

A BRIDGEHEAD SOCIAL CARE REPORT • JULY 2024

SOCIAL MEDIA POWER LIST 2024

TOP 20 SMALL CARE HOME GROUPS

Ranked on social media reach, engagement and content quality



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ABOUT BRIDGEHEAD SOCIAL CARE

A division of Bridgehead Communications, Bridgehead Social Care is a specialist marketing, public relations, and political communications consultancy focused exclusively on the adult social care sector.

Our expert team includes former national print and broadcast journalists as well as senior policy advisers with an in-depth understanding of the adult social care landscape.

We help care providers, both large and small, to drive their self-funding occupancy and client rates. Our support covers marketing campaigns, public relations, media coverage, reputation management, social media, and SEO.

Our clients and the services they require are broad. They include care bodies looking to rebrand or market themselves more effectively; providers seeking to raise the profile of their provision through both digital and traditional media; those seeking to navigate a hostile media environment; as well as individuals and organisations looking to have their voice and opinions heard among key sector decision makers.

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Yours faithfully,

William Walter,
Managing Director,
Bridgehead Communications



Our core services include:



Marketing
& Content
Production



Profile
Promotion



Crisis
Communication
& Reputation
Management



Regulatory
& Political
Engagement



Campaign
Management

2. OVERVIEW AND KEY FINDINGS

Social media is an increasingly important mechanism to support stakeholder engagement in the social care sector.

Last year, we produced a series of reports investigating the use of social media among the country's leading care home groups. Following the success of this research, we have decided to publish a second series of reports, updating our analysis to include those groups – and their homes – at the forefront of care provision in 2024.

In this, the first in the series, we examine the use and applications of social media in the adult social care sector using carehome.co.uk's list of Top 20 **Small** Care Home Groups 2024. We construct a 'power list' of runners and riders among some of the leading care groups and each of their respective homes. unveiling the statistics behind the social media use of each care group, which platforms they use most prominently, and what they use these platforms for.

Our research has uncovered some interesting trends. First, the increasing use of LinkedIn as a tool employed by small care groups across the country. In our 2023 report, we found that LinkedIn accounted for around eight per cent of the Top 20 Small Care Home Groups combined followers.¹ In this report, however, we reveal that LinkedIn accounted for 37 per cent of this figure.

As a result, the number of Facebook followers of these groups has declined in both proportion and in number, falling from 23,157 (81 per cent of overall followers) to 18,422 (53 per cent of overall followers).

The figures for Instagram and X (formerly Twitter) remain remarkably similar to our previous research. In both reports, Instagram accounted for around seven per cent of overall followers, while Twitter fell from constituting four per cent in our 2023 investigation to three per cent here. An exploration of these findings is offered in the analysis that follows.

But to lay the groundwork in our understanding, it's important to first understand the nature of social media platforms themselves. As with last year's reports, we look at five of the most popular and relevant social media platforms to the adult social care sector: Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and TikTok. We explore which are growing in number and influence, and which are not. Within our analysis, we also consider the implications of the age demographics of each platform's users.

¹ This figure reflects the figures of 18 of the Top 20 Small Care Home Groups 2022. The followings of Cygnet Group and Royal Star & Garter were excluded from analysis as both were significant statistical outliers. Cygnet is also excluded in this study for the same reasons.

We then use this information to identify the most appropriate platforms for common applications of social media for the sector, from community-building, marketing, and reputation management to domestic and overseas recruitment.

We then reveal the raw statistics behind the social media use of the Top 20 Small Care Home Groups.

After analysing our results, we turn our attention to the relative merits of group versus individual care home social media accounts to help you determine which is likely to be most effective for your group or home's needs.

KEY FINDINGS

By platform

Since 2019, and of the five social media channels analysed in this study, **TikTok** has enjoyed both the largest numerical **and** the largest proportional increase in user numbers.

The app has increased from around 5 million active users in 2019 to more than **23 million** in 2023.

Each of the three largest platforms (**Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn**) have risen by **around 11 million** between 2019 and 2023, with Instagram witnessing the highest proportional growth (**47 per cent**).

Facebook has the largest number of users across all age ranges apart from those aged 25-34.

In the **25-34** age category Facebook was beaten by **LinkedIn**, which has an estimated **18 million users** in the age group.

KEY FINDINGS

By Care Group

The groups and their respective care homes had a combined total of **85,513 followers** across the five platforms.

The Cygnet Group and its two care homes accounted for **around two-thirds** of the total follower count of all 20 groups, or approximately **50,000 followers**.

Excluding Cygnet's follower count, the groups and their respective homes had a combined total of **35,000**.

Facebook followers constituted **53 per cent** of the remaining figure. LinkedIn accounted for **37 per cent**, Instagram for **seven per cent**, and X for around **three per cent**.

Boutique Care Homes (9,327) was the clearest statistical outlier in total follower statistics, with a combined total across all platforms around **5,000 followers higher** than its closest competitor.

Boutique Care Homes' statistics are fuelled by a significant **LinkedIn following (7,097)** – the highest of all groups.

Sanders Senior Living had the highest number of **Facebook followers (2,951)** across its group and home accounts.

Doveleigh Care Homes had the highest number of **Instagram followers (1,014)**.

Rotherwood Group had the largest **X (formerly Twitter) following (285)**.

The Burlington care home, belonging to the Boutique Care Home group topped the individual homes leaderboard, with **1,100 followers**, all of which came on **Facebook**.

The Rotherwood Group topped the list of followers for its group account, with almost **2,500 followers** across its **Facebook, X and LinkedIn** accounts.

3. INTRODUCTION

Social Media in Social Care

Effective engagement between care groups and their respective stakeholders is important to their successful operation and function. In the past, as [The Guardian observed in 2014](#), for various reasons the social care sector has historically been cautious with digital tools. This culture has now changed. Social media and its various platforms are becoming an increasingly important mechanism to support stakeholder engagement in the care sector.

For example, as well as being a social networking platform, Facebook is a popular business development and marketing tool through which care groups and their homes can showcase the quality of their service offering, activities, and events to both existing and prospective care-receivers and their families.

Facebook, alongside platforms such as LinkedIn, is also proving an invaluable resource to help care groups address the significant recruitment challenges they face, particularly in the post-COVID environment. Used effectively, social media is helping groups to connect directly with applicants from the UK and overseas, driving up application rates, reducing their dependency on agency staff, and lowering costs.

Social media is also a useful tool for boosting staff morale. Across platforms care groups use social media to celebrate staff development and achievement.

This, in turn, supports recruitment by promoting the opportunities that groups offer, as well as the culture that they promote. It highlights their understanding of the importance of employee wellbeing and recognition to their target audience.

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Social media platforms, particularly X, Facebook, and LinkedIn, are also proving to be invaluable campaigning tools to allow care groups and those working within the sector to raise awareness of challenges affecting the industry among policymakers, the media, and the public.

The role of social media in amplifying the sector's voice became particularly apparent during the pandemic.

Since then, it has allowed the industry to highlight other issues, including the recruitment crisis, rising operating costs, and social care stigma, to key audiences.

Return on investment

Robust evidence quantifying the positive return on investment of social media in the social care sector is limited. Despite this, we can draw some insight from the findings of previous research into social media's applications in the healthcare sector.

