CARE ENGLAND
Representing independent care providers

FUTURE PROOFING CARE

Innovative solutions and turnaround strategies to sustain independent adult social care providers

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Foreword

"In our society, the independent adult social care sector is critical to the well-being of countless individuals and their families. It is a sector that, despite facing unparalleled challenges, stands resilient; driven to offer a high quality of life and empower those in need to make meaningful choices so they receive the right care across a variety of services, including care homes, home care and supported living services.

Yet, as this paper illuminates, the sector finds itself at a critical juncture, navigating a storm of financial, operational, and regulatory challenges that threaten its very structure. The COVID-19 pandemic cast a stark light on the indispensable role of adult social care and since then, care providers have been left to contend with rising operational costs, staffing shortages, sub-optimal fees, and an ever-complex regulatory environment, all while striving to maintain high-quality care.

The situation is particularly acute for smaller providers, which represent the majority of the sector, yet face the greatest risk of closure. This is not simply an industry concern; it is a societal one, which will have a significant effect on the most vulnerable.

This paper lays bare the realities of these challenges but outlines the innovative strategies and solutions that smaller care providers can employ to sustain services in the face of adversity, remain operational, and continue their essential service to their community.

As we look to the future, the independent adult social care sector mustn't be left to weather this storm alone. This paper acts as steps to help secure a sustainable future for adult social care so that it can continue to be a pillar for both the economy, and wider health of the population."

Professor Martin Green OBE
Chief Executive, Care England

Executive Summary

It is an unfortunate truth that the independent adult social care sector is in an exceedingly vulnerable state. While still recovering from the pandemic, care providers have had to balance delivering high-quality care against the backdrop of unprecedented rises in utility and operational costs; surges in agency spending due to significant staff vacancies; and complex regulatory hurdles, all on a shoestring budget. Regardless of sector warnings, these dire circumstances are forcing more and more providers out of the market, despite the increasing need for care and support for both older persons care and working-age adults.

In 2023, sustained financial pressures meant that two in five (39%) of care providers considered exiting the market, with the organisation size significantly influencing this consideration. This is because larger entities possess greater flexibility to restructure, access financing, or leverage existing resources to mitigate the impact. However, such options are often beyond the reach of Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) providers, which constitute over 60% of the sector.

Consequently, over half (56%) of smaller providers considered exiting the market in the past year, compared to 18% of medium-sized and 26% of large providers. The unique financial strains and vulnerabilities facing smaller providers risk a potential mass exodus from the sector, endangering its very foundation.

In response, Care England has convened industry experts to offer guidance and support to smaller providers navigating this challenging landscape, to ensure they have access to the level of support that is available to larger providers and groups.

This paper delves into solutions aimed at sustaining services, including redevelopment, refurbishment, rebuilding, and outsourcing operational aspects. It emphasises the importance of early intervention and outlines strategies for a successful turnaround, including leveraging third-party financing. Detailed guidance for each of the solutions raised in this paper can be found in the appendices.

For the 56% of smaller providers considering exiting the market, these solutions would be the difference between remaining open or being forced to close. For providers still opting to exit, the paper offers insights into proper preparation and guidance essential for successful exit planning, ensuring a smooth transition and maximising value during the sale process.

Collaboratively produced with industry leaders including Healthcare Management Solutions, Cornerstone Care Solutions, Westcott Care, Salus Properties, Miva Care, and RWK Goodman, Christie & Co and Fulcrum Care; this paper equips providers with actionable solutions and contact information for further assistance.

The Problem

Several models are employed to forecast the future demand for care homes and the corresponding social care requirements. Forecasts from the likes of the Institute of Public Care and the Personal Social Services Research Unit paint a picture of substantial growth, with Compound Annual Growth Rates (CAGR) ranging from 3.1% to 3.6% over the period from 2022 to 3030.

However, amidst these projections, the more conservative estimate put forth by the LaingBuisson model's a 1.2% growth rate for the same period. Regardless of the variance in these forecasts, what remains unequivocal is the imperative for investment to meet the impending demand for care home beds.

The trend of the affluent, property-owning generation opting to remain in their own homes for longer periods is reshaping the landscape of residential care. This demographic shift sees individuals entering care facilities primarily in moments of crisis, such as the death of a caregiving partner, or when seeking alternatives to hospitalisation for convalescence, end-of-life, or palliative care.

