

CASE STUDY

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL FRAMEWORK RATES FOR ADULT SUPPORTED LIVING

Manchester City Council uses CareCubed to Set Their Standardised Framework Rates for Adult Supported Living

The Challenge, The Solution, Why CareCubed?

The Challenge

- Fee rates for supported living negotiated at different points by different commissioners meaning a lack of consistency.
- No clear rationale for variations in rates between providers.
- Historic block contracts with rates that had been increased and supplemented over time.
- The need to put new contractual arrangements in place.

The Solution

- Implementation of a framework for supported living, with banded rates, developed with provider input.
- A consistent operational approach to benchmarking fair and transparent costs of service provision.
- A collaborative approach for negotiations between provider and commissioner.

Why CareCubed?

- CareCubed is the only nationally recognised evidence-based rationale used by commissioners and providers.
- CareCubed provides a transparent basis for negotiation.
- The CareCubed team provide comprehensive training, implementation services and support to ensure benefits are maximised.

Results

- Building positive and productive provider relationships through transparent negotiations.
- Consistency and standardisation of placement costs across Manchester City Council.
- Standardised commissioning practice across mental health, learning disability and autism adult commissioning teams in Manchester City Council.
- Improved understanding of care costs.

“When we first started using CareCubed with a new provider, we would meet online to take them through the tool and help them understand why we were asking the questions that we were. This initial investment of time improved relationships and means that we save lots of time – as those questions do not need answering each and every time. We have a shared understanding right from the outset.”

Gill Ashton,
Commissioning Officer for
Learning Disability & Autism,
Manchester City Council



CareCubed Cost of Care is the UK's leading tool for providing data-driven benchmarks and evidence-led insights into adult social care costing negotiations. A valued tool in the UK for both commissioners and providers, CareCubed aims to streamline the care commissioning process, enabling commissioners to reduce pressures and better understand costings by working with providers.

Manchester City Council have held a CareCubed Cost of Care licence for a while, using it on an ad hoc basis to inform individual fee negotiations. When the Council needed to commission a new framework for supported living, they wanted to set standard rates for care and needed a firm basis on which to do this in a consistent way. The Council decided to use CareCubed to back up the work they were doing. Using the CareCubed templates, they gathered detailed cost information from a range of providers and used this to build bands of hourly rates across low, moderate and complex care as well as for waking and sleeping nights. Pre-procurement engagement tested these rates out with providers, who agreed they were fair.

Since the framework went live, when referrals come in for new placements, the Brokerage team sends them out to providers, who

after assessment, submit hourly rates and supporting information. If a provider's proposed hourly rate sits above the top of Manchester's banded rates, the team initiates a CareCubed assessment to review the package with the information provided. Since the launch of the framework in April 2025, a tiny number of CareCubed assessments have been needed, showing how accurate the original fee setting was.

Gill Ashton, Commissioning Officer for Learning Disability & Autism, acted as the council's internal CareCubed Champion, guiding colleagues through implementation and helping to embed the new approach.

Alongside her, **Paul Furley, Commissioning Development Specialist for Mental Health**, noted that varying provider models were initially the biggest challenge they had to work through – yet also the most insightful. Understanding how different models translated into cost on the ground helped the council build a more rounded view of the market.

The shift to using banded rates, built out of the true cost of care, brought newfound clarity to discussions with providers.

“We are serious about shaping our local care market in partnership with our providers. CareCubed supports in this by providing a transparent, well-understood basis for our strategy to be delivered together with our care providers.”

Paul Furley,
Commissioning Development Specialist
for Mental Health,
Manchester City Council

Engagement with Manchester’s providers, new and established, was instrumental. A dedicated CareCubed session led with support from Sherif Attia, Director of Delivery and Design at CareCubed, helped to set expectations and build a shared understanding between provider and commissioner. This session prompted discussions around the tool, the new framework and its use in practice and helped the council build understanding of CareCubed and how the Council was using it, while strengthening provider relationships.

Beyond the framework, mental health and learning disability and autism commissioning teams continue to use CareCubed to look at individual residential and nursing home placements. By explaining that CareCubed is being used to understand the true cost of care – rather than to drive prices down – the Council’s use of the tool enables more open, constructive conversations. Meetings are easier to progress, with all parties working from the same evidence base of CareCubed. This approach has helped providers and the council alike identify placements that were

potentially underfunded and in need of review. This ensured that there was clarity on costs for all involved and led to fairer costings and increased sustainability.

Gill states “Staffing models are being provided in costs, which before we would not have known. Without CareCubed, some of the extras that have been charged for would have been unknown, we didn’t know what these charges were. Now this is knowledge that we have, which has been very useful, and if we are unsure now, we can use CareCubed to give us confidence and support our conversations.”

Paul states “It works both ways. Providers are now using CareCubed to highlight historic placements in nursing and residential settings, and inflationary revisions that haven’t kept pace, helping to acknowledge fair cost of care for long-term placements.”

Looking ahead, Manchester is exploring how CareCubed and the framework can be further applied in care home settings, and how reporting data can help to track, evaluate, and strengthen long-term outcomes. More widely, CareCubed is being used across all Greater Manchester Councils in a consistent way that provides vital evidence and data to support strategic decision-making across the sub-region.

Bernadette Nartey, Implementation and Improvement Manager for Adult Social Care at CareCubed, shared her reflections:

“It’s been a pleasure working with Manchester - there has been so much engagement and enthusiasm. We’ve seen how clearly, they’ve set up their framework with CareCubed, and how it has reduced so much of the back-and-forth. It’s a very strategic approach.”

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