One [US study published in 2014](#), for example, concluded that healthcare organisations were able to significantly increase their visibility and brand recognition using social media. Of those consumers surveyed for the study, 57 per cent felt that a brand's presence on social media positively influenced their choice to use that organisation's services. Similarly, 12.5 per cent of the healthcare organisations surveyed reported that they had attracted new patients through social media.

Major organisations, such as Skills for Care, now offer [guidance and 'top tips'](#) for how care providers can use social media. This includes advice for example to look out for awareness days, to "be visual", and to remember hashtags.

The page, and others like it that have sprung up in recent years, is testament to the increasing popularity of social media as a tool in the social care sector.

Given the continued growth in UK-based users of social media platforms (Chart 1) it seems reasonable to assume that the dividends from the effective use of social media have also multiplied.



Major organisations, such as Skills for Care, now offer guidance and 'top tips' for how care providers can use social media.

Users by platform

To use social media effectively in the adult social care sector, understanding the underlying statistics behind their wider use is crucial.

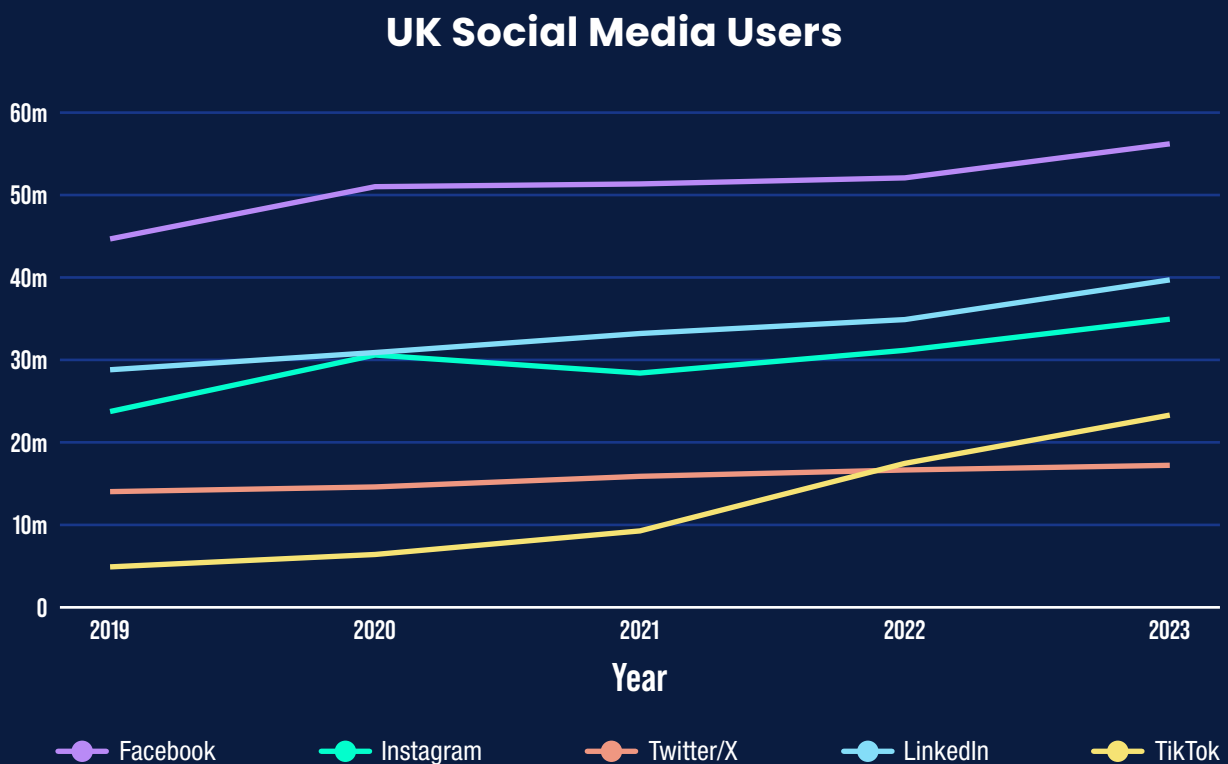


Chart 1

Chart 1² shows the growth in the number of UK users for the five most commonly used social media platforms in the social care sector. It shows how, since 2019, TikTok has enjoyed the largest growth in terms of user numbers, increasing from around 5 million to more than 23 million in four years.

Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram have seen steady increases in user figures, each rising by around 11 million since 2019. Interestingly, Instagram has seen the largest proportional growth, increasing by around 47 per cent between 2019 and 2023.

2 Sources: Facebook ([NapoleonCat](#)), Twitter ([Statista](#)), Instagram ([NapoleonCat](#)), LinkedIn ([NapoleonCat](#)), TikTok (Ofcom data, reported in [The Sun](#), [MSN](#), [GB News](#)).

Facebook and LinkedIn use has risen by 25 and 37 per cent respectively in the period.

Facebook's continued growth comes despite a common misperception of the platform being outdated and used predominantly by older generations.



Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram have seen a steady increase in user figures, each rising by around 11 million since 2019.

However, with a user growth rate of more than 400 per cent since 2019, TikTok – the newest entrant to the social media market – has seen by far the largest increase in volume of users (18,000,000).

The chart also reveals that, over the last few years, Instagram and LinkedIn have grown in relative parallel, though it seems likely in the next five years that LinkedIn will take a wider lead given its higher growth rate.

X's user base has risen since 2019, though at a far less significant rate than its competitors. While estimates suggest its userbase is likely to continue to grow, its annual percentage increases are anticipated to decline from around 5 per cent between 2022 and 2023 to less than one per cent between 2027 and 2028, per [Statista](#).



However, with a user growth rate of more than 400 per cent since 2019, TikTok – the newest entrant to the social media market – has seen by far the largest increase in volume of users.

Demographics

But it is not just the size of the prospective audience that informs the relevant applications of the various social media platforms. Other factors, particularly age, are also key. Chart 2 breaks down each platform's UK user base by age grouping.

