



## Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group



December 2022 – Festive edition

### Looking back over ERSCAG newsletters in 2022:

**Campaigning:** Throughout the year, many different local and national groups organised social care related campaigns (Age UK, End Social Care Disgrace, Inclusion London, JustFair, London Citizens, John's Campaign, Relatives and Residents Association etc). ERSCAG shared links to all of these campaigns as well as other useful sources of information/signposting, and we were able to support local individuals in receipt of Direct Payments or Continuing Healthcare packages to resolve some of their issues. Useful meetings were held throughout the year allowing ERSCAG to lobby our local MPs, the London Assembly, elected Councillors and senior staff, and involving our virtual participation in all Council Adult Health and Social Care Scrutiny Panels and the Health and Well Being Board meetings. Lobbying was stepped up at the time of local government elections in May with a Special Election Issue of our newsletter setting out the position of the political parties/candidates on social care, and our October newsletter covering the national party-political conference discussions of social care.

**Public Meetings/Events:** The profile of social care was increased in a variety of different fora – life-affirming TV dramas (Then Barbara met Allan); a Panorama expose of treatment in a secure psychiatric hospital; fringe events at party political conferences; a Winvisible podcast on refugee and UK born disabled women with moving personal stories about discrimination in social care; a tea-party organised outside parliament to support care workers; a national lobby of parliament under the banner of “Time for Action on Social Care”; and, most recently, a major meeting organised by End Social Care Disgrace (previously NaCSILS)

<https://www.facebook.com/keepournhpublic/videos/1481038659087575>

**Reports:** Numerous reports also contributed to moving social care up the national agenda, including: the People's Inquiry into Covid ([www.peoplecovidinquiry.com](http://www.peoplecovidinquiry.com)); the Women's Budget Group and New Economics Forum report into “Universal quality social care: transforming adult social care in England”; the Centre for Health and Public Interest's study of the financial impact of covid 19 on UK care home sector; and work done by the Reimagining Care Commission, the British Geriatrics Society, the Woolf Institute, the Royal Statistical Society and others. Official annual reports from the Care Quality Commission kept us informed of many of the challenges to be addressed, as did work by the UN Committee on the Rights of People with Disabilities and the Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner. Regular studies by specialist groups such as the Kings Fund and the Health

Foundation were complemented with political think-tank events such as Radix discussing “What social care is and how it can be fixed” and Policy Exchange issuing social care demands in a list of “What do we want from the next Prime Minister?”

## So, when looking forward positively into 2023, what is to be done?

**Cost of Living crisis:** Given that there is little likelihood of the economic situation improving radically very soon, much attention needs to be focused in coming months on understanding the pressure this crisis is posing to people in receipt of social care. ERSCAG produced a ‘useful resources’ guide but we also want to gather case-studies on the impact of the crisis to inform future local and national decision making.

**London Living Wage** – some positive steps have been taken in the past year. Locally, Ealing Council has committed to providing the LLW (and automatic annual uplifts) to a wider range of carers than previously. This will need to be monitored and extended to those who are still not covered by this commitment. Without this minimal commitment to better pay and conditions for care-workers, society cannot expect to recruit and retain the best calibre of people to this vital service.

**National Covid 19 Inquiry** – It will be important to ensure that the lessons from covid 19 for care-users are taken on board by the Inquiry, and that real learning takes place to ensure improvements in future.

**Policy follow up:** In 2022, Ealing Council organised extensive consultations on Shaping Ealing, Travel Charter, palliative and/or end of life care, an All-Age Learning Disability Review, and its Health and Wellbeing strategy. In Scotland, the Scottish government has committed to a National Care Service with support from most of the other political parties. The Fabian Society is due to issue a report to inform the Labour Party manifesto commitments on social care. The UK parliament carried out a range of studies into the invisibility of social care and the human rights of people in care settings, but UK government social care policy is still far from clear. All these policy developments will require scrutiny and engagement.

**Outreach:** Advances have been made in the past year in increasing the profile of social care (in part due to the horrors of covid) but ERSCAG is very aware that much more needs to be done by way of our website, public outreach, and campaigning alongside other groups. We will do our best in 2023 to contribute to a broad local and national coalition of support to move forward our agenda of a “transformed social care system to benefit the lives of older people and those with *physical, mental, or other disabilities.....a social care system fit for purpose, well-funded from general taxation, and (like NHS medical care) free at the point of need*”.

[So, have a good seasonal break, and be prepared for a busy 2023!](#)



[Why not join in our efforts? Check out our website - \[www.erscag.org.uk\]\(http://www.erscag.org.uk\)](#)

For free monthly newsletters and/or more information contact ERSCAG Secretary  
[maggiebeirne@googlemail.com](mailto:maggiebeirne@googlemail.com) or [erscaginfo@gmail.com](mailto:erscaginfo@gmail.com)