

Care 'lottery' likely to get worse

The 'postcode lottery' of care in the UK is likely to get worse in the next few years, a report published on the eve of the Spending Review has warned.

As social care budgets come under ever-increasing pressure, there is growing evidence of a widening gap between the performance of local authorities in providing care and support.

Shaping public spending priorities for adult social care, a report produced by the Social Research Institute, Ipsos Mori for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, says:

'Those local authorities that are already ahead of the curve, with already strong relationships with user-led groups, providers and key agencies – will be better placed to motivate, innovate and reshape.

Those currently behind the curve may be left even further behind.'

The report – due to be published in full in November – says that the social care sector faces 'uncertainty and a series of tough decisions in the period following the Comprehensive Spending Review'.

Local authorities and service user/carer organisations alike are 'acutely aware' that budget cuts will bring about radical changes for the sector.

'Local authority decision makers and service user/carer organisations shared concerns about making the right decisions for the medium and long term,' says the report.

'Many anticipated a dramatic reduction in funding for early intervention, prevention, and respite care in order to ensure continued support to people with the highest levels of need.'

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Have your say

What are your thoughts on the Spending Review? How will you be affected by it?

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£2bn 'boost' may not save jobs

THE £2 billion 'boost' for adult care may not be enough to prevent up to 50,000 local authority care workers losing their jobs, the Government has been warned.

There are growing fears that the money – unveiled in the Spending Review – is likely to be swallowed up by demands placed on local authorities to cut costs over the next four years.

The cash injection has been cautiously welcomed by many social care leaders and charities. But they warn that at least half the amount could be vulnerable because it will not be 'ring-fenced' in council budgets.

A leading union official has claimed that as many as 50,000 council care workers could lose their jobs as the Government prepare to axe almost half a million public service posts over the next four years.

Brian Strutton, GMB's national secretary for public services, warned of the reduction amid claims that local government could be forced to shed a total of 300,000 jobs by 2014/15. 'It's a real sickener and it means that community services will be slashed dramatically,' he said.

The national charity Counsel and Care welcomed the £2bn extra funding for care, but warned that, without much 'smarter spending', the impact of the extra cash could be limited by the growing demands of an ageing population and massive cuts in councils' budgets.

Stephen Burke, its Chief Executive, said: 'The Government has recognised that the care system is in crisis and in danger of meltdown. It has gone some way to plug the estimated £6 billion funding black hole. 'But the extra funding needs to be accompanied by smarter spending to make the best use of resources. Councils should stop cutting care and hiking charges. Instead they should work more effectively with their partners in health and housing to plug the funding gap.'

'Better integration of and more creative commissioning between health, housing and care is imperative, especially considering the huge changes proposed by the Government's reform of the NHS.'

Meanwhile, the head of the NHS Confederation has warned that cuts to local authority social care funding could lead to more hospital beds in England being filled by the elderly and vulnerable. In a letter to the *Daily Telegraph*, Nigel Edwards said people who needed medical treatment may be denied a hospital bed as a result of the cuts. 'Less support from council services will quickly lead to increased pressure on emergency services and hospitals. Hospital beds will be blocked for those who badly need care because the support services the elderly require after discharge will not be available', he said.

The Department of Health told the BBC that they were strengthening programmes like reablement to integrate hospital care with care in the community. 'We have allocated an additional £2bn by 2014-15 – this extra boost, alongside an ambitious programme of efficiency, will ensure that there is enough funding available both to protect people's access to services and deliver new approaches to improve quality and outcomes'.



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CFYB Spending Review

A time for humility, not political bravado

THE loss of almost 500,000 public sector jobs is devastating in any era. The human cost will be immense. The knock-on effect to our economy will be huge.

The gravity of the greatest job and spending cuts since the Second World War was clearly lost on George Osborne when he rose in Parliament to announce his Comprehensive Spending Review.

This was clearly a time for humility, compassion, respect and an understanding of the magnitude of the cuts facing Britain.

But the half a million job losses were announced in a matter-of-fact and cold way. They were just another number, lost in a myriad of figures unveiled by the Chancellor.

There were no gasps in a packed Parliament on October 20 – for ever to be known as Axe Wednesday – when Mr Osborne declared the job losses.