Additionally, there is an increasing demand for specialist management of chronic conditions in both older persons and specifically in working age adult services. This is in tandem with a shift in the care desired, with individuals looking for lifestyle alternatives rather than traditional home settings, such as respite care and 'care hotel' models. Moreover, the expectations of non-care facilities have risen sharply, with standards now akin to those found in modern hotels; including ensuite bathrooms, broadband access, and sizeable rooms.

This evolving scenario presents care home operators with a clientele that has both higher expectations and more complex care needs, necessitating significant investments in real estate, technology, and innovative care models. Currently, the critical need for investment and adaptation is not sufficiently addressed or prioritised by many operators in the sector, due to the aforementioned budget pressures being faced with increasingly limited budgets as a result of historic underfunding.

While the demand for care home services is anticipated to grow significantly, the capacity of the sector presents a nuanced challenge. The market has demonstrated resilience, with a steady bed churn rate of 1-2% and a net addition of approximately 2000 beds annually from 2016 to 2021. However, aligning enough capacity with the anticipated demand surge is critical for the sustainable growth of the care home industry, ensuring that the sector remains well-positioned to provide for the future needs of both our ageing population, and for the working age adults in receipt of care and support. This requires not only maintaining but substantially expanding the provision of care home beds.

The landscape has seen predominantly smaller-scale exits, with local authority-focused operators, colloquially termed 'mom and pop' establishments, which represent the majority of the sector, facing the brunt of financial pressures.

With margins squeezed by sub-optimal fee uplifts from local authorities due to inadequate central government funding and escalating minimum wage costs, there is urgency for both a more nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by SMEs within the care sector, and for further support.

The recent findings by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) further illuminate the strains experienced by smaller providers, particularly exacerbated amidst the cost-of-living crisis. These challenges are not merely anecdotal but are quantifiably reflected in diminishing profit margins and reserves of specialist care providers, as highlighted by the National Audit Office (NAO).

The decline in EBITDARM margins from 19.7% in September 2021 to 14.6% in March 2023 for specialist care providers, and the near-historic low of 22.6% for care homes catering to older individuals, underscore the pressing need for a holistic approach to addressing the sustainability and profitability concerns plaguing the sector.

SME providers, often constrained by limited capital resources, face a significant challenge in upgrading their facilities to meet the evolving needs of residents. Without enough funds readily available for investment, providers find themselves at a critical juncture, unable to embrace modern care practices, integrate cutting-edge technology, or implement sustainable real estate solutions.

Furthermore, the absence of dedicated resources for 'horizon-scanning' exacerbates the situation. With many owners considering exit or retirement, there is a lack of forward-thinking strategies aimed at anticipating future demands and adapting accordingly.

In the broader investment landscape of the care sector, there's a strong focus on short to medium-term gains, which doesn't align well with the dynamic nature of demand and evolving needs. While significant investments go into new builds focused on specific demographics, aimed more at those self funding in older persons care, the essence of future-proofing services and care models often gets overlooked.

Consolidation models, while emphasising small improvements, don't adequately address the fundamental shifts in care delivery and resident expectations. Moreover, investments in other markets add further complexity, diverting attention and resources away from the core challenges faced by SME providers.

The differences in investment become stark when comparing the top and bottom quartiles in terms of profitability. While considerable sums are poured into state-of-

the-art new-build homes tailored for affluent private clients, facilities in the lower quartiles, aimed more toward publicly funded residents, struggle due to limited access to capital and outdated infrastructures.

This investment gap exacerbates the challenges faced by smaller providers, deepening the divide between those able to adapt and thrive and those stuck in a cycle of financial constraint. Adding to these challenges is the limited availability of exit strategies for smaller providers. Large care groups, aiming for standardised operations, are hesitant to acquire older or non-standard facilities. This hesitancy stems not only from the operational challenges of integrating such facilities into standardised models but also from the financial complexities involved.

Financial investors, including lenders, who have specific return requirements, face significant difficulties in understanding and pricing the risk associated with these acquisitions. The challenges are compounded by the exiting owners' situations, the lack of corporate infrastructure, inadequate information, and the absence of backable incumbent management teams. These factors can make it difficult for investors to assess the viability of these investments confidently, further restricting the exit options for smaller providers, reducing valuations, and complicating the landscape of care facility acquisitions.

