



Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group Newsletter November 2022

Update on latest activities

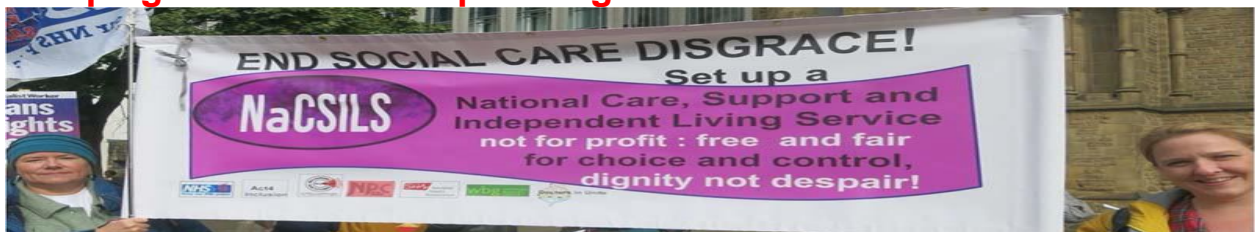
ERSCAG submitted a paper to the **National Covid 19 Inquiry** highlighting some of the learning from our experiences in Ealing. We emphasised that decision making improved once it moved closer to the people affected, but that this poses resource issues for local authorities in the longer term. Councillors, staff, local MPs, the London Mayor's office, & the Assembly were sent copies. Dr Onkar Sahota, Chair & Assembly Member for Ealing & Hillingdon, replied: *"It is important that all the 32 boroughs in London share and aggregate their learning and I will raise this with our Public Health Unit at City Hall to see how this can be best achieved."*

Although ERSCAG, and its Direct Payment User Group, do not take on **individual casework**, we have intervened successfully in support of a few people. For those unhappy about the care provided by the NHS, the relevant complaints mechanism can be found at: [Patient feedback and complaints :: North West London ICS \(nwlondonics.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nwlondonics.nhs.uk/patient-feedback-and-complaints)

ERSCAG continues to monitor meetings of the Health and Well Being Board, the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel, and various consultation events, such as the recent Ealing Health and Care Residents Forum. As appropriate, we have raised questions of interest to social care users, for example – the operation of the London Living Wage, disabled facilities grants, cost-of-living measures etc.

We stay alert to local concerns – for example, the most recent quarterly monitoring form produced for the Council by Ealing Advice Service (www.ealingadvice.org) reported on the inquiries received and outcomes secured for their clients. Its July-September issue had very positive statistics, with 86% of clients saying that their situation had improved following EAS involvement; 33% had an increase in benefits; and 77% reported greater confidence in future raising their concerns with officials directly. Some £719,098 of benefits awards, one-off payments, successful appeals and debt write-offs were secured. On the worrying side, almost twice as many clients accessed the service this summer as did in 2019; the waiting list of people wanting to access the service has increased; and though benefit enquiries (particularly disability benefits and entitlement checks) remain the most prevalent advice areas, inquiries about homelessness and eviction issues have also increased.

Campaigns – current or upcoming



- Webinar on the campaign to End Social Care Disgrace -6pm on 5 December- register [here](#), or <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0sdOqopzktHtfcwIC7CJZJN0x8ti49A05E>
- The [Disabled Mothers' Rights Campaign](#) and Winvisible, following a successful Ombudsman's complaint, wrote an Open Letter ([here](#)) to Ealing Council calling on them to implement the support disabled mothers are entitled to under the Care Act.
- If you missed the SOS NHS Conference on Saturday 12 November, catch up online [You can watch some of the speeches and sessions here](#).
- An Early Day Motion on social care and disability rights was submitted; ask your MP for their support - <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/60241>
- The Law Society has called for [Mental Health Act reform, given the data which shows a](#) disproportionate impact on Black British people in terms of detention and treatment. Locally, Ealing Save Our NHS - ESON is campaigning against any closure of mental health beds – see survey ([here](#)).
- ESON is also encouraging people to support the Foxglove' campaign for safeguarding data privacy - <https://www.foxglove.org.uk/2022/11/16/nhs-patient-data-palantir-email-your-mp/>
- [Learn more](#) about JustFair's campaign on the cost of living
- If you prefer to take individual action locally, you might be interested in this: [A Personal Account of Volunteering as a Dementia Befriender](#)

Latest developments locally & nationally

Austerity and cost of living crisis

- Subscribe free to - updates@ealingcouncil.net – if you want regular Council bulletins with latest information, including support during the cost-of-living crisis (eg Updates 149/153)
- For info on budget problems facing Ealing Council given rising demands for adult social care: <http://www.ealingtoday.co.uk/default.asp?section=community&spage=common/ldrseacouncil038.htm>
- [Cost of living: Warm space grants](#) Grants of up to £2,500 are being made available to local organisations for help in providing warm spaces for local people in the cost-of-living crisis
- [Disability Grants – provides information on national and local grants for disabled people](#)
- In addition to the Priority Services Register for utilities (<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/getting-extra-help-priority-services-register>) did you know that there are 'social tariffs' for broadband? See <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/compare-broadband-deals/broadband-social-tariffs/>
- Age UK produces a range of free information materials including "Save Energy, pay less: improving energy efficiency around the home" (www.ageuk.org.uk)

