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Website Care Plan vs Web Development Subscription: 5 Requests

> Tapflare is a flat-rate monthly subscription for graphic design and website development. A dedicated project manager assigns each request to senior designers and developers, so companies get steady creative and web output without hiring.

Published by Tapflare · 2026-11-08 · website care plan · website maintenance plan · web development subscription · website support retainer · unlimited website development · flat rate website development · wordpress maintenance cost · wordpress care plan · website maintenance vs development retainer

Original article: https://tapflare.com/articles/website-care-plan-vs-web-development-subscription



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Executive Summary

A **website care plan** and a **web development subscription** are not two prices for the same product. A care plan buys upkeep: scheduled updates, backups, monitoring and an escalation route. A development subscription buys production capacity: hours or a request queue that can be pointed at new pages. This report compares them by running five identical, hypothetical requests through the published scopes of eight suppliers with sourced rows in Table 1 (plus others cited in the text), all retrieved on November 8, 2026. These are commissioning examples, not mystery-shopping results.

The pricing spread is wide and the baskets differ. **WP Buffs** lists four monthly tiers, **$89**, **$179**, **$239** and **$359** (wpbuffs.com). UnlimitedWP, which sells only to web and digital agencies, lists daily-hours WordPress development from **$747** per month (unlimitedwp.com), and Hey Reliable lists month-to-month retainers from **$2,995** per month (heyreliable.com). Twelve times the lowest WP Buffs fee is **$1,068** a year, and twelve times the lowest Hey Reliable fee is **$35,940**. Those figures are arithmetic, not equivalent service baskets, so they are not savings or rankings.

Scope language decides the outcome more than price does. WP Buffs counts adding a new landing page among its unlimited edits, yet excludes "building full pages to match an exact design" (wpbuffs.com). Clear Digital says retainer hours are not sized for "a new solution page, a microsite launch, or a site-wide redesign" (www.cleardigital.com). Both can be true of the same landing page, depending on whether the brief is a finished design. Custom integrations are separate almost everywhere: WP Tech Support lists API integration without guidance documentation as not included (wp-techsupport.com), and Clear Digital scopes API integrations separately (www.cleardigital.com).

"Unlimited" and "24/7" are also not interchangeable with response commitments. WP Tech Support states it does not offer "a formalized, legally binding SLA for all plans" (wp-techsupport.com), while Valet states weekday office hours (valet.io). Monitoring tools alert contacts but still need a person assigned to act (help.uptimerobot.com). WordPress documentation says to back up "always before an upgrade" (developer.wordpress.org), and that recovery depends on a backup made before the attempt (developer.wordpress.org).

The practical rule: a stable site with few changes needs a care plan or a single project. A site producing regular campaign pages needs production capacity. A site whose form or checkout is business-critical needs an explicit, written incident agreement, which neither a daily-hours subscription nor a bare edits plan implies. Tapflare, the publisher of this report, is a flat-rate design and development subscription and is relevant only to the second branch. Section "Quote-Request Sheet" lists the questions that turn unconfirmed cells into confirmed ones before any annual figure is computed.

Introduction and Background

Founders, SaaS marketing leads and agency operators who own a WordPress marketing site tend to meet the same fork: pay a monthly "care plan" fee, subscribe to a design and development service, hire a freelancer per task, or combine them. Supplier pages for "website maintenance plan", "website support retainer" and "unlimited website development" use overlapping language for different responsibilities. This report treats the choice as a scope question first and a price question second. It is not a broad web-development cost guide and not a tutorial for selling care plans.

The platform assumption matters. W3Techs measured WordPress at 39.4% of all websites as of November 8, 2026 (w3techs.com), and found that Elementor, a page builder, is used by 31.5% of WordPress sites (w3techs.com). A marketing site on WordPress therefore usually has three moving layers: core software, a plugin and theme stack, and page-builder content. Each layer produces recurring requests that different suppliers price differently. The WordPress.org plugin directory advertises "over 78,000 free plugins" (wordpress.org), which is part of why updates are a recurring task rather than a one-time event.

How the comparison works. The report uses five hypothetical requests (Hypothetical Example), each a plausible weekly or quarterly need for a marketing site:

- **Request 1:** update a plugin, with a documented recovery route if the update fails.
- **Request 2:** place client-supplied copy and images into an existing page.
- **Request 3:** design and implement a new campaign landing page from an approved brief.
- **Request 4:** investigate a broken lead form outside office hours.
- **Request 5:** implement a custom integration, for example sending form data to another system.

