



## Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group Newsletter April 2023

ERSCAG'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WILL BE HELD VIRTUALLY  
ON 5 JUNE at 2pm  
IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO ATTEND OR BE INVOLVED CONTACT DETAILS PAGE 4

### Update on latest activities

The last month has provided ERSCAG with a variety of ways to discuss how to improve social care provision in Ealing. For example, we met with **Healthwatch** which has a statutory duty under the Care Act to be “*the voice of patients*”, and regularly carries out research, patient surveys, and enter-and-view visits to assess local care provision. Healthwatch noted their desire to work closely with the community and offered some suggestions for collaboration, and ERSCAG emphasised the importance of Healthwatch not (even inadvertently) reducing the direct involvement in decision making roles of people with a lived experience of care.

In early April, ERSCAG attended a meeting of **Ealing Health and Care Residents Forum** - a new initiative by the Council and NHS to hear from local residents which meets every two months. The event provided information on the new health structures, set out ‘who does what’, and talked of future plans for improved outreach and equality proofing their policies. The latter will be of particular interest to the **Ealing Citizens Tribunal** whose webinar on 28 March looked at questions of racial inequalities in health (see link). Vital recommendations were explored, though it was disappointing that racial inequalities in care provision were not covered in this session - ERSCAG will follow this up.

THE MEETING

Last but not least in April, ERSCAG attended the Council’s **Health and Adult Social Services Standing Scrutiny Panel**. The main discussion was about improving the role of Partnership Boards - should there be more or fewer specialist Boards; how best to coordinate efforts; co-production etc. The Panel used this final meeting of the municipal year to review its work over the last year and made welcome recommendations about the importance of “*putting the voice of social care users at the heart of any reform programme*”, adopting the social model of disability, and looking at best practice reviews of referral and assessment processes etc. In the ‘questions from the public’ session, ERSCAG underlined the importance of co-production and urged the Council to maintain close oversight of care-home provision (see various news items later) and the Council’s recently agreed learning disability strategy.

### Campaigns – current or upcoming

The campaign continues for unpaid carers – see End Social Care Disgrace meeting - [https://www.facebook.com/keepournhspublic/videos/1177645432915614?locale=en\\_GB](https://www.facebook.com/keepournhspublic/videos/1177645432915614?locale=en_GB), and numerous groups came together at this March meeting to discuss a range of social care

campaigns – for more information on what these groups are doing see- ([www.nacsils.co.uk](http://www.nacsils.co.uk))  
And: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/apr/26/english-council-bosses-demand-urgent-help-for-exhausted-unpaid-carers>.

UNISON has launched a campaign for a National Care Service in England – “*a nationally recognised institution that will create consistent standards of care for older and disabled people, and fair pay and conditions for the workforce*”. General secretary Christina McAnea said: “*As the largest union in the care sector, we have a responsibility to push for this progressive and radical change.*” This conforms to many of the demands ERSCAG and others make for a National Care Support and Independent Living Service to complement the NHS.

[Age UK has joined more than 70 other organisations to call for a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing for England](#). The importance of this call is underscored by the report March 2023) of the Joint Committee of Human Rights which concluded that there is no need for a separate Human Rights Ombudsperson because it would be better to facilitate bringing human rights complaints to existing ombudspersons.

Read the full report

## Latest developments locally & nationally

### Austerity and cost of living crisis

- [https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/mar/27/broke-and-disabled-in-tory-britain-the-reality-of-life-on-one-meal-a-day?CMP=Share\\_AndroidApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/mar/27/broke-and-disabled-in-tory-britain-the-reality-of-life-on-one-meal-a-day?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Other)
- National Pensioners Convention (NPC) has produced a Pension Credit toolkit to help older people facing financial hardship **Click here to read the full article**
- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/apr/05/jeremy-hunt-benefit-conservative-welfare-poverty> article by Frances Ryan, author of “Crippled: Austerity and the Demonization of Disabled People”

### Care and residential care

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-65187961> - the personal tragedy and problems for the NHS created when adequate homecare is not provided
- Locally, a meeting is being organised in Sycamore Lodge, off Acton High Street, on 18 May to promote a Carers Pathway Service - a short breaks service for family carers.
- <https://www.facebook.com/100024404689232/posts/pfbid02s712AJrLhCdd7n2g3eNFQjpR5UwivnGhfE14UrRfNeoU9vTHRxXyh4zyVZ7hrH8fl/?sfnsn=scwspmo> about institutional abuse
- See range of recent worrying articles about care-homes which highlight the importance of effective inspection and oversight (see also page 1): [Care homes in England using ‘revenge evictions’ to stifle complaints from residents](#);  
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/apr/13/britain-care-homes-shareholders-staff-workers-covid-wages>;  
<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/apr/20/urgent-calls-for-reform-after-horrific-abuse-of-young-people-at-private-care-homes>;  
<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/apr/24/half-uk-public-fear-family-would-not-be-well-looked-after-in-care-homes>

### Reports/Research:

- <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2023/mar/28/disabled-people-are-lost-and-excluded-when-disasters-hit-says-un-advocate> – an international perspective.
- The Health Foundation called (13 April) for better data to help local authorities support unpaid carers. noting that “*four in ten unpaid carers under retirement age were not working as much as they might otherwise, due to their caring responsibilities, yet out of the 4.7*”

million people providing unpaid care in England in 2021, only 8% approached their local authority for help, and of those only 1 in 4 received direct support.” The Health Foundation full report will be published later in 2023. ([www.health.org.uk](http://www.health.org.uk))