That was partly because of Chief Secretary to the Treasury Danny Alexander's gaffe the day before when he inadvertently and naively leaked the figure.

A Coalition Front Bench clamouring to congratulate Mr Osborne on his delivery of the Spending Review compounded the lack of respect for all those facing hardship.

And the squabbling that followed across the House of Commons brought shame on Parliament on a very black day for Britain and for our politicians.

Many of us will agree that substantial job losses are inevitable in the campaign to cut Britain's massive deficit and get us back to a position of financial stability.

We all know about the high level of waste and inefficiencies in many public services, particularly at management level.

But do we really believe that the 490,000+ people who will lose their job in our public services over the next four years will find work in the private sector?

Will, as the Chancellor suggested, the majority of those job losses be through 'natural wastage' and not wholesale redundancies?

Particularly when local authorities, facing cuts of more than 25% over the next four years are already preparing to lay off tens of thousands of workers.

What will be the effect on the economy of so many well-paid jobs being lost – with many of those affected being forced to take work at the minimum wage?



Time is running out for many public service jobs: will those facing redundancy be able to find well paid work elsewhere?

Many of those large businesses who have backed the Government's Spending Review – such as Asda, Marks & Spencer and Mothercare – pay many of their employees the minimum wage.

Will many of those facing the sack end up on long-term benefits – putting new pressures on our creaking welfare system? How many of those losing their jobs will lose their homes? What impact will the job losses have on local shops, other businesses and communities?

Of course, we don't know the answer to any of these questions yet. All we have is a decision to reduce public service staff – and vague assurances that they will find new work.

The Government contend that the size of the public sector acts as a barrier against the creation of jobs. It argues that the devolution of financial control to a local level and the abolition of thousands of local authority 'targets' will go a long way to resolving this. Mr Osborne says eliminating the national deficit by £81 billion in four years will result in lower interest rates and a climate in which small and medium-sized businesses will have the opportunity to grow – and create the jobs lost from the public sector.

One problem for the Government is a warning in a recent report by PricewaterhouseCoopers that about 500,000 private sector jobs will be lost as a direct result of the spending cuts. Confidence in the private sector is essential if our economy is to 'bounce back'. But with many surveys showing that consumer confidence is dipping, businesses will find it increasingly hard to grow.

In launching his Spending Review, Mr Osborne said: 'Today is the day that Britain steps back from the brink'...it is a hard road, but it leads to a better future'. There are many assumptions in that statement. The truth is, the Government are gambling with Britain's future in the hope of turning our fortunes around. They believe it will work, but the outcome is far from certain. What we do know is that the pain of the spending cuts is likely to be felt greatest by the poorest in our society over the next five years.

Care 'lottery' may get worse

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'This was despite their strong sense of awareness that focusing only on immediate critical needs would have negative, and costly, future repercussions.'

Local authority decision makers interviewed by the researchers said that thresholds currently in place for assessing potential service users would need to be reviewed so that only the most vulnerable are eligible for support.

'This is expected to have a damaging effect on service users. Focusing care provision only on those whose needs are already critical could prevent social care providers from intervening earlier in cases where this could prove crucial,' says the report.

A representative of a care organisation told the researchers: 'There's talk at the moment about moving the goalpost to just supporting critical. All the evidence that is out there at the moment... says that in the medium term this saves you absolutely no money whatsoever.'

On a positive note, the report says that that some decision makers are already considering how to make cuts in an innovative way. 'There is a general sense that there has been a move away from top-down targets towards more creative approaches to improving services, and those involved are generally keen for this trend to continue.'

'Many local authorities are already working with volunteer, community and user-led groups, with the aim of delivering the same level of service in a more efficient manner.'

Early intervention and preventative measures are seen by many as the most cost-effective way to safeguard people's well-being in the long term, says the report.

'However, there is fear that these types of measures will be the first to be cut if decision makers respond to the budget cuts in a knee-jerk fashion.'

Decision makers interviewed by researchers warned that cutbacks in social care will 'push more and more people to rely on the NHS. This will actually create greater strain on health services, because the people turning to the NHS from social care are more likely to have complex needs.'



Paul's view on social care

When will we know the truth behind the £2bn 'boost' for social care?