As a result, smaller providers find themselves isolated, with few viable options for exiting the market on favourable terms. This feeling of being trapped further highlights the need for strategic interventions to break free from the cycle of stagnation or decline.

At management level, there are also a myriad of challenges that SME providers face. Economic pressures, including inflation, unstable energy, food, and interest costs, present significant hurdles for these providers. SMEs must navigate a tightrope to sustain quality care for their residents amidst these financial strains. Regulatory requirements and insurance complexities further compound the challenges for SME providers.

With only a limited number of insurers willing to consider the unique demands of the care sector, rising premiums and reduced coverage exacerbate the financial burden on these providers, which are only set to increase amidst the more recent cyber security threats the sector has seen.

Proactive recruitment functions emerge as critical strategies for SME providers to overcome staffing challenges. This is particularly relevant given the aim to eliminate reliance on agency staff through the recruitment of overseas workers. However, navigating the stringent requirements of the UK Border Agency for securing a Home Office Sponsorship license poses a significant barrier, along with additional challenges with housing, pastoral support, integration and modern-slavery legislation.

Furthermore, regulatory compliance remains a key concern for care sector management. Maintaining high-quality standards, as assessed by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), is crucial for the success or failure of a service in the fiercely competitive market.

Strategic interventions and tailored solutions are essential to fortify SMEs against these multifaceted challenges. This dynamic environment necessitates the implementation of sound financial strategies and the adoption of proactive measures to sustain quality care provision while navigating economic fluctuations and regulatory requirements.

The Solutions

Presented within this paper is an overview of the effective strategies accessible to providers that can be utilised to alleviate the problems outlined to ensure the sustainability and quality of care homes. Recognising the critical importance of early intervention, this paper delves into a comprehensive exploration of strategies available to care home providers facing operational pressures. From identifying warning signs to executing turnaround plans and considering renovation options to exploring third-party financing, management takeover, exit planning, and selling services. A diverse array of solutions are provided to address the multifaceted challenges faced by the sector.

Each section offers insightful analysis and practical guidance, equipping care home providers with the knowledge and tools necessary to navigate the complexities and make informed decisions. Whether it's assessing financial indicators, considering renovation alternatives, leveraging third-party financing, or contemplating management takeover, the aim is to empower providers to choose the most suitable strategy tailored to their unique circumstances.

By offering a roadmap for action and accompanying annexes providing in-depth analysis for each strategy, this paper serves as a valuable resource for care home providers. It aims to equip services with the knowledge, insights, and support necessary to navigate these challenges, explore opportunities, and uphold the commitment to delivering quality care in an ever-evolving landscape. For those still looking to exit, this paper outlines the right strategies to adopt to ensure the best possible exit. Care England has collaborated with industry experts to offer every care provider a digestible solution to help sustain, turnaround, grow or develop their services in an unstable and ever changing social care sector. For providers that may need further support, all of the contact details of the contributors can be found at the end of this paper.

Early intervention

Timely intervention is the cornerstone for the sustainability of care homes, as any postponement in taking action can lead to severe repercussions for residents, their families, and the care facility. Implementing such strategies becomes a moral obligation to ensure the enduring viability of care homes. It is imperative to identify indicators of financial, managerial, operational, and compliance challenges, as this knowledge is essential for crafting impactful strategies. Providers should act swiftly, embracing a proactive stance to confront these challenges directly and safeguard the welfare of residents as well as the long-term sustainability of care homes.

Click here to access the early intervention section

Turnaround strategies

Spotting warning signs early, taking proactive measures, and employing professional expertise can be the difference between profitability and insolvency for SME care providers. A comprehensive turnaround plan, coupled with stakeholder involvement and modern technology, is a formula for sustainable success in the competitive landscape of care provision. The implementation of effective turnaround strategies hold paramount significance and these strategies, ranging from proactive measures to formal options, are vital lifelines that can determine not only the immediate fate of the care home but also the long-term well-being of residents and the overall viability of the establishment.

Click here to access the turnaround strategies section

Beyond this, there are several options available that providers can consider to maintain operations:

Renovation and refurbishment

Refurbishing existing facilities presents a viable alternative to providers than building new facilities. The ability to achieve modern standards, layouts, and regulatory compliance through refurbishment, while maintaining existing operations, results in substantial savings.