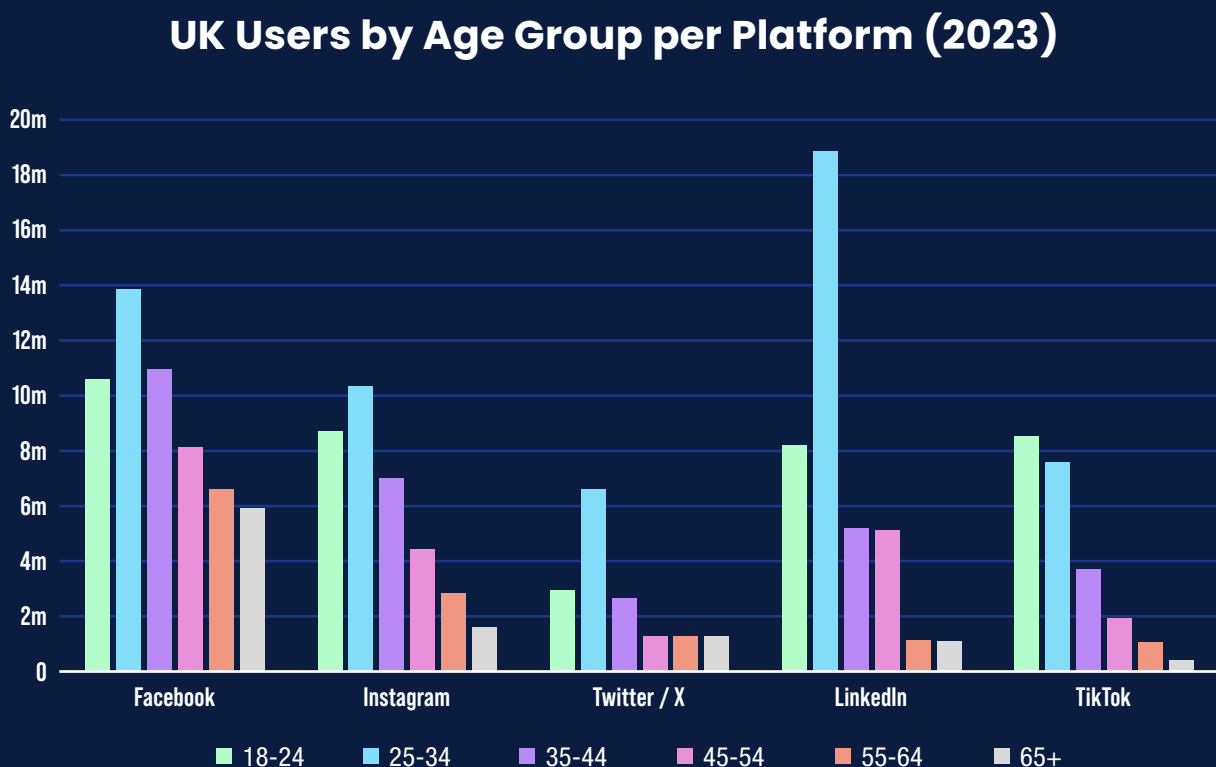


Chart 2

Chart 2³ shows how Facebook has the largest number of users across all age ranges apart from those aged between 25 and 34.

It is no surprise, therefore, that Facebook proves consistently to be the preferred platform for care groups and their homes.

3 Compiled using various data sources. Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn were populated using 2024 user data from [NapoleonCat](#). In the case of LinkedIn, all those aged over 55 were grouped in one category as well as those 35 to 54. To overcome this, we divided the userbase evenly over the 55-64 and 65+ groupings to give readers a rough indication of likely demographic. Similarly, in the case of Twitter, specific UK user data by age group is unavailable. Instead, the share of each platform's global userbase by age grouping (Twitter: [WhatsTheBigData](#) 2024) were applied to the total number of UK users ([Statista](#)). However, as with LinkedIn, inconsistencies in age groupings existed. Where these occurred the user numbers were divided evenly across the corresponding groups. The TikTok age breakdown was calculated by dividing the overall UK figure by the global age breakdowns ([Oberlo](#), accessed May 2024) to get a rough indication of the likely figures.

It dominates particularly among those aged 45 and above. In the over 65s category, it has more than three-and-a-half times as many followers (5,927,000) as its closest competitor, Instagram (1,607,000).

Despite its popularity with older demographics, the platform still enjoys a significant audience among younger people. Like LinkedIn, Instagram, and X, Facebook's largest user base is among those aged between 25–34.

LinkedIn's proportion of users aged 25–34, which numbers more than 18 million, is significantly higher than the other platforms – reflecting its popularity among young professionals. Its use among those aged 55 and over is particularly low.

Like LinkedIn, Instagram, and X, Facebook's largest user base is among those aged between 25–34.

Facebook and Instagram both share a relatively similar age distribution among their users: the highest among 25–34 year olds, followed by 18–24 year olds and 35–44 year olds.

TikTok's relatively recent entry and expansion is reflected in its younger user profile. 18- to 24-year-olds make up its largest user share, standing at more than eight million. As the platform continues to surge in popularity, it is likely that its relevance to the social care sector, particularly from a marketing and recruitment perspective, will become more significant. This suggests a clear opportunity for those social care providers looking to get ahead of their competitors to establish and develop their presence on the platform early.

As TikTok continues to surge in popularity it is likely that the platforms relevance to the adult social care sector will become more significant.

The applications of social media in adult social care

Recruitment

With the social care sector facing a chronic skills shortage, and potential future repercussions after a government crackdown on care worker visa rules, care providers are turning to more innovative tools to drive recruitment and reduce their reliance on agency staff. Facebook and LinkedIn are currently at forefront of this effort. Our research found that smaller care groups were slightly less active in using social media for recruitment than larger care groups, but it still retained some presence in their overall use.

Facebook is the site most often used to recruit for more junior care positions. The platform offers several advantages. It often boasts high levels of engagement among communities local to care homes. Secondly, the platform's sophisticated advertising interface allows care homes to target recruitment ads accurately, whether it be locally, regionally, nationally, or even internationally.



Facebook and LinkedIn are currently at forefront of efforts to use innovative tools to tackle staff shortages.

Among the homes investigated in this analysis, Claridge Place (Sanders Senior Living) and Chartwell House (Boutique Care Homes) offer good examples of where Facebook is used in recruitment.

Both have posted in recent weeks on their accounts to advertise for vacancies, ranging from Lifestyles & Activities Assistant to Deputy Manager.

Increasingly, as recruitment via social media becomes more sophisticated, wider trends have emerged among care groups and their homes, particularly the larger and medium-sized groups. Some are creating dedicated '[care group or home name] - jobs' accounts for their recruitment campaigns. These are easy to access and readily appear in search results.

Our analysis has found, however, that this is not yet observable among smaller care groups – likely attributable to a straightforward lack of need: with significantly less homes it makes sense to co-ordinate recruitment at a care home or care group account level.

Our overall analysis has found LinkedIn is traditionally used by care providers to recruit for more senior roles, though observing trends in smaller groups is difficult where some do not have LinkedIn accounts. While many advertise roles in straightforward posts, the online professional network also enables employers to post roles via the platform's dedicated jobs portal, through which applicants can apply for roles directly.

The sophisticated nature of the platform offers recruiters a more precise means of targeting candidates; the ability to showcase their care group and homes; and a means by which to engage with passive candidates. Premium features also allow InMail messaging as well as information on who has viewed job advertisements.

Recruitment is not exclusive to Facebook and LinkedIn, however.

Awareness and Marketing

Social media is also a powerful marketing tool through which care groups and their homes can build awareness of the positive work they do and the services they provide. This is particularly useful in engaging local communities, prospective residents, their families, and job applicants. This can be achieved by sharing positive stories about staff, showcasing events taking place, and highlighting new additions to your home's facilities or projects your home has been involved in.

Facebook is often the most effective social media platform for sharing these stories as it allows for lengthy, personable posts, though LinkedIn is increasingly becoming a platform for these also.

Similarly, and as previously discussed, TikTok is an emerging platform being used to attract new staff and advertise care vacancies among younger people.

The use of Instagram hashtags such as #adultsocialcarejobs are also being used by care homes and recruiters to connect with younger audiences to promote vacancies.

