



Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group Newsletter September 2023

Update on latest activities

In Geneva, an expert United Nations committee received reports about the UK government's compliance with its duties towards people with disabilities (28 August) – see the fascinating testimony on <https://tinyurl.com/CRDP23Live>. Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group (ERSCAG) made a short written submission about social care, but a range of disability organisations & the national Equality and Human Rights Commission (report [here](#)) appeared in person. Committee experts asked about - the impact of the covid and cost-of-living crises on disabled people; social security arrangements; the extent of support for advocacy and participation in decision making by disabled people; the risks of 'institutionalisation' even in one's own home; and the government's general attitude to human rights, given their adverse comments on the Human Rights Act and European Convention.

As summer comes to an end, **regular Council committee meetings** have resumed, and ERSCAG attended the Health and Well Being Board (20 September) and the Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel (28 September). We asked questions about the learning from Covid 19, the delays in assessment reviews, and local thefts of Blue Badges etc. Regarding lessons learned from Covid, ERSCAG was subsequently sent a link to the Council's excellent analysis: [Ealing COVID-19 lessons learned review | Ealing Council](#). The Council encourages residents to engage in the work of scrutiny committees – so please note that more information about Scrutiny Panels, including meeting dates, work programmes, agendas and reports can be found on [the council's website](#). ERSCAG also continues to follow the work of Ealing Save Our NHS opposing the potential closure of all acute mental health beds for the under 65s in Ealing.

On 30 August, ERSCAG wrote to all Ealing Councillors urging them to let us know of any social care issues arising at the **national party-political conferences** now underway and helpful responses were received from individual Councillors from the Conservative, Liberal Democratic and Labour parties. Though the Greens are not represented on the Council or Ealing's parliamentary team, Kate Crossland was also very helpful, and hopefully can find out more from colleagues about why our neighbouring Council (Hammersmith & Fulham) has been able – unlike Ealing – to end charging for social care.

Campaigns – current or upcoming

The End Social Care Disgrace national campaign has organised a series of very interesting zoom meetings looking at different aspects of social care. The next event focuses on paid care-workers - "A Fair Deal for Care and Support Workers". This will take place on 23 October, 6.30 – 8pm. Please spread the word about this important event to anyone interested, especially Personal Assistants and care & support workers, and register in advance on this link <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwtfuGgqjosGNTmqytKghSwTax156FCCwQL>

Care Rights UK want to secure a new legal right for a Care Supporter to provide support to a relative or friend when using health and care services. They offer a draft letter to the Prime Minister to be signed by local MPs. Read more about why this right is being called for in an [article](#) by author and fellow campaigner Nicci Gerrard and/or contact team@carerightsuk.org

Change Org (change@change.org) has a petition urging us to support an increase to the Carers' Allowance. Andrea Allen is a single mum with two disabled children who had to give up work to become a full time carer. ***"Carers allowance is £76 a week, that's 90p an hour for a 12 hour shift, I often am on call 24/7 as there is no written rule to the care that they may need."*** If you want to support Andrea and others in the same situation - sign here:



Age UK, the National Pensioners Convention, and others are campaigning against the digital exclusion often disproportionately experienced by older people. This year, 12 October has been designated "End Digital Poverty Day" and a free webinar is being broadcast at 11am on that day exploring the issue: www.digitalpovertyalliance.org/edpd-event/universal-internet-access-essential-human-right/)

Latest developments locally & nationally

Austerity and cost of living crisis

- <https://www.irf.org.uk/press/universal-credit-falling-so-far-short-cost-essentials-putting-health-millions-risk-say-health>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/sep/04/poor-people-surviving-not-living-as-uk-social-contract-collapses-says-report>

Covid 19:

- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/sep/10/covid-coronavirus-disabled-vulnerable-people>
- <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2021-05-10/revealed-thousands-of-pandemic-deaths-in-home-care>

Financing:

The declaration of bankruptcy by Birmingham Council and others has led to a number of articles looking at local government financing more generally. Given the fact that social care is largely undertaken & financed by local government the following may be useful

background information for campaigners - <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/aug/28/at-least-26-english-councils-at-risk-of-bankruptcy-in-next-two-years>; <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/sep/06/the-guardian-view-on-local-government-finance-a-growing-crisis-with-deep-roots>;

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/sep/11/more-english-councils-expected-to-fail-owing-billions-warns-moodys>;

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/sep/21/15bn-of-public-assets-sold-by-english-councils-since-2010-amid-budget-shortfalls>; <https://www.homecareassociation.org.uk/resource/the-impact-of-late-payment-of-invoices-by-the-nhs-and-local-authorities-and-a-reduction-in-volume-of-hours-available-per-provider.html>;

[https://theconversation.com/birminghams-bankruptcy-is-only-the-tip-of-the-iceberg-local-authorities-across-england-are-at-risk-](https://theconversation.com/birminghams-bankruptcy-is-only-the-tip-of-the-iceberg-local-authorities-across-england-are-at-risk-212912?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20September%207%2023%20-%202729527592&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20September%207%202023%20-%202729527592+CID_361fa28928c8ba68bc2cc873cda45052&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=Birmingham%20bankruptcy%20is%20only%20the%20tip%20of%20the%20iceberg%20%20local%20authorities%20across%20England%20are%20at%20risk)

