



Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group Newsletter
Summer Issue 2022

Update on recent developments

Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group (ERSCAG) formally launches its website in September– www.erscag.org.uk – please check it out. The website presents our work but also directs people to lots of additional resources: contact details of national and local groups working on social care, an extensive bibliography of reports and documentation, and easy access to ERSCAG’s past newsletters and submissions.

Two recent submissions from ERSCAG appear on the website. One paper (July 2022) was addressed to the Fabian Society which has been asked by the Labour Party to “develop a roadmap towards a national care service for England”. Our paper brings together ERSCAG concerns about long and short term measures that must be taken to ‘fix’ social care. Hopefully, the Fabian study will inform Labour Party policy going into the next election so, if you want to make a submission write to gensec@fabians.org.uk, or see on for National Pensioners Convention entry.

The June ERSCAG newsletter brought together some worrying statistics about people concerned about their increasing utility and other costs and, at the request of supporters, we have now produced a Cost of Living: Savings Tips (August 2022). This brings together a range of practical ideas provided in media coverage, and details of local and national organisations which can help (on debt, benefits, energy/food/fuel, and general support). We drew extensively on material provided by the Council [Coping with the rising cost of living | Coping with the rising cost of living | Ealing Council](#) and Ealing Advice Service which has produced an “At a glance guide to cost of living support 2022” – see www.ealingadvice.org; or tel: 02085798429. We are also planning to produce audio visual resources outlining the practical implications of cost-of-living hikes for older and disabled people.

The parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights issued a report on 13 July entitled: “Protecting Human Rights in care settings”. Several ERSCAG concerns (about training, complaints handling, effective accountability) were endorsed in the final report, see: <https://www.bih.org.uk/news/jchr-protecting-human-rights-care>

Locally, the consultation on the all-age Learning Disability Review is expected to be discussed at Ealing Council level in the near future. This strategy will cover day care centres, work placements, post- school/college courses, short breaks for service users and carers, supported housing, advocacy and welfare rights advice. Questions will arise about the Council’s plans to support and finance living and working with assistance in local community, as opposed to residential care (possibly out of Borough), and - to what extent - any financial support will be provided directly or funded via grants or contracts to the local voluntary and private sector.

Campaigns – current or upcoming

NaCSILS - the campaign for a National Care Support and Independent Living Service is planning to lobby the Autumn party political conferences.

A national lobby of parliament entitled “Time for Action on Social Care” was organised on 19 July. Given it was the hottest day of the year (so far), it was agreed to make it a virtual meeting!

Disabled activists are writing to their MPs asking them to have OFGEM, the energy regulator, ensure that: (a) utility companies are aware of, and support, disabled customers who use Pre-Payment Meters providing more regulation, so that users have the same level of protection as disabled people on standard meters; (b) energy companies should update resources on best tariffs for households with disabled members (given higher energy usage) and collectively move towards the introduction of social tariffs; (c) all energy companies should train staff in dealing with, understanding, and supporting disabled customers, inc. the use of accessible communications; and (d) The industry should engage with organisations of disabled people immediately to demonstrate a willingness to listen.

The passage of the Health and Care Act 2022 has led, amongst other changes to the NHS, to private companies sitting on newly created local and regional boards. We own it campaigners (www.weownit.org.uk) report that ever greater privatisation has led to 11 local NHS chairs pledging that private companies will not have a seat on their boards, and another 12 local NHS chairs confirmed that they agree with the spirit of the pledge. Our local ICS chair in North West London does not seem to have made the pledge yet - see '[Local wins so far](#)'.

The National Pensioners Convention issued a blog about the Fabian study (see earlier) and reports that “*The NPC will be responding to the call for evidence and we are seeking your views, evidence and proposals for reform (whether you are from an organisation, an NPC region, an interested individual, a carer, someone receiving care, as an interested individual).....please send your thoughts to the NPC by 2nd September (info@npcuk.org or by post to NPC, Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont Street, London, WC1N 1AB)*” or directly to the Fabians.

Latest developments nationally

Cost of living crisis

- Lots of media (press/TV and radio) coverage, some of which was drawn upon by ERSCAG for its Cost of Living paper (see: www.erscag.org.uk)
- <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/aug/11/more-than-100000-people-join-dont-pay-uk-to-protest-against-price-rises> Please note however that many charities and organisations are advising strongly against refusing to pay (since it could push people into (more) debt) and urge people instead to seek urgent advice <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-62435432>

Covid 19

- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/28/no-masks-no-free-tests-low-sick-pay-the-government-is-back-in-covid-denial> written by Frances Ryan, author of “Crippled: Austerity and the demonization of disabled people”.

- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jul/05/pretending-covid-over-uk-government-virus-risk-public-health-measures>
- [Ealing Hospital Makes Masks Compulsory Again](#), blog dated 14 July 2022
- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/jul/24/uk-private-care-providers-profit-rise-covid-report>

Legislation/litigation/ombudsman complaints

- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/jun/26/essential-services-websites-in-uk-should-be-accessible-to-all>
- [Health and Care Act 2022: combined impact assessments](#)
- [Local Government Ombudsman Admonishes Ealing Council](#)

Reports/reporting/events

- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/jun/29/nhs-privatisation-drive-linked-to-rise-in-avoidable-deaths-study-suggests>
- Briefing issued in June by the Women’s Budget Group - [The Income Crisis: a Gendered Analysis](#) or see website www.wbg.org.uk
- Addressing the invisibility of women and girls with disabilities – Human Rights Comments: from Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner (www.coe.int)
- Adam Kay (comic and author of “*This is going to hurt: secret diaries of a junior doctor*”), spoke at a local event on 26 July: see www.ealingsaveournhs.org.uk
- [human rights are at risk in care settings](#) Relatives and Residents Association (www.relres.org) comment on JCHR report (see earlier entry)

Staffing

- Ealing Council announces “*Increasing wages for care workers is a commitment the council has made for delivery over the next four years.....In Ealing we are incredibly proud of our carers who provide crucial support to the most vulnerable residents in the borough, and the council is investing to increase their wages.*” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWpWcO3a-ho>
- Think Local, Act Personal have posted materials on the topic of - The Forgotten Workforce-Recruiting and Retaining Personal Assistants – see [Weblink](#) for summarised survey findings. See also Sian Vasey Best Practice Guide on ERSCAG website on the same topic.
- Citizens UK report that they will be holding ‘house meetings’ in Ealing soon to hear from care workers and Personal Assistants about their work experiences to help them shape their LLW campaign.
- [exceptional and transformational leadership development opportunity](#) – a new leadership programme launched by the Department of Health and Social Care for nurses from black and ethnic minority backgrounds working in social care.

Your Help Needed

As part of the NHS re-organisation, there is to be a new online NHS North West London Residents Forum: “*The forum is there to guide and oversee our approach to working with local people and involving them in our work. The forum will meet quarterly, chaired by a local resident.*” Future newsletters will provide an update/contact details.

Sources of official advice/help

Regular information is available from a variety of government websites: see, for example, the Office of National Statistics website (www.ons.gov.uk) or the generic government website (www.gov.uk). More recently the following may be of interest:

- [Health and wellbeing boards: draft guidance for engagement](#) This draft guidance for engagement sets out the role of Health and Wellbeing boards following publication of the Health and Care Act 2022.
- [Down Syndrome Act 2022 guidance: call for evidence](#): Government is seeking views on what should be included within the Down Syndrome Act guidance.
- [NHS continuing healthcare and NHS-funded nursing care: public information leaflet](#) Translations now available in Bengali, Gujarati, Mandarin, Polish, Punjabi and Urdu.
- An article in 'Around Ealing' (summer issue) suggests that "*if you would like to find out if your home is eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant, contact Council's social services*" on 020 8825 8000.
- In response to the current heatwaves, government has issued relevant factsheets [for carers and managers in residential care homes](#), as well as a version [for health and social care professionals](#). Ealing Council has also issued heatwave guidance: [Keep your cool in the heatwave](#).

Social care over the longer term

The national Covid-19 Inquiry has finalised its Terms of Reference and is already underway. ERSCAG was pleased to see that the inquiry had taken on board some of the concerns raised in our comments on the draft text. We made submissions to Ealing Council on "Review of Covid Learning" (August 2020) and an "Updated Review of Covid Learning" (July 2021) and will submit these to the national inquiry in due course. There will be an understandable focus on health, and government's response to the virus by way of vaccinations etc., but there are also some key lessons to be learned about the country's handling of social care at a time of a major public health emergency.

Little appears to have been said about social care in the current campaign for the Conservative Party leadership, but hopefully the party political conferences will provide an opportunity to move this issue up the political agenda? KONP (Keep Our NHS Public) marked the 5 July birthday of the health service by reminding everyone of the founding principles set out in the original leaflet. To mark the launch of the NHS, every household read that: "*Everyone - rich or poor, man, woman or child can use it or any part of it. There are no charges, except for a few special items. There are no insurance qualifications. But this is not a charity. You are all paying for it, mainly as taxpayers, and it will relieve your money worries in times of illness.*" This is our hope for the future of social care, but we have a long way to go.....

[Check out our website - www.erscag.org.uk](http://www.erscag.org.uk)

Follow Us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) at [Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action](#) and join our Facebook group [Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group](#).

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