Autumn Statement/Budget

- Government's Autumn Statement was announced on 17 November - see [Autumn Statement](#). The DHSCS reported: it "will put adult social care system on a stronger financial footing and improve access to care for some of the most vulnerable in our society".
- Other commentators were not as positive. The Women's Budget Group reported that government's statement talks of "a real terms cut to public services ...at a time when we can least afford it"; it asks government "to put the foundations of the economy on a stable footing(including) working towards a free universal quality social care system". Polly

Toynbee writes in The Guardian (22 November) *“people are dying waiting for social care”* <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/nov/22/jeremy-hunt-wealthiest-fund-own-care-cap>. The move of the funding burden to local Councils is challenged nationally (<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/nov/18/bigger-council-tax-rises-will-not-prevent-more-cuts-to-services-councils-say>) & locally: *“Peter Mason repeated his pledge the Council would continue to support families through the cost of living crisis, despite the government passing the buck instead of providing the right support for public services.”*

Covid

- Some foreign news: [story of scientists in South Africa taking matters into their own hands](#)
- For early work of Covid 19 national inquiry – see <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/oct/31/covid-19-inquiry-to-examine-boris-johnson-whatsapp-messages>
- And for some long-term impacts of covid on patients, the NHS, and discharge problems - <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/nov/18/covid-epidemic-cancer-diagnosis-pandemic-europe>; <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/nov/13/hospital-beds-england-occupied-patients-fit-discharge>

Future dates/events:

- The Kings Fund (health charity and think-tank) is organising a series of events in 2023 to *“explore the everchanging and complex health and care system”*. See www.kingsfund.org.uk
- [Bringing Us Together \(tony@bringingus.together.org.uk\)](mailto:tony@bringingus.together.org.uk) has an event on 24th January - *“Conflict and Battles with services. How do we get the balance right?”* The speaker is Isaac Samuels, chair of the National Co-production Advisory Group, 'Think Local Act Personal'.

Reports

- <https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/globalassets/media/documents/policy/beol-reports-2022/better-end-of-life-report-2022.pdf> November 2022 report on *“Understanding and Improving Out-of-Hours care for people with advanced illness and their informal carers”*

Staffing

- For government website aimed at recruiting more care-workers – see the [Made with Care campaign has returned](#) *“to highlight the range of opportunities to build careers in care and help others live happy, healthy and fulfilling lives”*. [Campaign advertising is appearing to millions](#) across 'video on demand' platforms, and will also direct job seekers to the dedicated careers website. The government is also offering care providers [campaign assets](#).
- People employing Personal Assistants (PAs) and care-workers may want to subscribe to mailings from Skills for Care (a government supported service for *“individual employers and those who support them”*) – mailings@skillsforcare.org.uk. ERSCAG has its own Sian Vasey Best Practice Guide for Recruiting and Employing PAs, and the Council provides guidance and advice about Direct payments please see <http://www.ealingdirectpaymentsguide.co.uk>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/nov/16/brexit-and-drop-in-workforce-harming-britain-economic-recovery-says-bank-governor>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/nov/20/gps-in-england-treat-up-to-three-times-more-patients-than-safety-limit-demands>
- This past month saw lots of events marking London Living Wage Week (14-18 November) - in central London ([London Living Wage Summit 2022](#)) and locally in Ealing. Campaigning continues on several fronts regarding the payment of LLW to all care-workers thanks to work by trade unions, London Citizens, ERSCAG and many others.

Your Help is needed:

- NHS North West London *“wants to hear from our patients and residents about ‘what matters to you’ when you use the health services that we provide”*. Just click on the link to complete the survey <https://form.jotform.com/222926091208353>. The closing date is Friday 16th December 2022.

- A study has been commissioned to advise the Council on implementing the Ealing Labour Party's manifesto commitments relating to social care. What is to be done in practice (a) to empower people and families using social care; (b) establish a new community-based support network to deal with social isolation and improve mental health resilience; and (c) work to prevent older people needing to go into care homes and supporting 3,000 of the most vulnerable residents get the care they need in their own homes. If you want to be involved, contact ERSCAG for more information.

Sources of advice/help

Reference appears throughout the newsletter of useful information sources including government and Council websites. For example, the government website included important information for staff (27 October Update) about discharging patients from hospital to social care settings (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hospital-discharge-service-action-cards/hospital-discharge-and-community-support-key-messages-for-all-staff>)

Social care over the longer term

Given the current financial squeeze at the national, local and individual level, it is worrying that longer term discussions about putting social care on a proper financial footing will be deferred again. A report from the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) - see <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/nov/02/state-of-social-care-in-england-never-been-so-bad-social-services-boss-warns-says> "*The shocking situation is that we have more people requesting help from councils, more older and disabled with complex needs, yet social care capacity has reduced and we have 50,000 fewer paid carers.*"

Yet government defends the two-year delay to social care reforms <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/nov/20/steve-barclay-refuses-to-say-nhs-in-england-is-functioning-properly>. Steve Barclay (Secretary of State for Health and Social Care) is reported to have said that it had been a difficult decision to push back by two years plans put in place by Boris Johnson to "[fix social care](#)".and accepts that the service was under "severe pressure". The same article reports that [540,000 people](#) in England are awaiting social care, financial assessment or a review. The government announced that changes finalised a year ago designed to meet the 2019 Tory manifesto promise to "fix social care" [were to be delayed](#).

[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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