As I listened to George Osborne on Axe Wednesday I was reminded of the words of Oscar Wilde about the man who 'knows the price of everything and the value of nothing'.

Perhaps it is a trait of all Chancellors. Maybe they have to adopt a pugnacious approach to their role to help them to sleep at night.

But it is a huge disappointment that Mr Osborne and many others in the House of Commons failed to grasp the enormity of the programme of cuts. The Spending Review proved a defining moment in British politics and the way we live. A new era of austerity has begun – and no-one knows when it will end.

There is no 'Plan B' if there are dramatic changes in our economy. The Chancellor has stated there is only a 'Plan A'. Clearly he is not for turning.

As financial and business experts look at the fine print of the announcements of October 20, we can only speculate on the outcomes of the Spending Review. It could take 2-3 years to fully understand the effects of the cuts. All we can do right now is look at what has been announced and look beyond the smoke screens and mirrors.

The Government has pledged to provide an extra £2 billion in the next four years for social care to help the sector withstand massive cuts to council funding.

The money will come from two sources – a direct grant of £1bn and the remaining £1bn from the NHS. But all the funding will be channelled through local authorities.

Worryingly, this new funding is not being ring-fenced, which raises questions over whether it will be used for social care – or shoring up other under-threat services.

There are also question marks over whether the money will be sufficient to keep pace with the needs of an ageing population and an increasing number of people with learning disabilities.

The reality is that many local authorities are drastically reducing (or reviewing the future of) social care and other services to cut their overall budgets in line with new government targets.

Tens of thousands of jobs are under threat as some authorities look to become commissioners only rather than suppliers of public services.



Care Services Minister Paul Burstow has hit out at those cutting adult social care services – warning them there is no justification for a 'slash and burn' policy.

But his warning is likely to have little impact, particularly as there are no guarantees that the extra £2bn promised by the Chancellor will be available to prevent cuts.

We only have to study the responses of organisations representing the interests of local government and social services to gauge the scale of the challenge

facing councils. Baroness Margaret Eaton, chairman of the Local Government Association, said the Spending Review would hit councils and the residents they serve very hard and 'will inevitably lead to cuts at the front line'. Town halls, she said, would face 'extremely tough choices about which services they can keep on running'.

The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services has warned that the likelihood of a 28 per cent reduction in core local government grant over the next four years will be a 'colossal challenge to managers and staff'.

Of course, there is usually 'no gain without pain'. Opportunities for important and lasting changes frequently come through periods of great adversity. For those opportunities to emerge and evolve, the Coalition Government needs to win the hearts and minds of the people – the ones who ultimately will get us out of the mess we are in.

Social care providers – with the local authority, independent and charity sectors – need to be directly involved in the process of providing better care for our ageing and disabled population.

There need to be clear signals that there will be sufficient resources in place to provide for the most needy – and measures to ensure all of us have access to the care we need.

A report produced for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation warns that the 'postcode lottery' of care blighting many areas of the UK is likely to get worse.

The Government say they are determined to prove that social care is safe in their hands. They have a tough task ahead of them.

Impact of the Spending Review

Scotland will lose about £900 million from its next budget – £200 million less than expected. An estimated 90,000 public service workers are expected to lose their jobs in the next four years. First minister Alex Salmond has not guaranteed to continue free personal care for the elderly.

Wales's budget is due to fall by 400m next year – although Welsh ministers believe this could rise to £900m. As many as 25,000 jobs are expected to be lost in the public sector – and a further 25,000 in the private sector.

Northern Ireland faces cutbacks of £4bn (in real terms) over four years. As many as 20,000 public service jobs are expected to be lost. Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams said the government should be 'stimulating, not slashing' the economy.

Baroness Margaret Eaton, chairman of the Local Government Association: 'The significant increase in funding for adult social care from Government and the NHS is good news ... There are also important moves towards much simpler funding mechanisms that will help councils do their job. The Government has eased burdens on local government, given us much greater freedoms and flexibilities over our budgets and taken a first step towards wider reform with councils in the vanguard of reforming the way the public sector operates. Ministers must move much faster to redraw the way public services are delivered so the people we serve come before the interests of the Whitehall machine.'