Every supplier cell in the tables below carries one of four labels: **Included** (the supplier's page says so), **Excluded** (the page says it is not covered), **Add-on or separate quote** (the page routes the work to a separate fee), or **Unconfirmed** (the page does not say). Unconfirmed is not a negative finding. Silence on a page is a question for the supplier, not an exclusion.

Publisher position. This report is published by Tapflare, a flat-rate monthly subscription for graphic design and website development run through a dedicated project manager. Tapflare is a direct provider of the second category discussed here (design and development capacity) and is not a maintenance or hosting provider. It appears as one row in Table 1 and in the decision section. Its own pricing and scope are not cited as evidence in this report; every cited source is an independent third-party page. Readers can review current plan details on Tapflare's pricing page.

Dates and currency. All provider pages were retrieved on November 8, 2026, and that is the retrieval date for each supplier statement unless noted. Prices are in US dollars unless stated, and promotional offers are excluded. Prices and plan contents change, so confirm them with the supplier before buying.

Four Purchased Responsibilities

Most confusion comes from one monthly fee covering several different obligations. The report separates four.

Care and Monitoring

Care is the upkeep layer: applying updates, keeping backups, watching for outages, and acting when something breaks. The WordPress project's own handbook sets the baseline: "Back up your database regularly, and always before an upgrade" (developer.wordpress.org), and a restorable backup needs both parts of the site, because "You need both to be able to fully restore a typical WordPress site" (developer.wordpress.org). The same handbook tells owners to learn how to back up and restore their own files (developer.wordpress.org), which is a documentation statement about the owner's role, not a statement about who is contractually responsible in a care plan. That allocation is exactly what a quote should settle.

Monitoring is a detection service. Pingdom's documentation describes alerts "sent to you whenever we detect a problem" (documentation.solarwinds.com), and UptimeRobot states that "each contact must be assigned to specific monitor(s) to receive notifications" (help.uptimerobot.com). A monitor does nothing until someone is assigned to receive and act on the alert, which is why "24/7 monitoring" and "24/7 fixing" are separate lines on a quote. Clear Digital's guide makes the same split, saying that "Proactive 24/7 monitoring is typically a distinct add-on" in its own retainer model (www.cleardigital.com). That is one agency's policy, not an industry definition.

Content Edits

Content edits move supplied material into existing templates. Clear Digital lists "copy edits, image swaps, page-level changes within existing templates" as in-scope retainer work (www.cleardigital.com). WP Buffs' FAQ defines the boundary with worked examples, including text emailed by the client replacing the current content on an About page. Accessibility is a small but real part of this job: WordPress documentation says to "describe the image for accessibility, or leave empty if the image is decorative" (wordpress.org), and W3C lists filenames or placeholder text as failed text alternatives (www.w3.org). A client who supplies images named like camera files is therefore creating a small task for whoever places them.

Net-New Design and Build

A new page designed from a brief is production work, not upkeep. Valet routes "website design, development and integration projects" to a separate Projects team rather than its monthly plan (valet.io), and tsquarecloud scopes "Large redesigns and new builds" as "separate fixed-fee projects" (tsquarecloud.com). Subscription suppliers sell capacity of this kind: Kimp, a design-led subscription, states its team will "allocate 2-2.5 hours each business day" to Graphics or Video requests (www.kimp.io), and UnlimitedWP lists "New Site Development" among the items included in all plans (unlimitedwp.com). A landing page also carries

performance and accessibility targets. Google's web.dev treats a page as passing Core Web Vitals when it meets the targets "at the 75th percentile" (web.dev), and WCAG 2.2 added 9 success criteria over WCAG 2.1 (www.w3.org), including a minimum pointer target of 24 by 24 CSS pixels (www.w3.org).

Custom Engineering

Custom engineering builds behavior that does not exist in a plugin. The WordPress REST API handbook notes that "Any programming language which can make HTTP requests and interpret JSON can use the REST API" (developer.wordpress.org), and that private content, internal users and metadata require authentication (developer.wordpress.org). An integration therefore involves credentials, a third-party system and ongoing breakage risk. WP Buffs routes this kind of work to hourly development rather than its unlimited edits, and WP Tech Support lists "Custom development (PHP, plugins, themes, etc.)" as not included in its plans (wp-techsupport.com).

Dated Provider Evidence

Table 1 below summarizes what each supplier's public page states for the five requests. It is an appendix of published scope as retrieved on November 8, 2026, not a test of how any supplier would handle a real job. Cells use the four labels defined above. Where a supplier lists no price, the cell says so.