Upgrading facilities allow providers to compete more effectively in the market attracting more service users, including those from a private market with higher fees, and expand the care that their services can offer. while renovations currently suffer a 20% VAT cost, there are HMRC approved schemes available which offer a more financially favourable option. This reduces the financial burden on smaller providers and makes the renovation route more accessible.

It is important to consider that significant alterations may require planning permission from local authorities. Additionally, building noise and disruption to the service can be disturbing and significant alteration to the atmosphere of the home could be difficult for staff and residents to adapt to.

Click here to access the renovation and refurbishment section

Third-party financing

Third-party financing assists in both managing and mitigating risks to enhance the overall stability of their operations. This option offers tailored loan agreements, providing flexibility to negotiate events of default, financial covenants, and other critical terms. This customisation ensures that the financial arrangements align with the unique needs and circumstances of SME care providers.

SMEs can also leverage third-party financing expertise to navigate bank expectations, presenting easily accessible information, such as inspection papers and annual accounts, to build a strong case for loan approval.

It is important to consider that approaching banks for financing necessitates a strategic approach, and successful negotiations are supported with detailed financial forecasts, providing a proactive approach to challenges like rising energy costs, inflation, and staffing issues.

Click here to access the third-party financing section

Management takeover

A management takeover offers a strategic solution which enables owners to mitigate challenges by outsourcing day-to-day operations to care home operators. This approach allows owners to maintain ownership benefits while relieving them of the operational stress, ensuring efficient management and maximisation of returns. Additionally, management takeovers can enhance a care home's market value through improved operational systems and updated regulatory ratings, making it an attractive option for those considering an exit strategy.

For those looking towards ownership transition, Management Buyouts provide a pathway for the existing management team to assume ownership, leveraging their operational expertise for the home's continued success. Employee Share Ownership Plans offer a tax-efficient method for this transfer, fostering a sense of commitment and alignment with the company's goals among employees. The flexibility in the seller's post-transition involvement offers a customisable approach to ensure continuity and support the business's strategic evolution.

Click here to access the management takeover section

Market Awareness

Market Awareness provides the luxury of options and a smoother, more lucrative exit. Such strategies empower SME providers to navigate complexities, optimise operations, and secure a profitable transition in the ever-evolving landscape. With the industry dynamics favouring expansion, particularly for larger operators, and smaller providers facing challenges like increased competition and rising costs; prompt action is crucial. Delaying exit planning could lead to the worst possible outcomes, including diminished operations and fire sale-type scenarios.

Closure of the home is often the last option for most care home owners as it causes the most disruption and evidence shows this leads to negative health and wellbeing outcomes for vulnerable people moved to new services.

This option should be considered carefully and only taken where risk is irreparable, or where financial viability means that the service cannot continue and all other options have been exhausted.

Click here to access the market awareness section

Exit preparedness

Selling a business is a multifaceted process, necessitating strategic planning at every stage. SME providers must be prepared to navigate complexities from marketing to completion, ensuring the transaction aligns with their financial objectives. Successful navigation through the selling process can not only meet financial objectives but also set the stage for the business's future success under new ownership. This is particularly relevant for SMEs where a stable leadership transition is crucial.

Selling a care home offers a route to financial relief and a complete exit from the business, allowing owners to realise the value of their property and assets. However, the impact on residents and staff cannot be understated. Changes in ownership can create uncertainty and anxiety, affecting the well-being of residents and the morale of staff, so careful thought should be put into planning an exit with experts who have experience in managing the process.

Click here to access the exit preparedness section

Contributors

Please find below an list of all the authors who contributed to this paper. Should you require further assistance, you are welcome to contact any of them for additional support. For general enquiries, please email Fraser Rickatson at Care England. We would like to extend our gratitude for their invaluable contributions.

Care England

Care England, a registered charity, is the largest and most diverse representative body for independent adult social care providers in England. Our members run and manage approximately 4,000 care services, amongst them single care homes, small local groups, national providers and not-for-profit voluntary organisations, as well as private associations. They provide over 120,000 beds and a variety of services for older people, and working-age adults with long term conditions, learning disabilities and mental health needs.

Care England is committed to supporting a united, quality conscious, independent sector that offers real choice and value for money. Our aim is to create an environment in which care providers can continue to deliver and develop the high-quality care that communities require and deserve.