In several cases, care groups and homes from the Top 20 Small Care Home Groups list have used Instagram to promote job vacancies – ranging from Kitchen Team Members at Digby Manor Care Home (D&L Care Homes) to Support Workers at Doveleigh Care.

Though not yet prominent among smaller care groups, others of a larger size have begun to pioneer its use for recruitment, for example HC-One, who featured on Carehome.co.uk's 2023 Top 20 Large Sized Care Groups list.



Though not yet prominent among smaller care groups, TikTok is an emerging platform being used to attract new staff and advertise care vacancies among younger people.

Ultimately, Facebook, LinkedIn, X, Instagram, and TikTok can all be used to market care groups and their homes, but there are key considerations that come with it. These include developing marketing objectives, identifying your target audience and effectively managing your brand identity.

Interaction and Enquiries

Social media platforms also enable prospective employees, residents, and their families to correspond directly with homes with any questions or queries they may have.

Facebook, LinkedIn, X, Instagram, and TikTok allow followers or interested parties to directly message accounts.

Policy Engagement and Campaigning

The adult social care sector is an ever-evolving industry that is being forced to embrace the advent of new technologies while also facing significant challenges in recruitment, retention, and funding amidst the backdrop of an ageing population.

The effective use of social media is giving the industry a platform to campaign on key issues that it previously has not had. Platforms like X allow for far reaching posts that enable care groups to engage in sector discussions with policymakers and journalists like never before.

Hashtags and handles mean care groups and their leaders can participate in conversations with key influencers in real-time. Internal industry campaigns such as #CelebratingSocialCare can be observed in the social media activity of care groups, and are useful in raising awareness of different aspects of – and individuals within – the social care sector.

While the level of background noise and online chatter has undoubtedly increased, there is little doubt that, used effectively, social media has given corners of the sector a voice that they never had before.

They are also able to hear perspectives from other quarters of the industry that they may have otherwise been oblivious to. This can only be a positive contribution towards debate and decision-making.

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4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Using carehome.co.uk's Top 20 Small Care Home Groups 2024, we collated the number of followers for each care group and their respective homes on each of the five major social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn and TikTok. All figures are of May 2024.

Followers by Platform

Our analysis found that in total, across all five platforms, the groups and their respective care homes had a combined total of 85,513 followers.

It reveals that just over 30 per cent (26,308) were made up of Facebook followers, 58 per cent (50,127) of LinkedIn followers, seven per cent (5,813) of X (Twitter) followers, around four per cent of Instagram followers, and less than one per cent (7) of TikTok followers.

However, as we found in our previous report, closer analysis reveals that the proportional figures are heavily skewed by the social media audiences of the Cygnet Group. Cygnet is a national provider of services for individuals and mental health needs, autism and learning disabilities. It supports individuals looking for residential, nursing and dementia care.

However, its nursing home provision extends to only two homes: Tabley House Nursing Home and Tupwood Gate Nursing Home. These represent a very small part of the group's wider service offerings (and have less than 300 followers on social media collectively), hence the disparity between Cygnet's large social media following (particularly on LinkedIn) and its inclusion in the 'Small Care Group' listing.

The Chart below breaks down Cygnet Group's social media following. It reveals that LinkedIn proves its most valuable, perhaps unsurprising given the range of its work and the number of individuals it employs. It is often used to share news of various project launches and events across the group that are not exclusive to social care.

Cygnet Group Followers by Platform

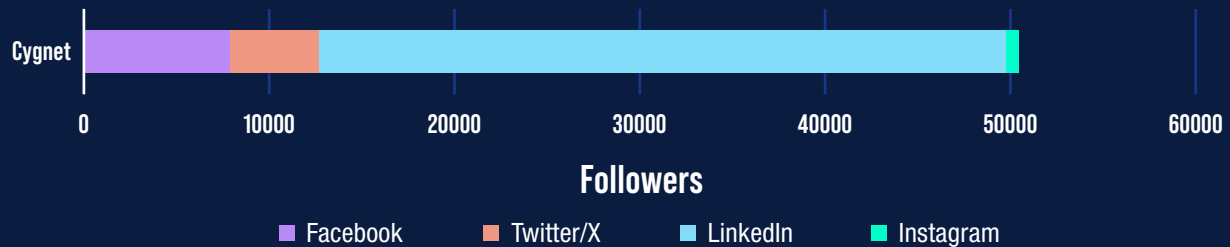


Chart 3

Cygnet accounted for around two-thirds of the total followings of the Top 20 Small Care Home Groups, across all platforms. It accounted for almost three-quarters (74 per cent) of the total LinkedIn followings, around 30 per cent of the total Facebook following, and more than 80 per cent of the total X followings.

It makes sense therefore to exclude Cygnet from wider analysis in order to get a more representative image of how small care home groups use social media. Doing so reveals a very different picture.

Providers Excluding Cygnet

Chart 4 reveals that Facebook accounted for the largest proportion of followers (53 per cent - 18,442) among the remaining care groups and their homes. LinkedIn accounted for 37 per cent of the total, Instagram for just over seven per cent, and Twitter for three-and-a-half per cent.

The dominance of Facebook is unsurprising given the relative size of its userbase and the age profile of its users, combined with the platform's suitability for sharing personal, more in-depth posts featuring images.