Supplier and model	Listed price	1. Plugin update with recovery route	2. Place supplied copy and images	3. New landing page from approved brief	4. Broken form, outside office hours	5. Custom integration
WP Buffs (care plans)	$89, $179, $239, $359 per month, one site per plan	**Included:** weekly updates and cloud backups (4x daily) are listed on Maintain. Restore and testing terms: **Unconfirmed**	**Included** from Protect (edits to supplied content). On Maintain: **Unconfirmed**	**Unconfirmed.** Adding and formatting landing pages is included; graphic design and exact-design page builds are **Excluded**	**Unconfirmed.** 24/7 emergency support is listed, with no response time stated on the plans page	**Add-on or separate quote** (hourly custom development)
WP Buffs (one-off tasks)	$59 per task, up to one hour (wpbuffs.com)	**Included:** up to 10 plugins updated and tested on staging first (wpbuffs.com)	**Included:** edits to a single page or post (wpbuffs.com)	**Unconfirmed**	**Unconfirmed**	**Excluded:** the task does not include writing or editing code (wpbuffs.com)
Clear Digital (agency retainer)	No tier prices on the guide	**Unconfirmed**	**Included** within existing templates	**Add-on or separate quote:** new pages scoped separately	**Add-on or separate quote:** 24/7 monitoring is a separate layer	**Add-on or separate quote**

Supplier and model	Listed price	1. Plugin update with recovery route	2. Place supplied copy and images	3. New landing page from approved brief	4. Broken form, outside office hours	5. Custom integration
WP Tech Support (care plans)	"Get a quote" on the page	**Included:** incremental backup before ticket work	**Included** for a new page from supplied content (wp-techsupport.com)	**Unconfirmed**	**Unconfirmed:** response targets are not a legally binding SLA on all plans	**Excluded** from plans (custom quote)
SatelliteWP (care plans)	CAD $175, $350, $650 per month	**Included:** restore from latest backup if an update breaks the site	**Unconfirmed**	**Add-on or separate quote:** development is quoted first	**Unconfirmed**	**Add-on or separate quote**
Valet (maintenance plans)	None on the page	**Unconfirmed**	**Unconfirmed**	**Add-on or separate quote:** Projects team	**Unconfirmed:** the page states weekday office hours and does not describe after-hours handling	**Add-on or separate quote:** Projects team
UnlimitedWP (agency-only subscription)	$747, $1,497, $2,997 per month	**Unconfirmed:** the page says Dev plans can also help with regular maintenance (unlimitedwp.com); recovery duties not stated	**Unconfirmed:** a collapsed sample-task list on the page mentions content updates	**Unconfirmed:** "New Site Development" is listed on all plans; landing-page specifics not stated	**Unconfirmed**	**Unconfirmed:** a sample-task list mentions plugin customization; depth not stated
Hey Reliable (development retainer)	$2,995 and up per month	**Unconfirmed**	**Unconfirmed**	**Unconfirmed:** the page describes a plan tier that adds design to CMS and front-end work (heyreliable.com)	**Unconfirmed**	**Included:** REST API integrations listed on CMS Focus
Penji (design subscription)	$995 per month (Essentials)	**Unconfirmed**	**Unconfirmed**	**Included:** landing page design on all plans; front-end development listed on Dedicated Team only	**Unconfirmed**	**Unconfirmed**
Tapflare (publisher; design and development subscription)	See its own pricing page; not cited here	**Unconfirmed:** ask	**Unconfirmed:** ask	**Unconfirmed:** ask, since landing-page production is the use case this model is built for	**Unconfirmed:** a design subscription is not assumed to include incident response	**Unconfirmed:** ask

Three patterns appear. Care-plan suppliers tend to state inclusions for requests 1 and 2 and push requests 3 and 5 to a separate quote. Subscription suppliers state production capacity for requests 2 and 3 and are largely silent on requests 1 and 4. No supplier in this set states a response commitment for request 4 that applies to a marketing form specifically, so "Unconfirmed" dominates that column.

Prices and notes behind the WP Buffs rows come from two WP Buffs pages. The plans page lists Maintain as "For Standard Site Maintenance" at $89 per month, with Protect at $179, Perform at $239 and Custom at $359 (wpbuffs.com). Its edits FAQ lists "adding a new landing page, formatting landing pages, changing images or text" as included (wpbuffs.com), and "building full pages to match an exact design" as excluded (wpbuffs.com). The same FAQ sends custom development to hourly work. That wording is why request 3 is marked Unconfirmed: an approved brief might be a finished design (excluded) or a content outline for an existing template (included). The correct step is to send the supplier the actual brief and ask in writing which side it falls on.