ADASS President Richard Jones: 'Given the challenges at a local level to make major reductions we are likely to still see a funding gap over the four years, and bridging that gap is going to take a great deal of skill, innovation and fundamental reform to how we work, what we offer and the role of individual citizens and the contribution of communities.'

CFYB focus on care homes

The great 'bed-blocking' challenge

THIS new era of austerity marks a watershed for our care homes. As many are plunged into uncertainty in the face of unprecedented local government cutbacks, question marks have been raised over the future role of care homes in Britain.

Many local authorities are looking to close residential care homes – or sell them to private companies – to save money or to look at more innovative ways of providing better community-based care for residents.

Many council and independently run nursing and residential care homes in the UK need millions of pounds of investment to enable them to offer an acceptable standard of care – through vastly improved facilities and having good and highly qualified management and care staff.

We all know that paying a high price for care does not always buy the best services. Too many homes have been criticised in the past year for providing inadequate long-term care for the elderly, particularly those suffering from dementia.

Axe Wednesday heralds the dawn of (perhaps) five very tough years. But it also offers an opportunity for nursing and residential care homes to play an integral role in shaping the future of care in the UK.

In a powerful address to a major conference in London early this year, the head of one of the UK's most respected care companies explained why care homes have a 'great future' – provided they grasped the opportunities facing them.

Mike Parsons, founder and chief executive officer of Barchester Healthcare, who care for more than 10,000 people at more than 200 different locations, said care homes held the key to unblocking expensive acute hospital beds.

He told a high powered audience of health and local government chiefs that care homes were also perfectly placed to address:

- The needs of people institutionalised in their own homes and craving a social life
- The needs of people who don't want to die in hospital or alone at home
- The needs of people with dementia needing care, not containment

The Coalition and Scottish Governments are looking at ways of ending the scandal of elderly and vulnerable people becoming stuck in hospital beds for long periods waiting for care packages to be arranged.

Tens of millions of pounds would be saved by transferring patients from a hospital bed costing £350-£400 a day to a care home charging a fraction of that cost. That money could be re-invested in improving NHS and care home services.

Independent care home owners in Wales say they could save the NHS £20 million a year by ending the 'misery of bed blocking'.

Barry Latham, senior policy officer for Care Forum Wales, the not-for-profit voice of independent care providers, told *The Western Mail*: 'There are reports that Welsh NHS faces making more than £380m worth of cutbacks by next April. We believe that the independent care sector can be part of the solution to this dire financial crisis.'

'We can help find at least £20m of the required savings across Wales and provide more appropriate care to

people at the same time. Quite clearly, what we need to do is to try to find ways of protecting frontline services as much as possible. Our members can do just that by helping to provide services more cost effectively to relieve some of the pressures on the NHS.

'Bed blocking remains a big issue. All too often when patients are ready for discharge from hospital, for various reasons it takes time to make the arrangements. As a result, people are kept in that hospital bed much longer than they need to be – and every hospital bed costs something like £350 per day.

'If patients could be transferred into an independent sector, either to care home beds or to their own home supported by domiciliary care, it would be for a much, much lower cost. For example, a nursing home placement it would perhaps be £450 to £500 per week instead of the £350 a day it costs in hospital while in domiciliary care there would be even more savings.



'Tens of millions of pounds would be saved by transferring patients from a hospital bed costing £350-£400 a day to a care home charging a fraction of that cost'

'We want to work with the health boards to see if there are ways of accelerating the discharge of people from hospital into an alternative setting provide by independent care providers.

'There is also the potential to actually stop a number of hospital admissions happening in the first place. Very often people turn up at accident and emergency units instead of going to see their GP. They may not need hospital treatment but they're often kept in hospital unnecessarily because they're not safe to be sent home without some support. What we could do is provide a safe alternative. That could be a nursing home, a care home or a domiciliary care support package.'

There appear to be no barriers to making this happen. The NHS, local authorities and the independent sector all agree on the need to unblock hospital beds.

David Nicholson, the NHS Chief Executive, told *The Financial Times* in December 2009 that about a third of hospital beds are 'filled by people who have more than three long term conditions and there is really good evidence that they can be much better managed, preventatively, out in the community. If you do it properly, care is of a higher quality and you are more productive – and no one wants to go to hospital'.

