



## **Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group Newsletter** **October 2023**

### **Update on latest activities**

Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group (ERSCAG) is following up on issues raised with Ealing Councillors regarding party political conferences (see page 4); a series of thefts of Blue Badges; and concerns about debts due to social care charging. In that context, its Direct Payment User Group met with senior Council staff about a variety of finance issues (25 October) and how to improve communications. And, in November, we already have separate meetings planned with staff and the chair/vice-chair of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel to discuss how to improve the Borough's Direct Payment provision. A regular meeting with local MP, James Murray is also planned to explore local and national responses to 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 most recent event (23 October) focused on paid care-workers "A Fair Deal for Care and Support Workers". See the recording on Keep Our NHS Public's Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/40921988278/> or it will be being posted asap on YouTube (with captions), see [www.endsocialcaredisgrace.org](http://www.endsocialcaredisgrace.org).

A West London Citizens Celebration Assembly is being organised in Southall on 7 November to mark successes around the London Living Wage campaign ("*We estimate that the impact will be 1,500 workers getting a pay rise of about £2,000 a year, critical in this cost-of-living crisis*"). The event will provide a chance to publicly celebrate those NHS Trusts that have been accredited as LLW employers and will hear testimony from people affected by low pay and their effective campaign efforts.

An online signature campaign run by Dimensions UK, arguing for care and support worker pay to be tied to NHS pay-bands, led to "*a petition containing over 76,000 signatures being delivered to 10 Downing St, in the company of politicians from the Conservative, Labour, Lib Dem and Green parties. The organisers argue that a simple solution like this has the potential to unite all the political parties*".

This 29 October marks the UN's first official [International Day for Care and Support](https://www.un.org/en/observances/international-day-for-care-and-support), which recognises the legacy of the first International Day for Care founded four years ago by trade unions to accelerate public investment in to the care economy.

This year, UK Disability History Month is celebrated between 16 November-16 December, <https://ukdhm.org/> and 3 December is the UN's International Day of Disabled Persons.

## Latest developments locally & nationally

### Asylum seekers

- For distressing article by rights activist Frances Ryan about disabled asylum seekers: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/oct/01/home-office-centre-for-disabled-asylum-seekers-care-home>

### Covid 19:

- As noted in the last newsletter, the Council discussed the “lessons learned from Covid 19”, and the full review can be *read on the council’s website*. In the Council’s Health News of 28 September they report *amazing examples of communities supporting each other and note that “Ealing’s independent Race Equality Commission has since highlighted the need to look at the impact of the pandemic and use what was learned to help reduce health inequalities.”*
- ERSCAG has urged the Council to draw out conclusions from this work on ‘covid-19 lessons’ for the national inquiry too, since there is much learning to be shared beyond Ealing regarding the resourcing of local authorities, the importance of making decisions closer to those directly affected etc. Relevant to the national inquiry will be articles such as that by Devi Sridhar on <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/oct/11/labour-billions-covid-fraud-pandemic> and the submission from Care Rights UK which carried out a survey into the experience of people living in care denied access to healthcare – see [website](#)

### Financing:

- Polly Toynbee writes (<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/oct/05/rishi-sunak-end-legacy-council-tax-social-care>) ‘advising’ the Prime Minister on how to secure his legacy - and notes that both parties (Labour as well as Conservative) have “sworn blind that they would reform” social care. She calls for - “The national insurance levy introduced by Boris Johnson in 2021, abolished by Liz Truss, needs to be restored, along with charging pensioners national insurance....Restoring Labour’s excellent 2010 white paper policy, to make everyone with means contribute a lump sum on retirement should be restored, too....”

### Reports/Research/Events

- “Carenomics report: Unlocking the economic power of social care” was published by the Future Social Care Coalition making the economic case for reform of social care.
- The National Pensioners Convention/Independent Age and others are working together to campaign for a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing – see “Who wants to listen to me?” blog and petition on NPC website: <https://www.npcuk.org/commissioner>
- The [latest report from the IPPR Commission on Health and Prosperity](#) says that it lays bare the UK’s failing health and social care services. “*But as our report lays out, this is not inevitable nor a lost cause*” and talks amongst other things of “*establishing a social care guarantee and developing a new deal for health and care workers*”.
- <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/adult-social-care-activity-and-finance-report/2021-22> This annual report notes almost 2m requests for adult social care support, from 1.4 million new clients, were received by local authorities.
- Black History Month was marked throughout October – for news of activities happening nationally and across London, visit the [Black History Month website](#).
- A free online event is being organised (4 November) on the topic of “Christians in social care: ethics and practice”. “*Are you looking for an opportunity to meet people motivated by their faith to care for others? Would you like to explore the unique contribution that faith makes to the health and social care sector? Are you interested in learning about the ethical challenges work in this sector may bring?*” Organised by St Mary’s University & the Christian Medical Fellowship: <https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/events/2023/11/christians-health-and-social-care-online>.
- And talking about faith approaches to care, the Woolf Institute marked World Mental Health Day (10 October) with a personal blog: “*it’s important for people of all faiths to be able to obtain appropriate mental health support that caters to all aspects of their recovery needs,*