Care Plan Models

The care-plan suppliers differ in how they describe response. WP Buffs states that its team is "global, working 24/7, 365 days a year, including nights and weekends" (wpbuffs.com) and that when "a critical error is detected, our team is notified immediately so we can respond" (wpbuffs.com). WP Tech Support publishes internal response targets but, as noted above, does not offer a binding SLA on all plans. Its Standard plan "includes up to 3 high-priority fixes per month for existing website issues" (wp-techsupport.com), which is a cap, not unlimited coverage. SatelliteWP's page says that if an update breaks a site, it can restore "to the most recent version available in your backups" (www.satellitewp.com), and that development is "done on a copy of your site" (www.satellitewp.com). Each is a different answer to the same question.

Design and Development Subscription Models

Subscription suppliers sell capacity in different units. Kimp, a design-led subscription, allocates daily hours per Graphics or Video subscription (www.kimp.io). Penji's Essentials plan works "on 2 at a time" (penji.co) and is "self-managed", meaning the client writes the briefs (penji.co). UnlimitedWP sells daily hours in bands such as "2-3 Hours Daily" and lists a "24-48 Hours Turn-around Time" (unlimitedwp.com). It "only work[s] with web and digital agencies" (unlimitedwp.com), so site owners cannot buy it directly. Hey Reliable describes its retainers as "typically focusing on one major initiative at a time — or multiple if capacity allows" (heyreliable.com), which affects whether a small urgent fix waits behind a larger build. ManyPixels, a design subscription, lists "Coding (HTML/CSS/JS)" among work it does not do (www.manypixels.co), a reminder that a "web design" subscription is not automatically a development subscription.

The Five-Request Comparison

Table 2 below compares the same five requests across three provider models rather than across named suppliers. Cells describe what each model typically means for the request and what to ask, using the evidence above. They are commissioning guidance, not claims about any single supplier.

Request (Hypothetical Example)	Care plan	Design and development subscription	Project or freelancer
1. Update a plugin with a documented recovery route	Usually the core use. Ask who takes the backup, who verifies it, whether updates run on staging first, and who restores.	Often silent. Capacity could cover it, but upkeep, backup and restore duties are rarely stated.	Fine for one update. A recovery route must be agreed in advance.
2. Place client-supplied copy and images	Often included on edit tiers, with an explicit boundary against writing copy or designing.	Typically a quick request. Check whether it consumes a daily allotment or a queue slot.	Overkill unless it is a single change.
3. Design and implement a new campaign landing page from an approved brief	Borderline. May be "adding a page" or may be excluded as an exact-design build.	The core use. Check the unit (hours, queue, tasks) and who handles hosting and publishing.	Reasonable for one page. Ask for a fixed fee and a handoff.
4. Investigate a broken form outside office hours	Only if the plan names after-hours response. "24/7" may mean monitoring, not repair.	Not assumed. Daily-hours models are usually staffed in working time.	Needs an explicit agreement; a freelancer is rarely on call by default.
5. Implement a custom integration	Usually a separate quote or hourly rate.	Possible if the plan covers custom code. Confirm integration depth and third-party costs.	The natural fit; scope and ownership of code must be written down.

Requests 1 and 4 are about responsibility over time, while requests 3 and 5 are about production. A single plan rarely covers both well, so a care plan and a production subscription can be complementary when a site is business-critical and also changes often.

Request 1: Plugin Update with a Recovery Route

WordPress's own plugin documentation says "Always make sure you have a current backup of your site before updating your plugins" (wordpress.org) and warns that a plugin not updated for the latest core release "may be incompatible, or its compatibility may be unknown" (wordpress.org). If a site breaks after an upgrade, the handbook's troubleshooting route is to deactivate non-default plugins and "Re-activate them one by one" (developer.wordpress.org). It also states that "without a backup of your entire site and your database, made prior to your upgrade attempt, a successful rollback is near impossible" (developer.wordpress.org). A theme vendor makes the same point to its own customers: UX Themes tells users to back up first and adds "This counts for any update!" (docs.uxthemes.com). The buyer's question is therefore specific: who makes that backup, where is it stored, who tests the restore, and is the cost inside the monthly fee?

Host-level backups are an alternative route, with different terms. WP Engine keeps "30 days of backups" and advises making "a fresh backup checkpoint before proceeding" (wpengine.com), while Kinsta's restore guide describes automatic backups "taken every 24 hours and stored for 14 days" (kinsta.com). A care plan that relies on host backups should say so, and the quote should confirm that a restore is a task the supplier performs.

