



Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group Newsletter **May/June 2025**

Update on our latest activities

Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group (ERSCAG) held its 2025 Annual General Meeting virtually on 2nd June. A brief annual report and financial report were presented and the new committee consists of John Moffat and Brian Rose, along with re-elected members Maggie Beirne (secretary), Alex Cowan, Mike Geoghegan, Janet Mearns, David Scully, Mark Tilston (treasurer) and Roy Willis (chair). If anyone would like copies of the reports, please contact the Secretary.

ERSCAG regularly attends official meetings of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Health and Adult Social Services Scrutiny Panel and met with Kerry Stevens (Strategic Director of adult social services & public health) on 27 May, James Murray MP (30 May), and Cllr Polly Knewstub (Cabinet portfolio of Healthy Equal Lives) on 25 June. At all of these meetings we explored issues of concerns about the Borough's daycare provision; the impact of CPZs/School Exclusion Zones on disabled people, carers and care-workers; and user involvement in service provision etc.

Campaigns – current or upcoming national campaigns and events

Campaigners are urging people to engage in the debate about the current 'Welfare Bill' going through parliament. The situation is changing rapidly – for example see an earlier government pronouncement to the effect that <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/welfare-bill-will-protect-the-most-vulnerable-and-help-households-with-income-boost>.

But many fear the exact opposite and have organised accordingly. See for example petitions on Change.org and the link "Taking the PIP" which also provides a template letter which you can personalise and send to your MP - <https://takingthepip.co.uk/write-to-your-mp/#letter> Organisations such as SCOPE, Disability Rights UK and Inclusion London and have all issued briefing papers and/or suggest actions to be taken – see <https://forum.scope.org.uk/discussion/130545/pip-and-disability-benefits-cuts>; <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/take-action>; <https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/campaigns-and-policy/act-now/stand-up-against-cuts-to-disability-benefits-write-to-your-mp-today/>; and we have been recommended the National MENCAP Easy Read guide: <https://www.mencap.org.uk/easyread/benefit-changes-easy-read>. At the time of writing, it seems that government may be re-thinking its proposals and listening to the many concerns raised, but all the more reason to make your voice heard with your local MP! See on for more media and reports on same topic.

Inclusion London is running a campaign to “bring people home from psychiatric hospitals” – see <https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/campaigns-and-policy/free-our-people-now/bring-people-home/bring-people-home/> Another online campaign is arguing for the right of carers to stay with hospital patients that need their support <https://johnscampaign.org.uk/> and Change.org has a petition about carers looking after family members with dementia - [Abolish the 20% VAT on Community Respite for Vulnerable Adults in the UK](#)

Good news on one campaign at least – campaigners like the National Pensioners Convention report on their “*success as nine million get Winter Fuel Payment back*” (see <https://www.npcuk.org/>. Policy Exchange (a Conservative think tank) also reports on the change in government policy - [here](#) – and Which magazine reports on the detail: [Changes to Winter Fuel Payments](#)

Latest developments – locally and nationally

Benefit system – for earlier references to Welfare Bill see also under ‘campaigning’

- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/apr/29/labours-benefit-cuts-will-cost-uk-economy-billions-charity-says>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/may/08/disability-benefit-cuts-impossible-to-support-labour-mps-tell-starmer>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/may/20/liz-kendall-dwp-double-down-labour-disability-benefit-cuts>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/jun/12/ministers-olive-branch-welfare-plans-labour-rebellion>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/jun/19/labour-mp-resigns-as-government-whip-in-protest-at-benefit-cuts>

Care workers:

- In an article entitled “UK care homes ban on overseas recruitment” see - <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/may/11/uk-to-time-limit-visas-for-roles-below-graduate-level-under-new-migration-plan>; and on the same topic - <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/may/12/cheap-foreign-labour-this-is-how-keir-starmer-denigrates-the-migrant-carers-looking-after-your-loved-ones>; and Keep Our NHS Public writes (22 May): “*Starmer is wrong: the NHS and social care need immigrants to survive*”
- Resolution Foundation is running a workshop on the topic of: How will the Employment Rights Bill impact workers, businesses and the wider economy? Thursday 3rd July, 9.30am - 10.45am [REGISTER NOW](#)
- If you are a care agency supplying care workers to Ealing residents – see [Apply for a professional carers parking permit | Apply for a professional carers parking permit | Ealing Council](#)

Disability

- The April newsletter carried this item, but it seems worth repeating in light of the publication of the Welfare Bill - “*For arguments in response to myths about disability benefits, see the Disability Cuts Mythbuster Information Pack which challenges persistent myths by providing statistics - (https://www.linkedin.com/search/results/all/?keywords=%23disabilitycutsmythbusters&origin=HASH_TAG_FROM_FEED&lipi=urn%3Ali%3Apage%3Ad_UNKNOWN_ROUTE_search.results.gen.eric.index%3B1gsKs6%2FIS7yCIC8MZRXHig%3D%3D)- showing that: more disabled people work than don’t; disabled people contribute seven times more to the economy than disability benefits cost; disabled people on benefits are much poorer on average than people who do not need benefits; PIP (Personal Independence Payment) is not an out-of-work benefit and cutting PIP will make it harder for more disabled people to work; PIP is hard for disabled people to get, not easy; people only get PIP if they are disabled and struggle to function in daily life*”