Fraser Rickatson, Policy and Public Sector Officer

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Fraser Rickatson is the Policy and Public Sector Officer at Care England, and leads on all funding-specific policies, projects, and initiatives. With an acute focus on the nuances of adult social care financing, his work has been pivotal in shaping the conversation around equitable and sustainable funding models within the sector.

Fraser's role involves in-depth analysis and advocacy, ensuring that the complexities of funding social care are both understood and addressed at the highest levels of government and within the sector itself.

Alongside Future-Proofing Care, Fraser has co-authored two additional reports at Care England; 'From Inception to Implementation: A Year of Integrated Care Systems' and 'Cost Saving Opportunities.'

Christie & Co

Christie & Co is the market leader in specialist advice and brokerage within the healthcare sector. Christie & Co's expertise covers agency, brokerage, valuation, consultancy, and land and development, with its clientele spanning the breadth of the market; from large institutional investors and corporate operators to individual care home owners.

Lee Howard, Regional Director

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Lee Howard is the Regional Director for Christie & Co's Care teams in the North, Midlands, and Anglia. Having worked in the care sector for over 20 years, Lee has been involved in a vast number of transactions; supporting and advising operators, banks, private equity groups, not-for-profits, and insolvency practitioners. His experience covers the breadth of the market, from individual private operators to nationwide corporate-backed entities, and he uses his extensive experience to provide insight into the social care market and valuation trends.

Christie Finance

Christie Finance has over 45 years' of experience and is a market leader in a variety of sectors, supporting clients to enter, expand, or develop their business portfolios. The company assists with the acquisition, refurbishment, expansion, or development work or perhaps a loan to purchase a new item of specialist equipment.

With over 30 consultants operating across 11 UK offices, Christie Finance has the resource and expertise to create bespoke funding packages to assist with acquisition plans and ongoing investment.

Jimmy Johns, Director

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Before Joining Christie Finance, Jimmy worked in commercial banking for over 15 years. During this time, he gained various qualifications in banking and advanced commercial lending. Now eight years at the company, he has supported numerous clients in structuring and advising on how to deploy debt into their business. Utilising this wealth of experience and knowledge he is now leading the Corporate Debt Advisory Division specialising in healthcare.

Cornerstone Care Solutions

Cornerstone brings over a decade of expertise to the forefront of the adult social care sector. With a dedicated team of around 15 professionals, they offer a breadth of knowledge and experience in various areas. This diverse team is well-versed in facility management, training, children's services, mental health, home management, and nursing. They provide their extensive services across the UK, albeit with Northern Ireland being the exception.

Their offerings are comprehensive and tailored to address the multifaceted challenges within the sector. Cornerstone specialises in conducting independent evaluations and providing support during crises. They are adept at formulating effective turnaround strategies and supplying interim management solutions. Moreover, their proficiency extends to aiding organisations in navigating the complexities arising from CQC papers and enforcement actions. They are also skilled in crafting detailed policies, procedures, and quality assurance frameworks.

Beyond these services, Cornerstone conducts thorough due diligence and operational reviews. They develop actionable plans and manage projects, which include staffing assessments and cost analyses. Their expertise also encompasses navigating regulatory changes and liaising with local authorities to enhance fee structures and service offerings. They offer strategic insights for engaging with lenders and manage homes during periods of administration, working closely with lenders to support business recovery.

Cornerstone is also known for conducting quality assurance assessments for care homes. Furthermore, they play a crucial role in new build projects, working alongside architects to ensure staff cost optimisation and compliance with regulatory standards.

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Lucy Corner holds dual registration as a nurse, complemented by an MSc in leadership and management and a Best Interests Assessor. Her professional focus encompasses nursing advocacy, operations management, strategic planning, and turnaround expertise. An accredited member of The Institute for Turnaround (The IFT).

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Ex UK head of healthcare for HSBC UK and UK and Europe NatWest bank. Qualified banker with forty years' experience of which twenty-five were in healthcare. He has owned an elderly care home and set up from scratch a learning disability unit. Whilst he had these care homes, he was a member of Care England. Currently working with operators in the social care space with Cornerstone care solutions.