- From Carers UK ([www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)) we learn that the 2021 census statistics “show a widening gap in the % of unpaid carers in the most deprived areas; the intensity of care is also higher, nearly double the rate in the most deprived areas; older carers are providing more hours of care ...” For a link to the detailed findings see - [ONS website](#) – as also Carers UK full reaction to the census [here](#). The average increase in caring hours was highlighted nationally in [The Guardian](#), interviewing carers on the impact of the increasing pressure.
- If you are interested in statistics and evidence-based research you may want to sign up for the Womens Budget Group [WBEG Census Day Event 2023: Call for Delegates](#)
- <https://www.nhsconfed.org/publications/hewitt-review-what-you-need-know> a summary of a report produced by Patricia Hewitt into Integrated Care Systems.
- The National Pensioners Convention made a submission to a House of Lords Inquiry entitled “How do we solve digital exclusion in a cost of living crisis?”

**[Click here to read the full article](#)**

- Thanks to the April newsletter of the End Social Care Disgrace campaign ([www.nacsils.co.uk](http://www.nacsils.co.uk)) we learn that the Nuffield Trust has done a recent analysis of the British Social Attitudes Survey and discovered that “almost two thirds of people who have used or had contact with social care were dissatisfied”. Those using the service for themselves or someone else cited as their main source of dissatisfaction the fact that they did not get all the care and support they needed. Other issues concerned inadequate pay, working conditions and training for care workers, and lack of support for unpaid carers:  
<https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/research/public-satisfaction-with-the-nhs-and-social-care-in-2022-results-from-the-british-social-attitudes-survey>

#### Staffing:

- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/mar/26/nhs-england-staff-shortages-could-exceed-570000-by-2036-study-finds>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/apr/04/halving-social-care-workforce-funding-in-england-an-insult-ministers-told>
- <https://keepournhspublic.com/i-am-a-junior-doctor-enough-is-enough/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/apr/11/secret-consultant-cannot-overstate-dangerous-hospitals-england-junior-doctor-strike>
- <https://ealing.news/health-wellbeing/junior-doctors-from-ealing-and-supporters-march-and-protest-over-pay/>

#### Your Help is needed:

Ealing Council wants to learn more about the needs of adult and young carers – if you are a carer “anyone who cares unpaid for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support” and are an Ealing resident – please answer either [https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Ealing\\_Carers\\_Survey](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Ealing_Carers_Survey) or the young carers survey: [https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Ealing\\_Young\\_Carers\\_Survey](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Ealing_Young_Carers_Survey). The deadline is **19 May**.

At the national level, the Department of Health and Social Care say that they want to find out what skills and experience are considered important for adult social care staff – **deadline 15 June** – see [Care workforce pathway for adult social care: call for evidence \(easy read\)](#)

## Sources of advice/help

In addition to one’s local MP, ward Councillor, or local advice groups, you may want to escalate any concerns you have to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman ([www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)),

see a recent ruling in a complaint about foster care: <https://ealing.news/news/ombudsman-upholds-complaint-about-failures-made-by-ealing-council/>

At the Ealing Health and Care Residents Forum (see page 1), some useful links were provided to explain the organisational changes introduced this year to the NHS by way of Integrated Care Systems and its local organ – the NHS North West London Integrated Care Board. See: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/integrated-care-systems-explained> and <https://www.nwlondonics.nhs.uk/about-us/ICB/about-ICB>

If you want more information about the Department of Health and Social Care’s decision to continue its free provision of PPE to the health and social care sector up until March 2024 or until the free stock is depleted, check out the PPE portal, where you can also find information on pricing and FAQs – <https://www.ppe-portal.nhs.uk/pppe-portal-transition>

## **Social care over the longer term**

Michael Marmot, who carried out a major report into health inequalities in 2010 wrote a newspaper piece asking “*Why have governments since 2010 been active participants not only in undermining the [NHS](#), but making the key social determinants of health worse? It seems to be part of a package of failure to recognise the public good, to recreate private affluence amid public squalor, to quote the economist John Kenneth Galbraith.*” He challenges any new government to reverse this trend by giving priority to the health and wellbeing of the population as a whole: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/apr/24/labour-wes-streeting-nhs-britain-europe>

Instead, several worrying press items on a rolling back of government provision for social care

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-65171795> “Vulnerable to lose out as care funding held back - council chiefs”
- <https://www.thelondoneconomic.com/news/millions-cut-from-funding-commitments-for-social-care-346229/>

whilst government still insists that it is moving ahead with some aspects of reform. The Department & Health and Social Care describes a “*refreshed plan to bolster the adult social care workforce, speed up discharge from hospital and accelerate the use of technology in the care sector over the new two years.*” [Adult social care system reform: next steps to put People at the Heart of Care.](#) The Chief Social Worker for Adults explains how the [values, experiences and insights of her profession](#) have informed this latest phase of reform.

A good news item to end on – Tower Hamlets in East London approved a budget which included help to provide free homecare for ‘qualifying’ residents from April 2024. Details of who qualifies are unclear, but they follow in the footsteps of Hammersmith and Council, our neighbouring Borough, and we can only hope that Ealing will follow this lead in the very near future – ERSCAG will certainly be campaigning to that end.

[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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