Automatic updates change the picture only partly. WordPress added plugin auto-updates in version 5.5 (wordpress.org) as an opt-in for administrators (make.wordpress.org). Whether the supplier or the site owner turns them on is another quote question.

Request 2: Client-Supplied Copy and Images

This is the request most likely to be included in a care plan, and the one where wording matters least. Still, the boundary is real. WP Buffs' FAQ separates uploading supplied content from creating content, Clear Digital limits content updates to existing templates, and WP Tech Support separates building a page from supplied content from writing copy and finding images. The practical test is whether the client supplies a finished document with final images. If the supplier must source, write or design, the request leaves the edits category.

Request 3: New Campaign Landing Page from an Approved Brief

This is the request most likely to be mislabeled. In a care plan, the supplier may include adding a new landing page and still exclude exact-design builds. In a retainer model, Clear Digital says retainer hours are not sized for a new solution page. In a development subscription, the same job is the product. UnlimitedWP lists new site development on all plans, and Penji lists web and landing page design on all plans while showing front-end development only on its Dedicated Team plan (penji.co).

Questions to put in writing: Is the approved brief a visual design or a content outline? Does the plan unit (hours, queue slot, task) cover build and QA? Who publishes, and who owns the files? A landing page should also be checked against web performance targets: web.dev says a good Largest Contentful Paint "should occur within" a published threshold (web.dev), measured at the 75th percentile (web.dev).

Request 4: Broken Form Outside Office Hours

This is the hardest request to compare, because no public page in this set promises a specific after-hours resolution for a marketing form. What can be established is how forms fail. Gravity Forms documentation says "Gravity Forms does not handle emails directly" (docs.gravityforms.com), and that "Using third-party transactional email services or SMTP can offer greater reliability" (docs.gravityforms.com). WPForms recommends SMTP for authentication (wpforms.com). Contact Form 7's documentation warns that "you may lose important messages forever if your mail server has issues" unless a storage plugin such as Flamingo, which "saves all messages through contact forms into the database", is installed (contactform7.com). A broken form is therefore often a mail-delivery problem outside the form plugin, and the Gravity Forms documentation says that once WordPress has passed the email on, "the ball is in the sending server side" (docs.gravityforms.com).

So the contract question has three parts: who is told, who acts, and what "acts" means. Atlassian's service-desk documentation separates the time to respond from the time to resolve (support.atlassian.com) and shows that an SLA clock can pause while a team waits for information (support.atlassian.com). Google's SRE book defines an SLA as "an explicit or implicit contract with your users" (sre.google). Without such a definition, "24/7 support" may mean an acknowledgement, not a fix. For a form that feeds sales pipeline, ask whether submissions are stored independently of email.

Request 5: Custom Integration

Custom integration is the cleanest "separate quote" case. WordPress's HTTP API documentation notes that "Very often we need to make HTTP requests from our theme or plugin" (developer.wordpress.org), which is the typical mechanism for sending form data to another system. WP Tech Support excludes API integration without guidance documentation, Clear Digital scopes API integrations separately, and Hey Reliable lists REST API integrations in its CMS Focus plan. Because an integration touches credentials and a third party, the quote should state who owns the code, where it is documented, who maintains it after launch, and whether third-party fees are the client's. Deployments carry their own risk: Kinsta's documentation warns that a full database push overwrites live "comments, new content, purchases on ecommerce sites, sign-ups on membership sites, and forum posts" (kinsta.com), and advises pushing "during off-peak hours" (kinsta.com).

Data Analysis and Evidence

Three data points frame why recurring upkeep is a purchased responsibility and not an optional extra, and one calculation shows how to compare fees only after scope is settled.

Vulnerability volume. Patchstack's State of WordPress Security report counted 11,334 new vulnerabilities in the WordPress ecosystem in 2025 (patchstack.com), with 91% in plugins and 9% in themes (patchstack.com). Only 6 were in WordPress core (patchstack.com). It also reports that 46% of vulnerabilities "did not receive a fix from the developer in time for public disclosure" (patchstack.com), and a weighted median time to first exploit of 5 hours for heavily targeted vulnerabilities (patchstack.com). The relevance to a buyer: plugin updates are the dominant maintenance task, and some risk arrives faster than a weekly schedule. The report is a security vendor's own analysis, so it describes the ecosystem and does not measure any care-plan supplier.

Platform concentration. W3Techs reports 39.4% of all websites on WordPress (w3techs.com) and 31.5% of those using Elementor (w3techs.com). A buyer with an Elementor-based site should ask whether a supplier edits in that builder.