[212912?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20September%207%2023%20-%202729527592&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20September%207%202023%20-%202729527592+CID_361fa28928c8ba68bc2cc873cda45052&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=Birmingham%20bankruptcy%20is%20only%20the%20tip%20of%20the%20iceberg%20%20local%20authorities%20across%20England%20are%20at%20risk](https://theconversation.com/birminghams-bankruptcy-is-only-the-tip-of-the-iceberg-local-authorities-across-england-are-at-risk-212912?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20September%207%2023%20-%202729527592&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20September%207%202023%20-%202729527592+CID_361fa28928c8ba68bc2cc873cda45052&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=Birmingham%20bankruptcy%20is%20only%20the%20tip%20of%20the%20iceberg%20%20local%20authorities%20across%20England%20are%20at%20risk). Which consumer magazine online bulletin (11 September) talks of *"care home fees soaring -the cost of living has hit residential care homes hard, with the average weekly price rising by 19% in a year"*, and reports on:

[How can you fund care?](#)

Reports/Research/Events:

- The Womens Budget Group (WBG) publicised (28 August) a report by Autonomy ([new briefing](#))- “The Chasm of Care” - on the need for strategic long term planning and investment in social care. WBG says the findings show the worrying gap in care needs, making the urgent case for creating a high-quality, universal care service with a well-paid workforce as argued in previous WBG/New Economics Foundation work - [here](#).
- The Kings Fund have a series of events planned this month “As we step into September, we're excited to bring you a line-up of events that promise to enlighten, empower, and transform. Join us as we shine a spotlight on [women's health](#), demystify the [world of health and care](#), challenge conventional thinking about the [health and care workforce](#), explore the potential of [population health](#) and share [personal leadership stories](#). Don't miss out on these opportunities for knowledge, inspiration and change”.
- Social Care Future has some places on its two day event – 19/20 October in Manchester: “Towards a Gloriously Ordinary Life” . [book a place today HERE](#)

Staffing

- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/aug/29/exploitation-and-low-pay-causing-poverty-among-care-workers-tuc-finds>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/aug/29/invisible-endless-relentless-the-reality-of-care-work-in-england>
- The Department of Health has put out helpful guidance for Personal Assistants/care staff about their eligibility for flu vaccinations – see www.nhs.uk/vaccinations - **the Council and ERSCAG already sent this info directly to local Direct Payment users.**

Your Help is Needed:

- The North-West London Trust wants our thoughts on community-based specialist palliative care. Email them on nhsnwl.endoflife@nhs.net if you want to learn the NHS views on “what good care should look like” and if you want to contribute to the thinking around this important topic.
- A government survey is now open to people working in adult social care across England, so if you are a Personal Assistant or care worker (employed or self employed) – or know of such - who wish to influence government decisions about best supporting everyone working in social care – see [Adult Social Care Workforce Survey](#). The survey should take no more than 20 minutes and is anonymous.

Sources of advice and help

Ealing Law Centre’s Triage and Outreach service are available at Hanwell Community Library (Cherington Road, W.7) to help members of the public with completing applications for Personal Independence Payment and UC50 forms. If you need assistance with this, please visit during the Law Centre opening hours: 9.30-5.30 Monday to Friday.

Government has a range of advice booklets about employing PAs/Assistants – for example –if you would you like to learn more about how to retain your PA, view their recruitment and retention event recordings that are full of helpful tips. [View the video. ERSCAG also developed some time ago the Sian Vasey Best Practice Guide for recruiting and employing Personal Assistants \(check out our website \[www.erscag.org.uk\]\(http://www.erscag.org.uk\)\)](#)

[MENCAP circulated a leaflet recently reminding people with a learning disability that they should ask their GP surgery to put their name on the Learning Disability Register if they are not already there. Joining the register ensures help getting appointments and, if you are 14 or over, a health check every year. Check out their free Helpline on 0808 808 1111.](#)

[If you want to give support to young carers \(aged 5-12\), the BBC issued one of its weekly Radio 4 fundraising appeals \(24 September\) for Honeypot. Check out the BBC Radio 4 appeal website or contact Honeypot directly on <https://www.honeypot.org.uk/>](#)

[Joe Latimer of Lawstop \(\[www.lawstop.co.uk\]\(http://www.lawstop.co.uk\)\) wrote \(25 September\): “I’ve recently confirmed that legal aid is available to defend/set aside county court judgements for social care debt. I am under the impression that few community care barristers/solicitors were aware of this because I had been previously advised that it is unavailable by two different barristers, andthere seem to be little/no reported case law.”](#) So, if you are facing any problems regarding getting into debt for social care payments, you should contact Lawstop, your own solicitor, or a local law centre for advice and help regarding the possibilities of legal aid.

If you, or someone you are caring for, is being considered for Continuing Healthcare and a non-means tested NHS care package, you may find the following link very useful in exploring exactly how your needs should be being assessed: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1170290/National-Framework-for-NHS-Continuing-Healthcare-and-NHS-funded-Nursing-Care-July-2022-revised_corrected-July-2023.pdf

Ealing Council issues a regular magazine Around Ealing, and its Autumn edition has a lot of interesting articles (though little specifically in this issue on social care) but it does usefully list all the ward Councillors and their contact details which could be useful for residents having difficulties with social care provision?

[MAGAZINE](#)

Social care over the longer term

As noted in the last newsletter, this is party political season. Given the London mayoral elections in Spring next year, and the increasing talk of the move to a General Election, the more debate we can promote at these events about the need to radically reform social care the better. For ideas on influencing public opinion, check Social Care Futures <https://socialcarefuture.org.uk/publications/> [Building upon a paper prepared previously by ERSCAG, End Social Care Disgrace \(<https://endsocialcaredisgrace.org/website>\), has finalised a note making the ECONOMIC argument for major reforms of social care provision and hopes to discuss this with participants at many of these events – look out for their demonstrations stalls/leaflets! And please let ERSCAG know afterwards of any positive statements/commitments made so that we can report on these in the October newsletter.](#)

[Check out our website - www.erscag.org.uk](http://www.erscag.org.uk)
and join our Facebook group [Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group.](#)
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