Fulcrum Care

Fulcrum Care Consulting specialises in helping care homes to deliver exceptional care. With support and guidance about CQC regulations, management issues and operational matters, care home's can expect to receive great CQC assessments that will attract potential residents. With specialist consultants and industry professionals on hand, with over a combined total of 100 years of experience, Fulcrum provides strategic guidance and customised solutions to address the unique challenges faced by care environments. Its comprehensive services encompass governance and compliance, crisis management, CQC challenges and mentoring that can help to turn around a care home if it is failing or maintain its favourable rating and reputation.

Tony Thiru, Chief Executive Officer

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Tony specialises in compliance, risk mitigation and in particular "troubleshooting" care/nursing homes, often turning around multiple homes concurrently. Tony is an expert in transforming failing care services through a holistic approach that encompasses leadership, human resources, and commercial aspects, utilising his unique methodology honed over a decade in the sector. His innovations in processes and technologies have markedly improved outcomes for stakeholders, while his proactive support assists providers with regulatory challenges and enforcement actions. With notable success in enhancing service ratings and achieving compliance and commercial turnarounds for major clients, Tony has significantly improved care quality and financial outcomes. His background includes pivotal roles in reputable care organisations and a wealth of operational experience in the care home industry. Tony's academic foundation is from the London School of Economics.

Healthcare Management Solutions

HCMS plays a key central role in the sector providing advice and support to a vast client base including all of the major banks, most of the country's insolvency firms, many national regional and local operators and provides consultancy advice to a number of Private Equity firms and investors.

Services include consultancy and due diligence to investors, systems for operators, audit and review for care homes and full service management. The HCMS team is continually seeking ways to improve quality in an increasingly challenging market.

HCMS has developed class-leading systems (IMPaCT audit and review, Portal Management Information, the Feedback App HowDidWeDo?) and is now working on rolling these out to the sector and to other service industries.

Tony Stein, Chief Executive Officer

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A qualified Chartered Accountant, with a strong corporate background as well as in professional practice, who has spent the last 25 years operating care homes.

As well as owning and operating care home groups, Tony has undertaken numerous assignments for banks, providing an overview of financial performance and advising on potential weaknesses in financial systems.

In 2009 Tony founded Healthcare Management Solutions (HCMS) with his business partner, Kevin Groombridge.

Carol Higgins, Business Development Director

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A qualified FCCA Accountant with extensive industry and senior management experience, Carol is responsible for the business development of the HCMS group and associated companies.

In addition, Carol is responsible for financial aspects of all consultancy work undertaken by HCMS and brings a technical and commercial view gained through nearly 15-years of care sector experience.

Dipe Rajani, Director, Miva Care

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Dipe specialises in aiding care operators to achieve their strategic aims by assisting on property and finance related matters. Whether an operator wants to expand, consolidate, repurpose, or exit, Miva Care can assist with all matters including acquisition, sales, or development, and associated finance needs.

Whilst Dipe has always had a background in the care industry, it's his wider experience that stands Miva out. Having spent over a decade in Corporate Banking, followed by a number of years in the startup world where he launched and sold his own business, Dipe is able to bring a wealth of outside experience and innovation into this industry which allows him to take a unique perspective when looking at problems and opportunities.

Dipe graduated with an Economics degree from University College London and holds an Executive MBA from Warwick Business School, where his research and dissertation project focussed on the potential for disruption in the elderly care market, and the potential impact on care home real estate.

Charles Leach, Director, Salus Properties

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Salus Properties Limited is a Residential Care Home Investment and Development Firm transforming forgotten lives in the middle and lower end of the market. Through innovative alteration, extension and refurbishment of existing distressed care properties we are able to deliver the highest modern standards of luxury care at a cost that ensures an economical success for the publicly funded segment of the market. We contribute both capital and expertise to every investment we make, working as a partner with entrepreneurs to accommodate growth and success.

The Salus team has over £350m worth of property development experience as architects, building & construction and property development in the UK, North America and South Africa. The property side is backed up by a management team with up to three decades each of experience in healthcare operations, regulation and compliance, finance, employment law and hotel and healthcare procurement.

RWK Goodman

The Health & Social Care team at RWK Goodman is a recognised market leader, with in-depth knowledge and experience in the social care sector. Based across London, Thames Valley and the South West, their team of lawyers are fully immersed in social care, which enables them to cut to the heart of urgent matters quickly, and help you plan for what may lie ahead.