Known base fees. *Table 3* below converts listed monthly fees to annual arithmetic (12 times the monthly fee). It is an arithmetic illustration of month-to-month listings. It is not a quote, not an equivalent basket and not a ranking. Hey Reliable describes its plans as month-to-month (heyreliable.com), and SatelliteWP states that subscriptions are available "on a monthly or annual basis" (www.satellitewp.com), so annual discounts are not assumed. SatelliteWP's figures are in Canadian dollars (www.satellitewp.com).

Supplier and plan	Listed monthly fee	12 x monthly fee	What the figure leaves out
WP Buffs Maintain	$89	$1,068	Edits tier, project work, hosting, plugin licenses
WP Buffs Protect	$179	$2,148	Exact-design builds, custom code
WP Buffs Perform	$239	$2,868	Custom development
WP Buffs Custom	$359	$4,308	Hourly development rate not stated on plans page

Supplier and plan	Listed monthly fee	12 x monthly fee	What the figure leaves out
SatelliteWP Essential, Growth, Professional	CAD $175, $350, $650	CAD $2,100, $4,200, $7,800	Development quoted separately
Penji Essentials (penji.co)	$995	$11,940	Front-end development is listed on Dedicated Team only
Penji Dedicated Team (penji.co)	$4,500	$54,000	Hosting, maintenance not assumed
UnlimitedWP Starter, Pro, Business	$747, $1,497, $2,997	$8,964, $17,964, $35,964	Agency-only; independent Care add-ons are listed separately
Hey Reliable Front-End Focus	$2,995	$35,940	Higher tiers cost more; hosting not assumed
Tapflare	Not cited here	Not computed	See publisher's pricing page

The table leaves several cells deliberately open. WP Buffs does not state a rate for custom development on its plans page, and the report does not invent one. The honest comparable total is therefore:

Comparable annual total = required plans + confirmed project or add-on fees + hosting, plugins and tools + internal coordination cost.

Only the first term is knowable from public pages. The other three are unknowns until the quote sheet below is answered. Two suppliers can differ by an order of magnitude in monthly fee and still be the right choice for different baskets: a $1,068 annual care plan cannot produce a campaign landing page, and a $35,940 annual retainer is a poor way to buy weekly plugin updates.

Hours and rollover change the arithmetic further. Clear Digital states that "Meetings and communications count against your hours" (www.cleardigital.com), so an allotment is not all production time. Daily hours are not translated into pages delivered here, because that depends on page complexity.

Quote-Request Sheet

Send each supplier the same sheet. Answers turn "Unconfirmed" cells into confirmed ones. Copy the five requests verbatim, attach the actual landing-page brief, and ask for written replies.

- **Request examples:** Which of the five requests are included, excluded or quoted separately? Please answer for the specific brief attached for request 3.
- **Business hours:** What hours and time zone apply? Valet's page, for example, states weekday office hours (valet.io), so confirm whether anything applies outside them.
- **Incident response:** For request 4, what is the response time and what is the resolution commitment? Is it contractual or a target?
- **Monitoring:** What is monitored (uptime, forms, checkout)? Who receives alerts, and who acts on them?
- **Backups and restores:** Where are backups stored, how often, and who performs and tests a restore? Does the supplier take a backup before each update?
- **Deployment approval:** Are changes tested on staging, who approves a release, and are changes pushed in off-peak hours?

- **Reporting:** What is reported weekly or monthly, and to whom?
- **Capacity and hours:** Is the unit a daily allotment, a request queue or a task? Do meetings count? Is there rollover?
- **Third-party fees:** Who pays for hosting, premium plugins, form services and mail-delivery services?
- **Work outside scope:** What is the hourly or project rate for out-of-scope work, and how is approval requested?
- **Ownership and handoff:** Who owns the code, files and documentation, and in what format are they handed over?
- **Site count and complexity:** Does one plan cover one site only? Do page-builder, membership or e-commerce features move the site to a higher tier?
- **Cancellation:** What are the terms for pause, cancel and refund of unused time?

Pause, refund and renewal terms vary: Kimp's page, for example, describes a pause feature for "a flat monthly fee of $19.95" (www.kimp.io). Ask rather than assume.

Decision Branches

The branches below assume an existing WordPress marketing site and an owner who wants fewer surprises, not the cheapest line item.

Branch A: stable, low-change site. Updates, backups and an occasional edit dominate. A care plan is the proportionate purchase, and the check is whether edits are included, which backup and restore duties the supplier takes, and what a one-off project costs. For a single change, such as one page rebuild, a freelancer or a one-off task may be cheaper than any plan. WP Buffs' one-off page lists a task limited to "Does not include writing/editing code" (wpbuffs.com); confirm the equivalent limit with any alternative.