Top 20* Small Care Groups Followers by Platform

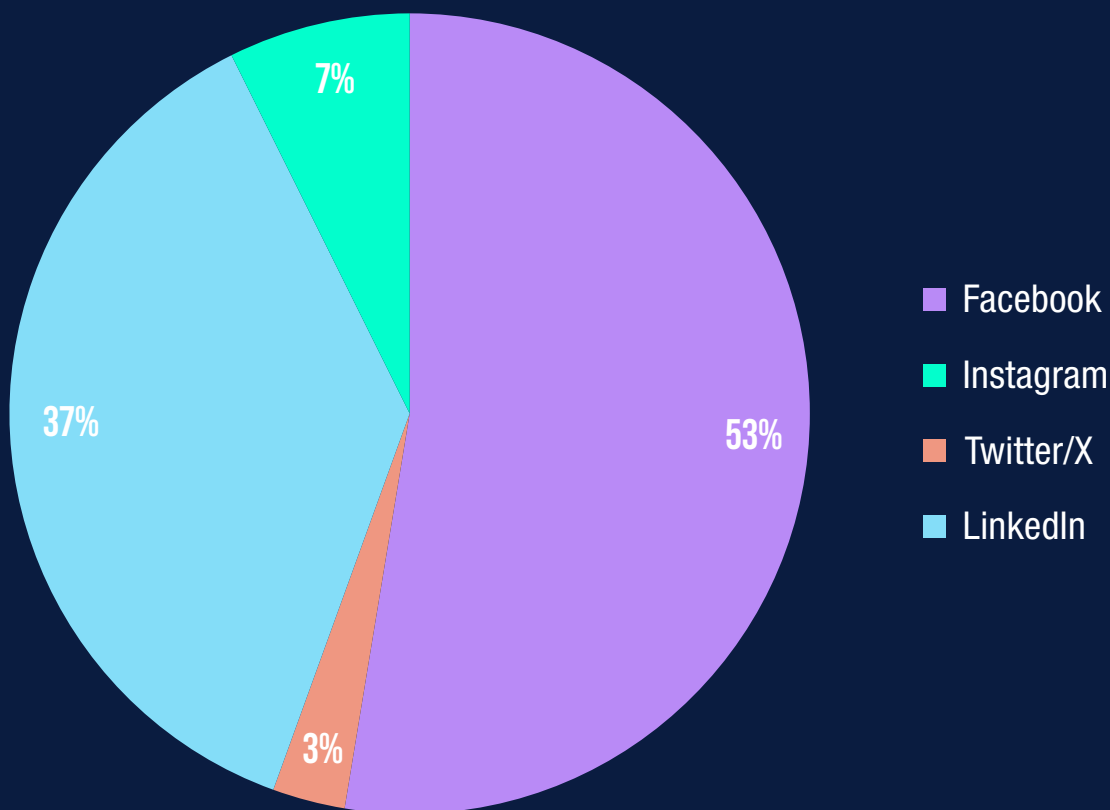


Chart 4

*Excluding Cygnet

Interestingly, the Facebook figures represent a decline of almost 5,000 when compared with the figures of the Top 20 Small Care Home Groups in 2022, the year of our previous report. This is partially explained by the absence of Adept Care Homes in this 2024's list, which in 2022 added more than 7000 Facebook followers to the aggregate tally. Forest Care is a similarly notable absentee, in 2022 recording almost 3,000 Facebook followers.

The chart below reveals the number of followers, including splits by platform, that these care groups have across their social media accounts.

Followers by Care Group

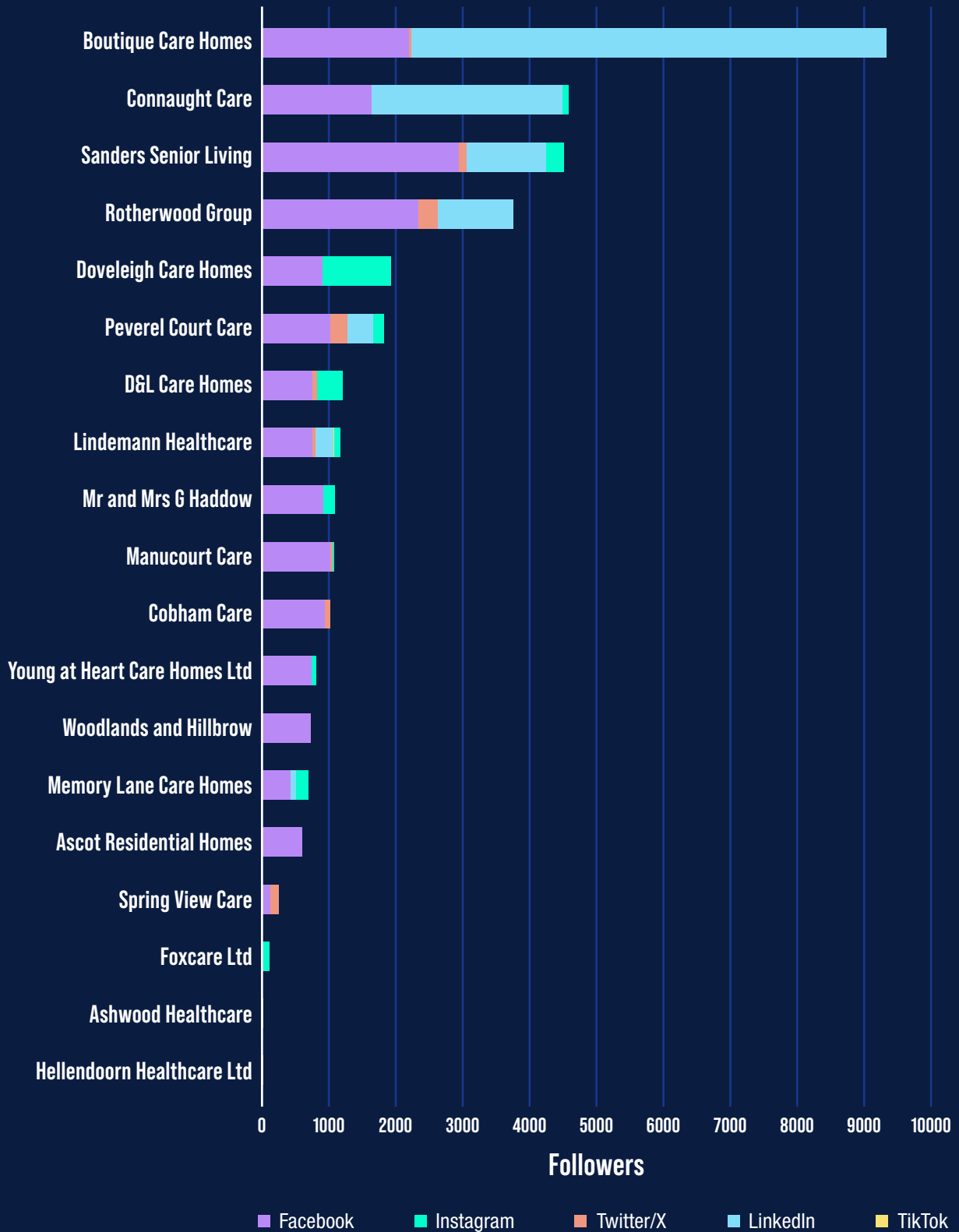


Chart 5

The care group with the highest number of Facebook followers across all accounts in the 2024 list was Sanders Senior Living, with 2,951 followers across its main account and its five homes. Its home with the most significant following was Claridge Place, which had 714 followers. Most of its posts celebrated events, activities and birthdays in the home.

Following closely behind in total Facebook followers is the Rotherwood Group, which has eight homes in its group across the West Midlands. The main source of these followers came from its main 'Rotherwood Healthcare' Facebook account (1,100), but followers were well-distributed across its homes.

Beyond Facebook, it is LinkedIn which appears to have surged in popularity among care groups over the past two years. As noted previously, in 2022 it accounted for just eight per cent of total followers among care groups, while in 2024 it represents 37 per cent.

Admittedly though, this is somewhat skewed by big hitters. Boutique Care Homes, for example, with over 7,000 followers constituted more than half of this total. It is interesting that they have such a significant presence on LinkedIn given that they have just three homes, with competitors with considerably more homes in their portfolio failing to match Boutique's LinkedIn presence. However, given that the individual homes in the group also have a significant number of Facebook followers suggests that the group has an effective marketing strategy as opposed to an anomalous LinkedIn following.

Boutique Care Homes uses LinkedIn to promote events in homes and in the community, highlight new projects, and celebrate residents, posting several times a week.

Other care home groups with significant LinkedIn followings include Connaught Care, Rotherwood Group and Sanders Senior Living. The first of these boasts an impressive 2,700 followers, though interestingly does not have a mirror account on Facebook, preferring accounts for individual homes.

Connaught uses LinkedIn in an almost identical way to Boutique Care Homes, spotlighting residents and employees, highlighting new infrastructure projects, marking events and awards, and sharing reviews.

It is difficult to paint a overall picture of LinkedIn's growth among the smaller care homes, particularly given less than half of the groups that feature in this report also appeared in our last. However, there are several methods by which to assess LinkedIn's increasing prominence.