In the wake of the Spending Review, there have been warnings that bed blocking in hospitals may get worse because of cuts to local authority care funding. So there appears to be a real opportunity for independent care homes to step forward and offer the solution.

But are they ready to take up this great challenge? Many – such as those operated by Barchester – clearly are. But many others will have to get their house in order to put themselves at the forefront of what would be a real care revolution.

Paul Roberts

What happened to Tory pledge on care insurance?

We are always happy to publish responses to articles published in our newsletters. The following is a response from a reader in Scotland to an article in our September issue on paying for care.

'My mother is in a nursing home because of a combination of health problems and the need for round the clock care. The whole set up is so galling.

'Essentially she is paying £2,000 per month from her pensions and sale of modest property and is quite miserable – but hey, she's making a profit for the shareholders of the big healthcare group.

'I'm in the middle of a battle between the care home manager and the local continence nurse because they won't even supply decent sized continence pads for her and the other residents.

'Staffing levels are as low as they can get away with, but there's still money to tart up the entrance to the building and have free tea and coffee for visitors.

'The Care Commission is in place but there's only so much they can do. In my view care of the elderly should be given over to care organisations run on a charitable basis, with strict financial and care regulation by government bodies, stricter than the NHS even.

'It seems that you have to pay if you become frail, elderly or have a health condition at any age. Those who have tried to be responsible end up paying and those who don't have any assets get it free anyway.

'I recall the Conservatives pledging to introduce a one-off insurance policy for £8,000 so that people need pay no more should they go into a care home. Wonder what's happened to that? '

CFYB dementia update

Open day to help launch new enterprise

An open day is to be held to help launch Dementia Timeout, a new Scotland-based social enterprise.

The event will bring together the four communities at the centre of the ground-breaking initiative.

Dementia Timeout will provide high quality self-catering holidays and respite breaks for people with dementia, their carers and families.

'We are planning an event that will bring together the four communities at the heart of the enterprise,' said Dementia Timeout founder Jennifer Roberts.

'We very much hope it will get our new online service off to the best possible start.'

The four communities are:

- ❖ People with dementia, their carers and families
- ❖ Holiday home owners wishing to make their properties dementia-friendly
- ❖ Organisations who will be able to provide support services for people taking holiday/respite breaks
- ❖ Suppliers of assistive technology that will be available in the dementia-friendly properties

The open day will be held in Scotland. Full details will be published shortly. For more information, contact Jennifer on 01877 386332 or on j.roberts499@btinternet.com

Duchess launches £1.5m dementia nurse appeal

A £1.5 MILLION appeal to place an Alzheimer Scotland Dementia Nurse in every health board in Scotland has been launched by the Duchess of Hamilton.

The Duchess has called for improved dementia training for nurses and doctors following the 'misery' of her husband's acute hospital treatment. Her husband – the 1th Duke of Hamilton – was diagnosed with vascular dementia in 2006, at the age of 66. He died in June 2010.

The Duchess said she had memories of her husband sitting in a hospital bed, looking distraught at what happened to him.

'No person should have to remember this and no ill person should have to endure such misery,' she told Alzheimer Scotland.

'If a nurse who was experienced in care of dementia could have talked with us, understood his needs, then his stay and our experience would have been so very much easier. That is why this appeal is so important.'

There are currently three dementia nurses in place who are funded by Alzheimer Scotland. One dementia nurse post is funded by a local NHS health board.

The appeal aims to place Alzheimer Scotland dementia nurses in the remaining ten NHS health boards.

Source: Alzheimer Scotland (www.alzscot.org)

£5,000 boost for ex-Grimsby captain

A charity has raised £5,000 to help a former captain of Grimsby Town football club who has dementia.

Kevin Moore, who played for the club between 1976 and 1987 has Pick's disease and now requires 24-hour care.

The money – raised by the North East Lincolnshire-based Artie White Foundation – will go to a special fund established to help Mr Moore receive the care and treatment he needs.

Mr Moore, aged 52, now lives in Southampton.

Dementia centre opens in Glasgow

A new state-of-the-art care centre for dementia patients has been opened in Govanhill, Glasgow. The £3.5 million Bankhall Street centre has 17 residential rooms, communal leisure areas and a roof garden.

