



Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group Newsletter October 2021

Update on recent developments

ERSCAG met with James Murray MP and attended a meeting of the Health and Well Being Board (6 October). We have been offered meetings in November with the Council Leader and other Councillors to pursue ERSCAG correspondence on the financing of care, staffing levels, the payment of the London Living Wage, day-care arrangements etc.

In addition to the submission made to the parliamentary debate on the Health & Care Bill and our concerns about the “discharge to assess” option, ERSCAG made oral and written submissions (29 September) to an enquiry by the Equality and Human Rights Commission about social care complaints. Both papers are available on request.

ERSCAG is also meeting soon with Ealing Healthwatch about the extent to which its consultation processes reach all those who need to be involved. If any readers have any experiences – good or bad – to share about their interaction with Healthwatch, please let us know, or contact them direct on www.healthwatchealing.org.uk or 020 3886 0830.

Campaigns – current or upcoming

Act4Inclusion (formerly Reclaim Social Care) is officially launched with discussions on “Choice, Control and Independence” on 28 October 2021 (7-9pm). Contact ERSCAG if you want a link to the virtual launch or subsequent recording.

To influence the Chancellor’s budget this week, Age UK has been running a letter writing campaign: a family carer spoke of her 92 year old mother in a care home where she had had four showers in four years and, with covid, all the residents have been kept in their bedrooms for 16 months! **STOP PRESS:** The day after the budget, Age UK wrote “*Over 57,000 of us asked the Chancellor to deliver substantial funding to councils to pay for social care.....£4.8 billion to local government over the next 3 years was announced in the Budget. This is the biggest core grant to local government in over a decade... Sadly this money is not everything that we asked for. The grant is not ring-fenced for social care and I am concerned that it will be stretched thinly to fund care as well as all the other council services*”.

Social Care Future (new website – www.socialcarefuture.org.uk) also worked with a number of other national bodies to lobby the government to use the budget to promote a positive vision of social care - see [here](#). Social Care Future is currently engaged in a detailed evidence review to be co-authored and co-designed by people with lived experience of adult social care. See a [video link here](#) which encourages people with lived experience to register their interest in the project via a [SURVEY link \(deadline 14 November\)](#).

Several other meetings are planned in coming weeks between campaigners for scrapping social care charges and for a National Care Support and Independent Living Service (NaCSILS) and politicians such as Liz Kendall (Shadow Minister for Social Care), members of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Adult Social Care, and Baroness Winchester (the Liberal Democrat Disability Spokesperson).

The Ealing Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition is holding a People's Budget conference at 3pm on Saturday 6th November at Acton Hill Church, Woodlands Avenue, W3 9BU. The objective is "to set an alternative local authority budget for 2022/23 concentrating on services that people need and using examples of measures some local Councils have already tried". Social care will surely figure – for more info contact ealingtusc@gmail.com

Information and latest developments nationally

Covid & Vaccinations:

- <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/oct/02/covid-unvaccinated-care-workers-should-get-another-job-says-javid>
- Experts say that Britain is suffering from a higher case rate than the rest of Europe, see [POLITICO colleague Ashleigh Furlong](#)

Disability:

- See [UK Disability History Month – 18 November – 20 December](#)
- Reclaim Our Futures Alliance (ROFA) (www.rofa.org.uk) is coordinating submissions for the UN's examination of the UK government's compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and their deadline is 5pm on 22 November – see [The UN is preparing to investigate the UK government again - The Canary](#)

Funding: further to the extensive coverage last month of the "Health & Social Care Levy" -

- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/oct/20/tories-local-services-rishi-sunak-levelling-up-funding-cuts> which draws on research by the Institute for Fiscal Studies claiming that the government's social care policies will cost [£5bn a year long-term](#) – almost 3x times the funding that has been allocated for the next 3 years.
- <https://blog.ons.gov.uk/2021/10/15/how-many-people-fund-their-own-care/> A piece by the Office of National Statistics about self-funding statistics
- A Homecare Association report concludes that 'Homecare costs outstrip funding from councils' <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-59008554>. The report, based on formal Freedom of Information requests, shows that £18.45 is the average UK hourly rate, Ealing pays only £15 and the true minimum cost is £21.43 per hour.

Government initiatives:

- Gillian Keegan became the new Minister of State for Care & Mental Health in the September government re-shuffle.
- Government announced (24 September) a new [Celebrating Homecare Day](#) and the Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care issued a [special video message](#). She also encouraged people to nominate care workers for the [Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care Awards](#).

Inquiry: Pressure continues for an official public inquiry into covid (due next year)

- <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2021-05-10/revealed-thousands-of-pandemic-deaths-in-home-care> Ealing reported more than twice as many deaths in care-homes over the period of the pandemic than the same period in 2019.

- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/07/private-hospitals-treated-eight-covid-patients-a-day-during-pandemic-says-report>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/oct/14/covid-poor-people-uk-government-tories-died-in-thousands>

Reports

- In September, the All Party Parliamentary Group on Adult Social Care issued a report on its vision for the future www.adultsocialcareappg.com/newsandupdates/appg-launches-report-outlining-its-vision-for-social-care-1
- On 11 October, two parliamentary committees (Health & Social Care and Science & Technology) issued a highly critical report about government handling of the pandemic – see [Coronavirus: lessons learned to date report published - Committees - UK Parliament](#). See also Keep Our NHS Public which carried out its own public enquiry earlier this year and which commented critically on the report of the two committees - <https://keepournhspublic.com/commons-covid-report/>
- [ASC Review 2020-21 - vF.pdf](#) An annual review of complaints by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman notes in its introduction: *“The stark disconnect, between need and delivery, has never been more clearly manifest in our casework. Last year we found fault in a staggering 72% of the care complaints we investigated. This is an increase on the previous year. It is also higher than we see across local government as a whole. Most worryingly, it continues a relentless rise over the last decade in the proportion of complaints where we find injustice to care users and their families.”*
- Radio 4 carried two social care programmes: “Briefing Room” on <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0010fbh> and “In Touch” specifically relating to the blind and partially sighted <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m0010pwd>
- The Women’s Budget Group commented (27 October): *“The Budget speech devoted more time and detail to alcohol duty than to policies on care, housing, climate and violence against women, all of which are more important to women than saving a few pence on a bottle of prosecco. There was great focus on physical infrastructure and very little on the social infrastructure that we all need, like care.”*
- A paper on *“The value of investing in social care: what are the benefits of further funding for reform to adult social care in England?”* was issued in October by the Health Foundation, the Kings Fund and the Nuffield Trust [social-care-briefing-final.pdf](#)
- For a short video on the Care Act, see: https://www.scie.org.uk/care-act-2014/video.asp?utm_campaign=12676857_SCIELine%2022%20September&utm_medium=email&utm_source=twitter

Staffing:

- [Social care expert advisory group appointed](#). The Migration Advisory Committee has appointed 4 experts to advise its adult social care commission on staffing levels.
- [Multi-million pound fund to boost adult social care workforce](#)
- CASWO! - Care and Support Workers Organise – are campaigning nationally to raise the profile of the dismal terms and conditions of health and social care workers whilst advocating for the radical transformation in the provision of social care - **Read more** - for article dated 6 October about latest activities.

Sources of official advice/help

Check out the current official guidance about covid at www.gov.uk/coronavirus. The Department of Health & Social Care also issues regular updates about adult social care: to join their mailing list - news@dhsc-mail.co.uk. A new government Youtube service has been introduced - see [Subscribe to the Adult Social Care YouTube channel](#)

Ealing Council also provides local guidance – see www.ealing.gov.uk/coronavirus and/or www.ealingtogether.org. On the Council's website there is also a new [vital help and support section](#). For info about Direct Payments, see <http://www.ealingdirectpaymentsguide.co.uk>. Specialist independent advice on charging, assessments etc. is available from the Ealing Advice Service (www.ealingadvice.org) and legal advice can be reached via the Ealing Law Centre on 0208 579 4598 or info@ealinglaw.org.uk

For online bookings of the booster (for frontline care workers and others who received their vaccination more than six months ago), see [book their booster appointment through the National Booking Service online](#), by phoning 119, or visiting a walk-in centre. If you fall into the 'clinically extremely vulnerable' category because you are immuno-compromised, it has been suggested that you may want to check with your GP for advice about a 3rd vaccination, see: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanrhe/article/PIIS2665-9913\(21\)00313-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanrhe/article/PIIS2665-9913(21)00313-1/fulltext)

Social care over the longer term

The long-awaited White Paper on social care reform has come in for renewed speculation - see, for example, The Guardian (10 October) <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/oct/10/sajid-javid-radical-plan-merge-social-care-health-england-nhs-white-paper-reform>

Whilst the Prime Minister has insisted that he has long had a plan for social care, his Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) newsletter (8 October) suggests that pursuant to the "Build Back Better" paper of September 2021, *"an intense period of engagement has now begun, as the Government worksto develop a White Paper on social care reform."* (our italics). Moreover, their newsletter of 15 October excitedly talks of an 'extensive' consultation process: *"The extensive engagement programme continued apace this week as DHSC officials met with a range of social care organisations in a new Health and Wellbeing Alliance Social Care subgroup. Made up of a wide range of voluntary and charitable organisations, the group discussed the vision for social care and how to best engage directly with their members. DHSC is also working with system leaders, voluntary organisations and charities representing people with lived experience to discuss how system-wide social care reform can best address & support care users who are working age..... the Government will work with individuals and organisations from across the care sector to co-produce a White Paper on reform to be published later this year."* ERSCAG awaits developments.

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For more information, or copies of any of the ERSCAG papers mentioned here, can be requested from Secretary (maggiibeirne@googlemail.com) or erscaginfo@gmail.com