The first is the example of Peverel Court Care. Comparing the growth of its presence on Facebook versus LinkedIn paints an interesting picture. In the last year, it's Facebook follower count has risen by around 30 per cent. In the same period, its LinkedIn following has risen by more than double that – 61 per cent.

Similarly notable is the increase in LinkedIn's presence among the Top 20 Small Care Groups. Among those analysed last year, just four had an account on LinkedIn. In this year's, that figure has doubled, to eight.

The Chart below explores how the follower make-up of the Top 20 Small Care Groups has changed since our last investigation.

Proportional Social Media Following: 2023 vs 2024 Reports

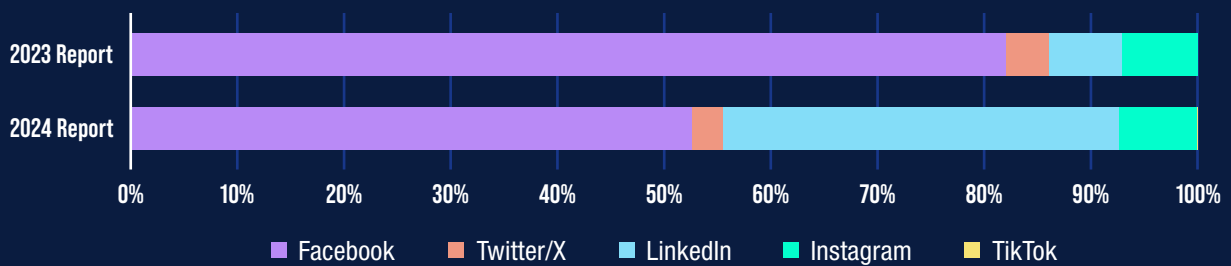


Chart 6

That said, though, more than half (11) of the groups do not have a LinkedIn page. In the majority of those that do not, much of their following comes from Facebook, and in some cases Instagram.

On Instagram, it is Doveleigh Care which boasts the highest following, with more than 1,000 followers. Such a following appears to compensate for its lack of a LinkedIn account.

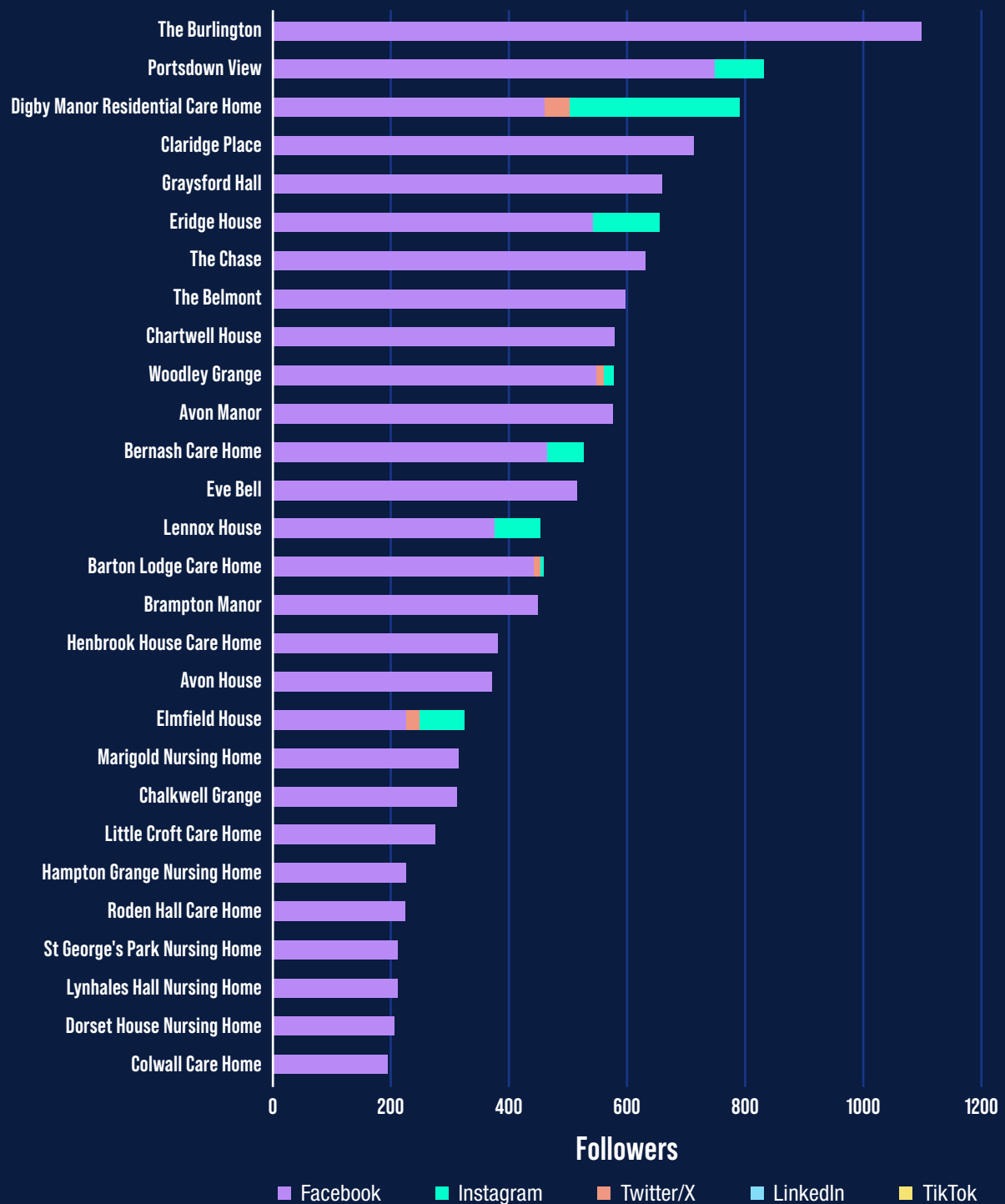
The account posts several times a week sharing images of trips, birthdays, and other significant events.

On Twitter, the Rotherwood Group had the most followers, with 287. They are closely followed by Peverel Court, with 253.

On TikTok, the only identified account belonged to Lindemann Healthcare. It had just 7 followers.