The specialise in the purchase, sale, development and refinancing of care homes, acting for both expanding groups and new entrants. They have good relationships with many of the key lenders and other professionals in the sector enabling them to proactively project manage the process and add value. The breadth of their knowledge and specialism of the wider team ensures our clients go into an acquisition with their "eyes open", avoiding unnecessary cost and management time resolving issues post-completion.

Their aim is to get to know your business and become the strategic advisors you trust to provide insightful, pragmatic solutions. Their clients include nursing and residential homes, hospices, homecare agencies, supported living, specialist colleges and children's services and our advice covers many areas, offering solutions across a wide spectrum of areas including sales, acquisitions, real estate, employment law, immigration, regulatory compliance, and more.

They are the legal partners for a number of local care associations, the Care Association Alliance, the Outstanding Society, the Care Innovation Hub and Care England.

Bharti Moore, Partner, Health & Social Care

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Bharti is a corporate lawyer with specialist experience in the Health and Social Care sector. She is a member of the Health and Social Care Team at RWK Goodman, whose clients include care organisations.

Bharti's expertise covers mergers and acquisitions for both buy-side and sell-side, corporate governance and advisory, corporate reorganisations or business structure and financing. Bharti regularly advises care providers on buying new businesses or selling their business.

Hazel Phillips, Head of Health & Social Care | Corporate & Commercial

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Hazel is the Head of the Health and Social Care Team at RWK Goodman. Hazel is a specialist corporate healthcare lawyer whose clients include care organisations, children's homes and children's services and charities. Hazel's expertise covers sales, mergers and acquisitions, commercial contracts, business structure, governance and refinancing.

She also has experience of advising on and negotiating local authority framework agreements and tenders and has previously assisted numerous care providers in fee negotiations with funders.

Hazel has a thorough understanding of the regulatory systems operated by CQC, CIW, OFSTED and the Charity Commission. She is regularly consulted by agents, accountants and banks in respect of queries over registration and compliance issues which may arise during an acquisition or sale. Her knowledge and reputation means she is often instructed in addition to the existing legal team.

Claire Wheatley, Partner, Health & Social Care | Banking

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Claire is a banking lawyer with specialist experience in the Health and Social Care sector. Claire is a qualified barrister and solicitor. Claire specialises in banking work including property finance (investment and development), acquisition finance, corporate finance, project finance, art finance and capital markets. Claire acts for borrowers and lenders, including all the main UK Banks.

Claire has over 35 years' in-depth knowledge and experience of banking, including secured and unsecured lending, leveraged finance, intercreditor issues, securitisations and restructuring. She has been rated as a leader in her field in the Chambers' directory, with one client commenting "she gets straight to the heart of the matter".

Andrew Whelan, Director, Westcott Care

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Andrew Whelan has nearly 25 years experience in the health and care sector, initially as a corporate financier and latterly supporting owners, investors and other stakeholders to explore ways of maximising the value of their care home businesses.

Recent projects have included completing an assignment for UK Government exploring opportunities to attract inward investment into the elderly care sector and working as the CEO of a private equity-backed elderly care home business where he successfully led, and realised within one-year, an exit that had eluded them for nearly five years.

A national and international leader and expert on both care and the business of care, a hands-on chair of a high impact charity focused on transforming the health and care system, and a former senior executive of Morgan Stanley, Andrew has a keen understanding of the operations and strategies of successful health and care providers, particularly balancing commercial objectives with the importance of putting those in need of care at the heart of the organisation. An expert in organisational design, Andrew has significant experience of building (or re-building) organisations from scratch as well as advising more established businesses on setting and delivering their strategic priorities: he understands what makes organisations work, and how culture, communication, design, policy, resources and objectives must all flow from strategy.

Through Westcott Care, Andrew works with a variety of owners, operators, investors and lenders to explore the potential of elderly care home businesses and ensure that their facilities are fit-for-the-future. This may include: analysing and discovering the potential of the care home enterprises (regardless of size); developing business plans; attracting funding from different types of investor; supporting the negotiation and structuring transactions; and delivering the due diligence, strategy, business development and operational plans these organisations require, particularly addressing operational issues such as HR, marketing, governance (clinical and corporate), finance and reporting.

Ex-Morgan Stanley EMEA leader on healthcare services, and a former UK Government advisor on the country's elderly care system and its emerging commercial opportunities, Andrew Whelan and Westcott have the knowledge, experience, understanding, network and expertise necessary to maximise the potential of elderly care organisations.