The centre has been built in a partnership arrangement between Govanhill Housing Association, the Mungo Foundation and Glasgow City Council social work services. It features artwork by celebrated Scottish glass painter John K Clark who created the glazing works at Glasgow Cathedral.



New bid to find early signs of Alzheimer's

Research aimed at finding early signs of Alzheimer's disease has been launched in Scotland.

A spinal fluid test is being offered to people with mild memory problems in research taking place at the Glasgow Memory Clinic.

Clinic consultant Dr Fraser Inglis said they were trying to detect early signs of Alzheimer's and offer an effective 'intervention'.

The clinic is seeking 25 to 50 patients with mild cognitive impairment to take the spinal fluid test.

The test involves measuring levels of the protein Beta-amyloid. Plaques made from the protein in the brain are one of the main characteristics of the disease.

Dementia Conference diary...

The **5th UK Dementia Congress** is to be held at the Bournemouth International Centre on November 9-11.

Keynote speakers this year include Professor Alistair Burns, National Clinical Director for Dementia, Department of Health, Professor Alexander Kurz, of the Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, Technische Universität München, Germany and Professor Peter Whitehouse, Professor of Neurology at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio.

For more information, contact: www.careinfo.org

CFYB how we can help you

How well do you know your area?

MARKET research could prove the difference between making and breaking a care business.

When was the last time you took a detailed look at your area – and potential business opportunities?

When did you last carry out a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis?

When did you last look at what your competitors are doing – and how you match up to their services?

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This may be the right time to grow your business, writes Jennifer Roberts

AS local authorities juggle their budgets in the aftermath of the Spending Review, there will be opportunities for Britain's home care providers to grow their business.

Social care has fared better than many sectors – winning £2 billion of extra funding, although it is unclear how much of this money will benefit front-line services.

In the light of changes that will be happening across the UK, it is worth looking at some of the opportunities that are likely to arise.

A number of councils are presently looking at becoming commissioners only of care services – and consequently will be looking to contract out more work to independent and charity providers.

There may be an opportunity here to win either block contract or spot purchase work. But those looking for this work should proceed with great caution.

Councils are strapped for cash and may drive a hard bargain in inviting tenders for social care work. They may be looking to drive down prices – to a level below what is acceptable for your business.

Many local authorities are tightening eligibility criteria for care (offering services in some cases for only the most needy) and imposing higher charges for social care services.

This will inevitably increase the number of private purchasers of care – a market place that offers huge opportunities for businesses specialising in person-centred care.

The changing face of local authority care provision is highlighted in a new report produced for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation by the Social Research Institute, Ipsis Mori.

The researchers spoke to local authority decision makers and service user/carer organisation representatives on their thoughts for the future. Here are just some of the comments:

'As always, our biggest focus are those who are the most vulnerable. They've always got to be the ultimate priority because that's what we're here for, to protect vulnerable people' – **LA decision maker.**

'There's talk at the moment about moving the goalpost to just supporting critical. All the evidence that is out there at the moment... says that in the medium term this saves you absolutely no money whatsoever' – **service user/carer organisation representative.**



Times are tough, but there will be opportunities to develop your business

'The sheer scale (of public service cuts) may force lateral thinking because it might, simply might not be possible to deal with it through standard percentages' – **service user/carer organisation representative.**

'It will be really interesting to see whether they go for a 'slash-and-burn' and just trying to survive in the short term or whether people take a long term view of this and say we need to reshape our offer to the public' – **service user/carer organisation representative.**

Encouragingly the report points to how more creative approaches are being taken to improve services. Many local authorities are working with volunteer, community and user-led groups to deliver services in a more efficient way.

'Nearly all respondents say there needs to be more collaboration between the different agencies that deliver adult social care,' says the report.

So, here's a great opportunity for independent home care businesses to be at the vanguard of delivering person-centred care in their communities.

Now is a good time to talk to your local authority about your plans for development – and to promote your services in the area you serve.

It's a good time to look at expanding with the help of good business planning, market research and a campaign of action.

If you need help in taking advantage of business opportunities in your area, we have a proven track record in developing care businesses throughout the UK. For more information contact us at pdjroberts@btinternet.com or call us on 01877 386332