Breakdown by Home

Followers by Individual Care Home



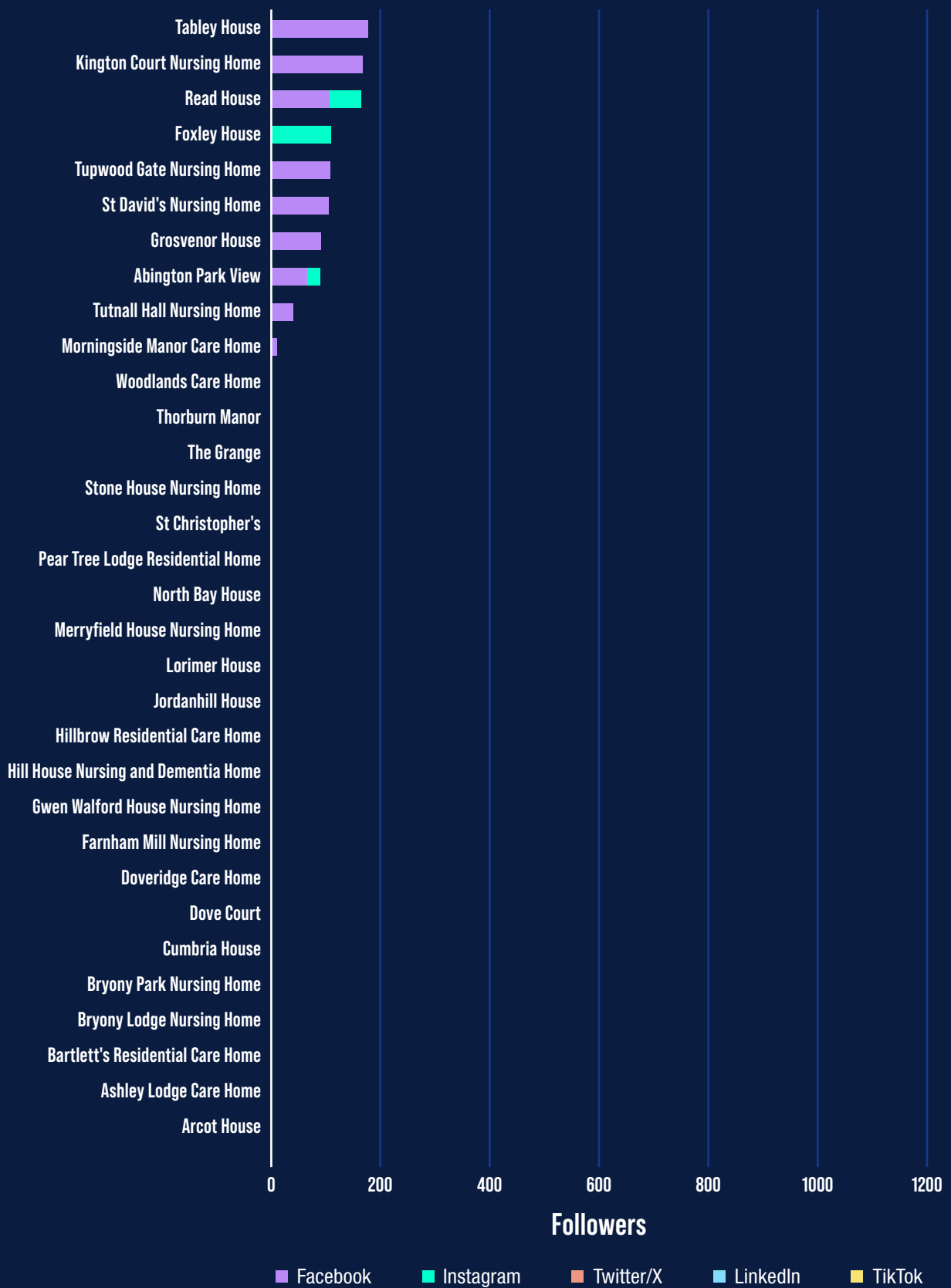


Chart 7

Chart 7 breaks our analysis down further by comparing the social media presence of individual homes on our list (excluding Cygnet's homes). It is The Burlington care home, belonging to the Boutique Care Homes group that has the most Facebook followers, as well as the most overall followers of all individual care homes, with approximately 1,100. Posts consistently garner 30 or more reactions from their audience. Mirroring the use of social media by other care homes and groups, The Burlington uses their account to celebrate birthdays, post about significant events in the home and mark achievements of the home and parent group.

Several other individual care homes have close to 1,000 followers across all social media platforms. The highest of these was Portsdown View, a home part of the Connaught Care group, which has just over 800 followers. The vast majority of this figure comes from Facebook, though they also have more than 80 Instagram followers, to which they share images of trips, introduce members of the team, showcase menus and celebrate events.

Following just behind are Digby Manor Care Home, of the D&L group, and Claridge Place, of Sanders Senior Living. In the former, followers are spread across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, while in the latter the followers are exclusive to Facebook.

Some care homes lack any social media presence at all. Thorburn Manor and Lorimer House, for example, members of the Lindemann Healthcare group, and Bryony Park Care Home, a member of the Memory Lane Care Home group. As will be explained in later pages, in many of these cases this is a result of a care group having one social media account under its group name, as opposed to individual ones for each home. This makes sense for centralisation purposes given that in most cases smaller groups have only three or four homes, often concentrated in one region.