Branch B: regular campaign-page production. If the site ships several pages or components each month, the constraint is production capacity, not upkeep. A design and development subscription, a retainer or a project pipeline fits better than a care plan. Tapflare describes itself as a flat-rate subscription for graphic design and website development run through a dedicated project manager, so it is one option in this branch; its scope is not independently verified here. It is not presented as a maintenance, hosting or incident-response provider, and it is not the right fit for a single one-off job; the sheet above applies to it as to any other supplier. Many buyers in this branch still need a care plan or host-level backups for upkeep.

Branch C: business-critical incident coverage. If a broken form or checkout costs revenue within hours, a daily-hours subscription is not an incident plan. Look for a specialist maintenance provider that names after-hours response, alert routing and restore duties in writing, such as the 24/7 emergency model WP Buffs describes (wpbuffs.com), and obtain an explicit agreement. A target is not an SLA, and some care-plan suppliers say so on their own pages. A subscription for production can sit beside it.

Implications and Future Directions

Three implications follow for buyers and suppliers.

Scope language will matter more than plan names. Page copy such as "unlimited edits", "24/7" and "design and development" compresses several responsibilities into one phrase. Because suppliers define the edges differently, buyers who compare by request, as above, will get fewer billing disputes than buyers who compare by tier. Suppliers who publish worked examples, as WP Buffs does in its FAQ, make their boundaries easier to check.

Recovery routes will be treated as part of the product. WordPress guidance puts backups before upgrades and ties rollback to a prior backup (developer.wordpress.org). A supplier that can show where backups live, who tests them and how a restore is requested offers something more concrete than a monthly report.

Accessibility and performance targets will enter scopes. WCAG 2.2 adds criteria that affect landing pages, including target size (www.w3.org) and error identification in forms (www.w3.org). Core Web Vitals add thresholds measured at the 75th percentile (web.dev). Buyers can ask whether a landing-page build includes a check against these targets, and whether that check is in the daily allotment.

Limits of this analysis. The report reads published pages. It did not obtain quotes, test response times or interview suppliers, and makes no demand or search-trend claims. Plan contents change, so re-verify every figure.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What does a website care plan include?

It varies by supplier. Typical published inclusions are scheduled updates, backups, uptime monitoring and reporting. WP Fix It, for example, lists "daily updates, incremental backups, one-click restore, downtime monitoring, and monthly reporting" (www.wpfixit.com). Content edits, new pages and custom development are often tier-dependent or separate.

How much does a website care plan cost per month?

Listed prices in this set run from $89 to $359 per month for WP Buffs and CAD $175 to $650 for SatelliteWP, while other suppliers publish no price. Price ranges are not comparable across suppliers without a confirmed scope.

Is a website care plan worth it?

It is worth it when upkeep is the main recurring need and the plan states who handles backups, restores and out-of-hours issues. It is not a substitute for production capacity: a care plan rarely covers a designed landing page. WordPress documentation's emphasis on backups before upgrades is the clearest argument for it (developer.wordpress.org).

What is the difference between website maintenance and a web development retainer?

Maintenance keeps an existing site updated, backed up and monitored. A development retainer buys build capacity. Clear Digital's guide, one agency's view, scopes new pages and features separately from support hours. Valet takes a similar route, sending design and integration to a separate team (valet.io).

What is an unlimited website development subscription?

It is usually a flat monthly fee for a queue or a daily-hours allotment, not unlimited output. Penji works on two projects at a time, Kimp allocates daily hours (www.kimp.io), and Hey Reliable typically focuses on one major initiative at a time, or more if capacity allows. "Unlimited" refers to requests queued, not work completed.

What is a flat-rate website development subscription?

It is a fixed monthly fee for a defined capacity. Check the unit, the turnaround and whether hosting, maintenance and third-party fees are included. UnlimitedWP states its typical turnaround is 24 to 48 hours and depends on task type.

Can one plan cover both upkeep and new pages?

Sometimes. WP Buffs includes adding landing pages in its edits tier while excluding exact-design builds. A single change may suit a freelancer or a one-off project. Anything requiring 24/7 operational support needs an explicit written agreement.

Do I still need backups if the host provides them?

Ask who tests them and who restores. WP Engine keeps 30 days of backups (wpengine.com) and Kinsta takes automatic backups every 24 hours (kinsta.com), but WordPress documentation advises keeping several recent backups in different places "to stay safe from data loss" (developer.wordpress.org) and checking automated backups manually (developer.wordpress.org).

