts for all contact and non-contact time. Its commercialisation not only generates new revenue but also promotes best practice across the sector.

Be Caring’s financial model is built on transparency and collaboration. The organisation works closely with commissioners to secure long-term, sustainable contracts and participates actively in regional and national sector forums to advocate for fair funding. By providing detailed data on service delivery - including variances between commissioned and delivered hours - Be Caring evidence the efficiency and value of its model. This openness has strengthened trust and contributed to more stable commissioning arrangements.

Investment in people is another cornerstone of Be Caring’s approach. The organisation invests 2.2% more in training than the Home Care Association’s recommended minimum, recognising that a well-trained workforce is more effective and less likely to leave. Staff bonuses and shared decision-making further support accountability and continuous improvement. These measures reduce recruitment costs and contribute to a more stable, motivated workforce - key to maintaining affordability in a challenging funding environment.

Despite these strengths, Be Caring operates within a finely balanced system. Over 90% of income is spent on staffing, yet carers’ average take-home pay remains modest due to structural mismatches in commissioning. Where calls are cancelled or care call are shortened, Be Caring ensure staff utilise their time and they are paid fully. This maintains continuity, stability and fairness. This commitment to workforce stability, combined with transparent reporting and a person-centred ethos, allows Be Caring to navigate the financial pressures of shorter visits and increased travel time - pressures that threaten sustainability across the sector when not addressed through thoughtful commissioning.

# Unlocking value and efficiencies

**“I knew we could make this money work better and drive the right behaviour by using our resources in a better way. Efficiency is absolutely key to making the finances stack up.”**

**Sharon Lowrie**, Chief Executive Officer, Be Caring

Be Caring’s neighbourhood-based care has delivered significant financial efficiencies for both the organisation and its commissioners.

By organising staff rotas so that care workers support people within small geographic areas, travel time has been dramatically reduced, enabling more time for care delivery and eliminating unpaid travel. This not only improves service quality but also reduces fuel costs and scheduling inefficiencies. These efficiencies have contributed to lower operational costs and improved care continuity, with reduced travel and turnover playing a key role.

The neighbourhood prime provider model has improved workforce retention by compensating carers for their full time, including travel and training. Lower turnover means reduced recruitment and training costs, and a more experienced workforce contributes to better outcomes for people needing care and support.

The neighbourhood model contracts have also reduced administrative overhead, allowing Be Caring to focus on proactive care interventions that help prevent hospital admissions and reduce long-term costs. The trusted assessor model, piloted in Manchester, has further saved money by tailoring care visits to actual needs rather than fixed time slots.

The neighbourhood model is designed to be flexible within reason and can be adapted to support people with a learning disability and/or autistic people. It works by assigning dedicated, multi-skilled teams to defined neighbourhoods, enabling more personalised, relationship-based support while maintaining a structured framework for delivery. There will always be an element of planned calls to ensure service continuity and efficient workforce deployment, with flexibility built in to cancel or rearrange support by agreement - for example, through Individual Service Funds (ISFs) or planned time allocations that can be adjusted with sufficient notice. This approach is already used successfully in Be Caring’s LIFE service, where agreed support hours can be flexed around individual goals, routines or health needs without creating operational or financial instability. By maintaining a balance between planned and flexible support, the model ensures both responsiveness to personal need and sustainability for the workforce and commissioners.

Be Caring’s model proves that investing in people, technology and relationships can deliver both cost savings and high-quality, person-centred care.

# How commissioned funding supports quality care

At Be Caring, every hour of care delivered is underpinned by intentional investment in training, workforce development, and central support - ensuring both quality and sustainability. The organisation reinvests 97.6% of its income directly into service delivery and workforce support, with a modest 2.4% net margin. Importantly, this surplus is not extracted as profit but reinvested into the organisation and its people.

The largest share of funding, 70.1%, goes to carer pay and associated costs, including fair wages, pensions, travel time and holiday pay. Be Caring is committed to valuing its workforce, recognising that fair compensation is essential to delivering compassionate, consistent care.

Training accounts for 2.2% of spend, exceeding sector norms. Be Caring invests 56p per hour on training, compared to the Homecare Association's minimum recommendation of 41p. This investment builds skill, confidence, and career development, which are central to the success of its care model.

Local team pay makes up 14.8%, funding frontline operational management and support in each area. A further 4.2% is allocated to central support, which provides essential functions that smaller providers often cannot sustain. These include leadership, governance, quality assurance, HR, finance and communications - each contributing to safe, efficient and high-quality care.

Finally, 6.3% is invested in non-pay essentials such as IT systems, property, recruitment, PPE and insurance - critical infrastructure that enables safe and effective operations.

The key difference with Be Caring is not how much they spend on pay but how they organise the workforce to get best value from them which is what sets them apart. Other organisations may pay more and some commissioners base their funding models on paying the carers more and having less support in the back office.

Be Caring views central support not as overhead, but as a vital enabler of continuous improvement. Through robust reporting, compliance monitoring, workforce planning, and ongoing learning and development, the organisation ensures transparency, innovation and a culture of care that supports both colleagues and the communities they serve.



## Key decisions

- Secured neighbourhood prime provider model contracts with guaranteed volumes to stabilise income and enable investment in workforce, training and service quality.
- Redirected internal resources to digital infrastructure and rota optimisation, improving planning accuracy and operational efficiency.
- Negotiated contingency arrangements with commissioners to protect staff income during hospital admissions or care disruptions.
- Commercialised CAREVIEW 360 to generate revenue and promote sector-wide improvements in care planning and performance.

## Key learning

**“Be Caring’s transparency around workforce and finances helped us make informed decisions and build trust.”**

**Paul Bickerton**, Head of Commissioning, Care Homes, Homecare and Quality, Manchester Local Care Organisation

Be Caring shows that sustainable care needs strong financial planning, ethical leadership and smart partnerships. neighbourhood prime provider model funded contracts covering care time, travel, training and overheads help create stability and value staff.

Early engagement with commissioners, backed by clear data, is key. Contingency planning protects income during disruptions. Aligning finances with values builds trust, supports retention and lays the foundation for high-quality, person-centred care.



## Recommendations for providers

A checklist of practical recommendations and resources to help providers to adapt and adopt similar informed by this building block section.

## Recommendations for commissioners

Access a checklist of practical recommendations for commissioners to help adopt some or all of the approach used by Be Caring's commissioners.