*including their spiritual ones (and) we must be encouraged to address inequalities that exist both in access to mental health support, and, the differences in recovery outcomes". A recent fact-sheet reports that "Of the 45,999 Muslims referred to NHS Talking Therapies in England during 2021-2022, only 2.6% finished their course of treatment, compared to 18.4% of Christian patients and 38.9% of those reporting no religion ....(and) Muslims experienced a lower recovery rate compared with Christians and Jews". (www.woolf.cam.ac.uk)*

- The Social Care Institute for Excellence and Think Local Act Personal published a report (September 2023) looking at support for alternative care models such as co-operatives and community businesses - <https://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/news/Supporting-the-development-of-alternative-care-models/>

### Staffing

- Nationally, the Department of Health and Social Care is also asking care providers to list vacancies on the [Department of Work and Pension's 'Find a Job' portal](#), to make sure job seekers can [find roles](#) in their local area.
- Some really good news! The Living Wage Foundation issued the new rates which will amount to a 10% increase in recognition of the current cost of living increases. For London workers, this means the rate will rise to £13.15- <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/news/real-living-wage-increases-%C2%A312-uk-and-%C2%A31315-london>
- Ealing Council reports that it has started a new staff learning programme to help recruit and retain the social care workforce:

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### Sources of advice and help

Ealing Council has started a new quarterly newsletter addressed to service users and carers – the first issue included important information about carers' grants, the new LLW for staff, etc. If you want to go on their mailing list directly, contact [DanielT@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:DanielT@ealing.gov.uk)

If you are a carer in Ealing for someone and want peace of mind regarding the person you look after if something was to suddenly happen can get an Emergency Card to carry with them – see Carers emergency card.

CARER'S CARD

If you are housebound or socially isolated through disability or long term illness in Ealing, why not find out more about [BEfriend](#) – which provides a one-to-one befriending arrangement. See: <https://www.aroundealing.com/news/a-friend-in-need-is-a-befriend-indeed/>

Nationally, see [here](#) for a round up of information about work of the Centre for Adults' Social Care, an online specialist advice service regarding social care issues - [www.cascaidr.org.uk](http://www.cascaidr.org.uk)

### Social care over the longer term

Further to ERSCAG's request to all Ealing Councillors to report back about developments at their different party-political conferences, Cllr Fabio Conti (**for the Conservatives**) wrote that *"on the two days I attended there weren't any specific events on social care. I know that in the Health Secretary's speech he did talk about £30million of investment to aid the role out of technology to help patients being treated at home".*

For **Labour**, Cllr Ben Wesson wrote that: *"In his speech at the Labour Party Conference, Wes Streeting MP, the Shadow Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Services, made an important declaration: "There is no solution to the crisis in the NHS that doesn't include a plan*

*for social care.” Labour is committed to delivering a New Deal for Care Workers, which will bring about significant changes in the social care sector. This is true locally where Ealing Labour has brought in the Real Living Wage for home care workers. Measures like this are central to the strategy that aims to tackle recruitment and retention challenges within the care industry. I have the utmost respect for our care workers who perform remarkable and often physically demanding work and deserve the recognition of professional status. Labour plans to establish a fair pay agreement for care professionals, recognising the invaluable role they play in our communities. The strategy is the first step towards an ambitious ten-year plan for a National Care Service. Although change on this scale will take time – and could be towards the end of a second term of an incoming Labour government – it will make social care accessible to all, high-quality and personalised. By creating a cohesive and well-funded care system, we can ensure that the crisis in social care is addressed once and for all, while simultaneously supporting the strained NHS. The Labour Party recognises the incredible potential within the fields of medical science and technology. The revolution taking place in these areas presents a unique opportunity to revolutionise social care. By harnessing the benefits of medical advancements and cutting-edge technologies, the system can enhance the quality and efficiency of care provision. This will enable us to better meet the diverse needs of individuals and promote their overall well-being. It was great to see the further of social care in such focus at Labour conference. Developing a National Care Service that meets the needs of all, now and for generations to come, would be truly transformational.”*

For the **Liberal Democrats**, Cllr Athena Zissimos wrote: “Our Pre-manifesto Policy Paper [For a Fair Deal - Liberal Democrats \(libdems.org.uk\)](#) was accepted and includes: Everyone deserves high-quality social care if they need it; But social care services in this country are in crisis. Hundreds of thousands of people in England are waiting for care, many stranded in hospital beds due to the lack of space in care homes. The Conservatives promised to “fix” the crisis in our social care system, that no one would have to sell their house to pay for care and that they would not raise tax to do it. They have broken all these promises. Liberal Democrats want everyone to be able to live independently and in dignity, to support those who provide care to their loved ones and ensure that no one has to sell their house to pay for their personal care. In particular, we will ● Ensure no one has to sell their home to pay for care by introducing free personal care based on the model introduced by the Liberal Democrats in government in Scotland in 2002. ● Hire more social care staff, provide training and advancement, and pay them a higher wage by introducing a Carer’s Minimum Wage. ● Increase Carer’s Allowance so that unpaid carers have the support they so desperately need; and ● Introduce a statutory guarantee of regular respite breaks for unpaid carers.”

Of course, there is often a big gap between party political conference – or electoral – commitments and what eventually transpires, but the coming year is likely to give us plenty of opportunities to engage in London mayoral and national elections. We need to make social care an issue that ALL our elected politicians hear about regularly on the doorsteps...only then might we secure the changes to social care that are urgently needed.

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