Breakdown by Group Account

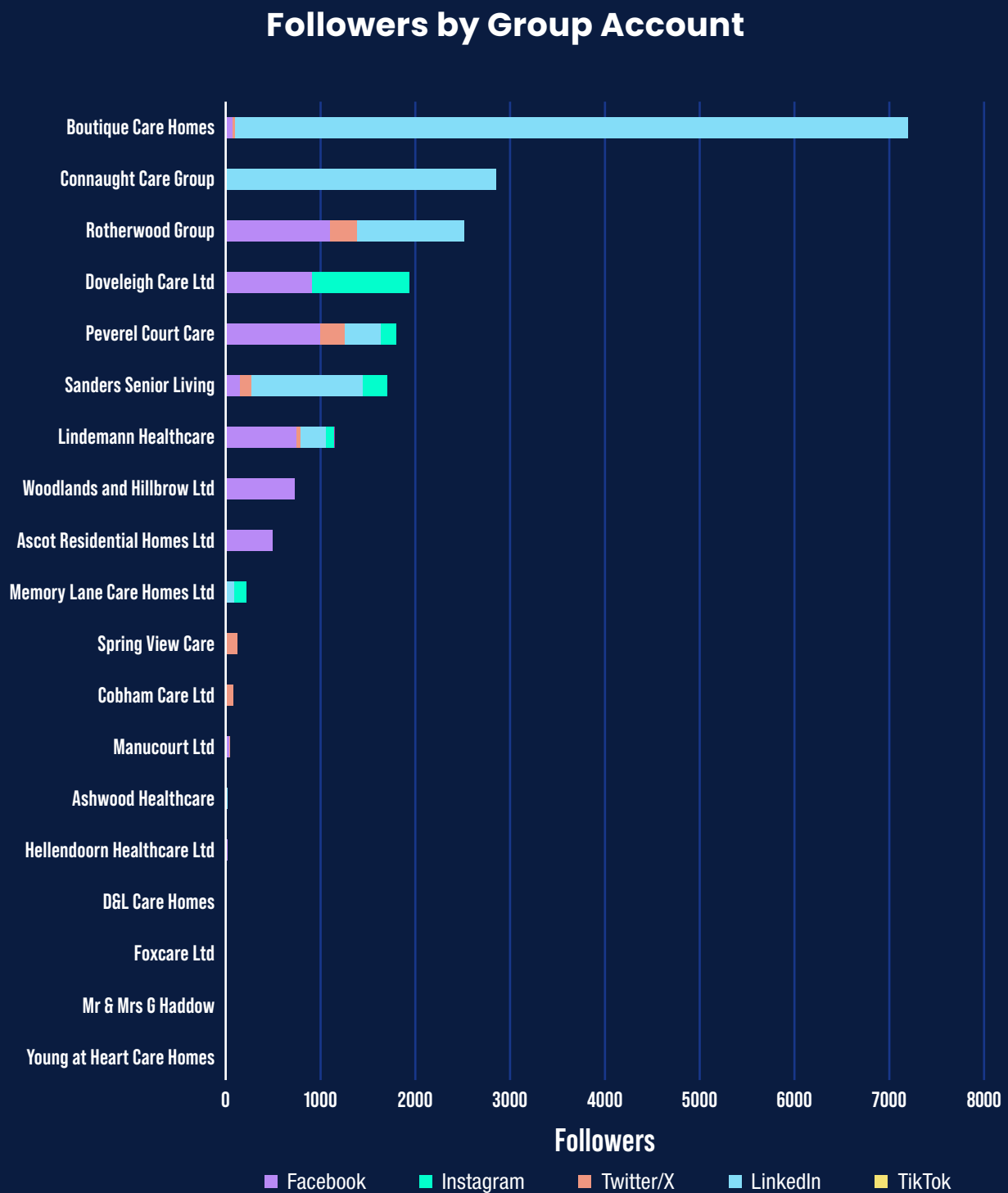


Chart 8

The group with the most followers on its 'group' account was Boutique Care Homes, with their 7,200 followers almost entirely coming from LinkedIn.

Given its ranking at the top of our list this year, we wanted to talk to those at Boutique who are behind their social media success.

Case Study: Boutique Care Homes

We sat down with Carl Roberts, Boutique's Associate Sales and Marketing Director. Here's what he told us about their relationship with social media:



At Boutique Care Homes, we are thrilled to be recognised in the Social Media Power List 2024. Social media has become an invaluable tool

for us, allowing us to connect residents with their loved ones and share the incredible stories happening across our homes each day. Additionally, we use social media to promote events, highlight community initiatives we champion, and offer a window into our homes for those researching care options. This digital engagement fosters a sense of community while ensuring transparency and accessibility.

Our brand concept, 'It's a feeling,' is deeply intertwined with our storytelling approach on social media. At Boutique Care Homes, we believe care is more than just a service; it's a profound feeling of comfort, security, and genuine connection. Social media allows us to communicate this ethos effectively, showcasing moments that capture the warmth and community spirit within our homes. On Facebook, we tell our story from the residents' perspective, aiming to reshape expectations around exceptional care by showing how our care is so good, it's unexpected.

To achieve this, we have invested significant time in training our teams on best practices for social media posts, including copywriting and photography, emphasising the importance of compelling photos to humanise our brand and bring our vibrant community to life.

Our approach on LinkedIn focuses on the development and growth side of our business. While we share resident stories and content from our Facebook pages, our LinkedIn audience, being primarily B2B, engages more with updates on new developments, award shortlisting and wins, and broader group achievements. This platform allows us to build professional relationships and showcase our leadership in the care home industry.

We are honoured to be included in the Top 20 Small Care Home Groups – Social Media Power List 2024. This recognition underscores the impact of our social media efforts and reaffirms our commitment to connecting with our community and showcasing the exceptional care we provide. We look forward to continuing to innovate and share our journey through these powerful platforms."

– Carl Roberts,
Associate Sales and Marketing Director,
Boutique Care Homes

Connaught Care Home followed, ranking second, though their 2850 followers came exclusively from LinkedIn.

Just behind this overall tally was the Rotherwood Group, with approximately 2,500 across the three platforms (Facebook, X and LinkedIn) on which it has a presence. It had a virtually identical number of followers (around 1,100) on its Facebook and LinkedIn pages. On the former, Rotherwood post daily, though often more generally in reference to events in the local community. It reserves posts about individual care homes to their dedicated accounts. On LinkedIn, Rotherwood's activity appears to be more sparing, with posts only every few weeks.

With just under 2,000 total followers were Doveleigh Care, Peverel Court Care and Sanders Senior Living. The first of these had 1,930, the second 1,781, and the third 1,700. Each of these were diverse in their use of social media – while followers mainly came from Facebook and Instagram, X also had significant presence.

Some care home groups lacked a general 'group' social media account. This includes Foxcare Ltd, D&L Care Homes, Mr & Mrs G Haddow, and Young at Heart Care Homes. For three of these four, their individual care homes retained a significant social media following, particularly on Facebook. For Foxcare Ltd, however, just one social media account was identified – an Instagram account dedicated to their home, Foxley House.

5. GROUP ACCOUNTS VS. INDIVIDUAL HOME ACCOUNTS

The decision to use group social media accounts, individual home accounts, or a hybrid model is not as clear cut as you may think and is heavily influenced by the number of homes within your group as well as the dynamics between your homes. Below we set out some of the key factors to consider.

Dispersion

Operating several different accounts can slow your audience growth rate as engagement on posts and follower numbers becomes dependent on the amount of effort individual managers and social media personnel put into each home's account.

Time

It is also a question of managing resources. If your social media presence will be managed by one individual on a part-time basis then single group accounts can be a more efficient use of their resources rather than having to switch between home accounts to publish individual, tailored content.

Consistency of Brand and Messaging

Having group accounts makes it easier to ensure consistency of brand and messaging, optimising the effectiveness of social media marketing campaigns.

Promotion

Importantly, operating as one group account allows you to promote positive stories and innovations as one cohesive brand, allowing each home to enjoy access to a wider user base, following, and access to a larger resource of positive news and events. This means that a home will benefit from the same exposure and followers as the others in your group. The risk, however, is that your larger potential audience becomes less targeted and less relevant to each individual home.

Benefits of Individual Accounts

More targeted and tailored

Individual group accounts offer care homes a degree of flexibility when publishing content tailored specifically to their target local audience. With a groupwide account, you would be publishing content that may be inappropriate to certain prospective customers.

Reduced reputational risk

While one overarching group account is good for brand awareness and promotion, there are risks that individual accounts can mitigate. Having one group account can increase the chance of your brand's reputation being negatively impacted by an incident that may otherwise be easier to contain with siloed social media accounts.

If your homes are scattered across the country, or indeed countries, and operate in local communities, then a more granular and bottom-up approach to running their social media is likely to produce better results. People may not want to consume everything your group has to offer, just what is relevant to them and their needs.

After all, it is those who run your homes on the ground who know this local community the best and will arguably be more aware of events that occur in it, as well as its needs. This knowledge is invaluable to ensuring that your individual homes remain connected to their communities, and localised accounts can ensure these connections are in real-time.

Offering advice

People enjoy personability, being able to contact who they need directly, and receiving a response quickly. A top-down approach to managing queries or complaints can appear as inauthentic, and it can slow down the process of dealing with them.

Having an individual account for each of your homes' identities can mean that people in their respective communities who use or wish to use your service can have their queries and concerns addressed in a more personal manner, improving the reputation of your homes in their communities. After all, these are their potential residents.

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Striking a balance

Often the most effective approach for care groups is to employ a hybrid model employing the use of both group and individual home accounts. It is important, though, to create a recognisable and uniform brand using your own logo, but applying it equally and uniformly to all the respective homes with social media channels that you manage.

Two good examples of this fusion would be Sanders Senior Living and the Rotherwood Group. In the former, its group accounts account for around 40 per cent of followers across all media, and in the latter group accounts account for around two-thirds. Both combine the corporate and local blend that a hybrid method can facilitate.

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