Conclusion

A care plan and a web development subscription answer different questions. The first asks who keeps the site healthy and who acts when it breaks. The second asks how much new design and build work can be produced each month. Comparing them by monthly fee or by the word "unlimited" hides this, and the five-request method brings it back into view. Requests 1 and 2 test upkeep and content handling. Request 3 tests production. Request 4 tests incident responsibility. Request 5 tests engineering.

The evidence in this report is the published scope of eight suppliers with sourced rows in Table 1, plus the other suppliers cited in the text, retrieved on November 8, 2026. It shows clear boundaries for custom work, frequent separation of net-new pages from retainers, and wide variation in what "24/7" means. It does not show how any supplier would handle a real job, and it contains no savings claim. The right next step is the quote-request sheet, answered in writing, with the actual landing-page brief attached.

Once the required scope is confirmed, the annual comparison is simple: required plans, plus confirmed project fees, plus hosting and tools, plus internal coordination. Until then, an unconfirmed cell is a question, not a verdict. Buyers who need design and development capacity can review Tapflare's current plans; buyers who need operational incident coverage should ask specialist maintenance providers for it in writing.

Source links

Links cited in this article, in order of first appearance. Full addresses are provided for readers using extracted text.

1. https://wpbuffs.com/plans
2. https://unlimitedwp.com/pricing
3. https://heyreliable.com/web-development-retainer
4. https://www.cleardigital.com/insights/guide/b2b-website-support-retainer-what-it-includes
5. https://wp-techsupport.com/wordpress-care-plans
6. https://valet.io/services/maintenance-management-plans
7. https://help.uptimerobot.com/en/articles/11360978-understanding-notification-channels-in-uptimerobot
8. https://developer.wordpress.org/advanced-administration/security/backup
9. https://developer.wordpress.org/advanced-administration/upgrade/upgrading
10. https://w3techs.com/technologies/details/cm-wordpress
11. https://wordpress.org/plugins
12. https://documentation.solarwinds.com/en/success_center/pingdom/content/gsg/set-up-alerting.htm
13. https://wordpress.org/documentation/article/image-block
14. https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/Understanding/non-text-content.html
15. https://tsquarecloud.com/wordpress-care-plans
16. https://www.kimp.io/pricing
17. https://web.dev/articles/vitals?hl=en
18. https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/new-in-22
19. https://developer.wordpress.org/rest-api
20. https://wpbuffs.com/one-off-jobs
21. https://wpbuffs.com/emergency
22. https://www.satellitewp.com/en/plans
23. https://penji.co/pricing
24. https://www.manypixels.co/scope-of-services
25. https://wordpress.org/documentation/article/manage-plugins
26. https://docs.uxthemes.com/article/77-how-can-i-update-the-theme
27. https://wpengine.com/support/restore
28. https://kinsta.com/knowledgebase/restore-wordpress-site
29. https://make.wordpress.org/core/2020/05/02/merge-announcement-plugins-themes-auto-updates
30. https://docs.gravityforms.com/troubleshooting-notifications
31. https://wpforms.com/docs/troubleshooting-email-notifications
32. https://contactform7.com/save-submitted-messages-with-flamingo
33. https://support.atlassian.com/jira-service-management-cloud/docs/what-are-slas-and-how-do-i-view-them-in-my-service-project
34. https://sre.google/sre-book/service-level-objectives
35. https://developer.wordpress.org/apis/making-http-requests
36. https://kinsta.com/docs/wordpress-hosting/wordpress-push-environments

37. https://patchstack.com/whitepaper/state-of-wordpress-security-in-2026
38. https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG22
39. https://www.wpfixit.com/comprehensive-wordpress-care-plans

THE PUBLISHER

About Tapflare

Tapflare gives companies an on-demand design and web team for a flat monthly fee.

How it works

Each subscriber has a dedicated project manager who learns the brand, assigns every request to a senior specialist in that kind of work, and reviews the result before it is delivered. Requests are submitted and discussed in the Tapflare portal, each plan includes a daily allotment of design or development time, and the client keeps full ownership of the export and source files.

What it covers

Graphic design, custom illustration, presentation design, logos and brand guides, video editing and motion graphics, website and mobile-app mockups, and website development, from design mockups to HTML, to drag-and-drop builders or custom code.

What it is not

Tapflare is not a marketing agency, a media-buying, SEO or copywriting service, a software product or a freelance marketplace. Where a reader needs one of those, the honest answer is to say so.

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