- Lord Prem Sikka writes about new legislation – Public Authorities (Fraud, Error and Recovery) Bill which “grants the government powers of surveillance on the bank accounts of the poor, old, sick and disabled people receiving specified benefits” for full article see - <https://leftfootforward.us16.list-manage.com/track/click?u=65b47e7ed535f89a2113322cd&id=6ce5d963af&e=367ea0174a>

Funding

- There was little in the government Spending Review about social care but funding for Councils is likely to become even tighter <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jun/12/croydon-council-finances-report>
- <https://observer.co.uk/news/national/article/uk-state-funded-two-tier-care-report>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/may/05/mps-warn-social-care-needs-substantial-investment-to-fix-broken-system> and <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/may/05/crisis-social-care-economy-treasury>
- The Women’s Budget Group have a newsletter (26 June) which, in addition to including their full response to the [Comprehensive Spending Review](#), reports on local council funding and a free online training session on a Dashboard on Unpaid Care (see www.wbg.org.uk).

Legislation

Apart from the discussion on the Welfare Bill, there has been continued extensive press coverage of the assisted dying debate that has now moved to the Lords – for some different perspectives see <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/may/14/assisted-dying-bill-disabled-people-parliament>, or this piece by former Prime Minister Gordon Brown - <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jun/16/mps-assisted-dying-bill-law-palliative-care>, or Polly Toynbee’s <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jun/20/support-assisted-dying-todays-vote-mps-labour>

Reports/Events:

- <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2025/apr/30/uk-among-lowest-ranked-countries-for-human-flourishing-in-wellbeing-study>
- A major cross party Select Committee held an inquiry into social care and “the cost of inaction” – for a useful financial tabulation, see appendix one, or for the full report, see, <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmhealth/368/report.html>
- Bright Blue (a centre right think tank) had (on 22 May) Sir Stephen Timms MP, Minister of State for Social Security and Disability, speak on ‘Expanding economic activity.’ following the publication of the DWP recent Green Paper *Pathways to work*.
- NPC issues a regular newsletter on health and social care: [Click here to read the article](#)
- Policy Exchange: *For Whose Benefit? Proposals to Reform Health and Disability Benefits & To Create a New Social Contract* (2025).
- The [All Party Parliamentary Group on Poverty and Inequality](#) published its report on the [disproportionate impact of poverty on disabled people](#) (June 2025). The report follows the Department for Work and Pensions’ *Pathways to Work* Green Paper, which has been widely criticised for cutting the incomes of disabled people, pushing 250,000 people into poverty according to the DWP’s own analysis. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation estimates that this number could be at least another [150,000 higher](#). See also rumours of plans to means-test Personal Independence Payments: <https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/ministers-are-secretly-considering-means-testing-pip-dwp-admits-despite-pledge-in-green-paper/>

Your Help Needed:

- Would you like to be a Community Champion in Ealing? The Council is looking for volunteers and writes – “By becoming a Champion, you can ensure your community is represented in health research and gain new skills and experience. It is an important role that will ensure Our Future Health truly reflects the UK population so we can identify differences in how diseases begin and progress in people from different backgrounds”. For more information,

[Find out about becoming a Community Champion](#)

Sources of advice and help

The Council is organising a Direct Payment Summit on Thursday 10th July from 11.00-2.00pm in the Atrium, Ground floor, Perceval House, 14-16 Uxbridge Road, Ealing W5 2HL. The Event will bring together residents, DP users, staff, various stakeholders, guests and councillors; will feature a keynote speaker, and several informational stalls aimed at promoting Direct payments; additionally, the Council is planning to launch an easy-read version of our Direct payments guide during the event.

Ealing Council is organising workshops about *“how technology can assist the delivery of care: telecare devices such as falls detectors, medication dispensers etc - and also consumer technology available to all for example Alexa: the Amazon device which can answer questions, set alarms, say reminders - and more”*. To book a place (30 June) contact Beinvolved_ASC@ealing.gov.uk or email to Toby Cray, Older Adults’ Partnership Board - crayt@ealing.gov.uk

Are you worried about the finances of someone with dementia – see Which podcast on the topic of [Handling your finances with a dementia diagnosis](#)

Social care over the longer term

The Casey review into social care started work earlier this month, with Baroness Casey meeting with carers, care-users, disabled people, and campaigners to hear their experiences of the sector and how it can be improved. The consultations will continue ahead of the first phase of work, but further details of how to get involved are yet to be announced ([Frequently asked questions | Casey Commission](#)). The terms of reference can be found here ([Terms of reference | Casey Commission](#)). ERSCAG is unclear about the extent of public consultation but has been informed that *“If you wish to contact the commission to find out further detail as to how you can contribute to their findings, they can be contacted here: enquiries@caseycommission.co.uk”*

Care Rights UK reports (18 June) *“We are delighted to be publishing “Our Vision for Social Care” today. This report outlines the key issues facing the people we support across themes like rights, regulation, funding and staffing. Read our recommendations [here](#)”*.

And the media generally continue to give a fairly high profile to the need for fundamental long-term change in the realm of social care – for example <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/may/19/labour-cant-keep-papering-over-the-cracks-in-the-care-sector>; and <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2025/05/19/why-britain-has-a-social-care-crisis/>

[Check out our website - www.erscag.org.uk](http://www.erscag.org.uk)

For more information contact ERSCAG Secretary

maggiebeirne@googlemail.com or erscaginfo@gmail.com

Please get in touch if you need material in other formats