



## **Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group Newsletter** **July 2025**

### **Update on our latest activities**

Ealing Council organised a Direct Payment Marketplace (10 July) bringing together residents, Direct Payment users, staff, various stakeholders, guests and councillors. It was an occasion to launch their revised Guide to Direct Payments ([Ealing Guide](#)), an easy-to-read version, and an animation ([What are direct payments?](#)). Alex Cowan, chair of ERSCAG's Direct Payment User Group, also spoke encouraging people to join our self-help network (see advert on page 60 of Ealing Guide). The Council is eager to extend the number of people using Direct Payments – thereby enhancing the independence and autonomy of care-users and carers – and there was lots of advice and information at the various stands represented on the day.

Later the same day, ERSCAG attended the Council's Scrutiny Panel and asked a question about the study that Ealing Healthwatch is to undertake into the closure of Ealing Careline. A second question related to the importance of Healthwatch carrying out surveys of social care provision and usage in the Borough, alongside its regular surveys of health provision. These concerns may now appear somewhat redundant in the face of surprise government moves to close Healthwatch nationally <https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/response/2025-06-28/government-plans-around-future-healthwatch>, so ERSCAG will want to monitor the impact of these developments at the local level. Currently Ealing Healthwatch has a statutory role to play in representing "the voice of residents" – how will this happen in future? If you want to try and influence the future debate you may want to [Complete the Public Survey](#)

ERSCAG also met (17 July) with Deirdre Costigan MP (Ealing Southall) before the parliamentary recess. The meeting was largely intended to introduce ERSCAG's work to the 'new' MP, though given her previous Council membership, her disability brief when working for UNISON, and her role as PPS to Secretary of State Wes Streeting, Ms Costigan has had extensive exposure to the issues around social care. At the meeting, we raised issues relating to co-production, Blue Badge thefts, equality impact assessing policies, the Employment Rights Bill, the value of a cross-departmental ACCESS group at Council level, and we forwarded on information about Community Strengthening - see [Stronger-Communities-Full-paper-V1.5.pdf](#)

### **Campaigns – current or upcoming national campaigns and events**

In last month's newsletter, we reported on the campaigns being mounted around the 'Welfare Bill' then going through the Commons and, given the extensive changes to the original proposals, the campaigners seem to have been relatively successful – see: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jun/30/labour-revolt-benefits-welfare-concessions-keir-starmer-disabled-people>; <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/jul/01/welfare-bill-passes->

[after-keir-starmer-offers-late-concession; https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/jul/09/ministers-offer-another-concession-to-enshrine-safeguards-for-disabled-in-flagship-welfare-bill](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/jul/09/ministers-offer-another-concession-to-enshrine-safeguards-for-disabled-in-flagship-welfare-bill).

There are nevertheless extensive outstanding concerns - the National Pensioners Convention says it “*doubts that Minister’s PIP assurances are enough*”; a Guardian editorial reports - <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/jul/01/downbeat-liz-kendall-acts-as-if-even-she-no-longer-believes-in-welfare-reforms>; and the Women’s Budget Group wrote (2 July) “*We’re very pleased to share that the Government’s proposed cuts to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) were scrapped from the Welfare Bill passed yesterday...However, we have been working hard with others in the women’s and disability rights movements, think tanks and NGOs since the Government first proposed the changes. We have provided oral and written briefings for MPs, raised the issues in the press and on social media and most recently worked with Sisters of Frida to publish new data on the impact the cuts would have on Disabled women*” (see on for full report link). Even the United Nations “*in a rare intervention*” expressed concerns about the Welfare Bill: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jul/08/un-panel-raises-concerns-with-uk-government-over-welfare-bill>

The National Pensioners Convention (24 July) - campaigns “*for a simplified, fair, state pension system to ensure every pensioner lives with dignity and respect*”

[Click here to read the article](#) and The National Unpaid Carers Union and Forum ([www.nucuf.org](http://www.nucuf.org)) – writes that they have three aims: (a) To achieve financial stability for carers, through either an increase in the carers allowance to either the living wage or a negotiated rate for carers; (b) to unite all carers across the nation, allowing the formation of a forum where carers can communicate with each other to be able to offer support and advice on issues; and (c) To petition HM Government to cease all current and future prosecutions of unpaid carers who have been overpaid carers allowance.

Keep Our NHS Public (KONP) is marking its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a video and a crowd-funder to help in their future campaigning work: [bit.ly/KONPAPPEAL](https://bit.ly/KONPAPPEAL)

## **Latest developments – locally and nationally**

### **Carers:**

- End Social Care Disgrace organised a fascinating event (12 June) allowing carers nationally to discuss their different situations and share campaign tips - for the video see: <https://endsocialcaredisgrace.org/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jun/30/carers-patients-doctors-feel-invisible-health>
- At the local level, carers (not already in receipt of a Carer’s Direct Payment- see Ealing DP Guide) can apply via the Ealing Carers Partnership to receive a one-off carer’s grant on a first come first served basis. ([www.ealingcarerspartnership.org](http://www.ealingcarerspartnership.org))
- The Direct Payment Marketplace (see earlier) also reminded relevant carers to ask about a carer’s assessment; the carer’s emergency card; dementia support services and other mechanisms of support (check out [Ealing Guide](#)).
- An article in a June edition of The Big Issue carries a piece by Ed Davey (leader of the Liberal Democrats) talking about his personal and political interests in caring – see his book *Why I Care: and Why Care Matters*, published by Harper Collins.

**Care workers:** There were several press articles and discussion about the overseas recruitment of care-workers, for example: 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 <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> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jul/22/the-guardian-view-on-labours-visa-crackdown-in-social-care-another-problem-for-an-overstretched-system>

## **Disability**

- [Ting Xu: The Legal Fiction of State Neutrality: Rethinking Accountability in Disability Home Adaptations](#) - fascinating questions about holding public bodies to account for their spending for contracted-out services. Relevant in this regard, is news (as we go to print) of problems at NRS, the equipment provider for Ealing Council – see <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn72mpz0zzeo.amp>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jul/15/britain-disabled-people-right-food-politics>

## **Finances and inequality**

- For discussion of the inter-relationship between poverty and poor health: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jun/29/britain-in-2025-sick-man-of-europe-battling-untreated-illness-crisis>; and <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jun/29/britains-medieval-health-inequality-is-devastating-nhs-experts-say>

## **Reports/Events:**

- On 4 July government issued its response to the inquiry: [Adult social care and the cost of inaction: government response to the HSCC](#) (ERSCAG made a submission to the Inquiry – see our website)
- 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](#)
- NHS North West London after a public board meeting on 23 July agreed on next steps on receipt of an [independent report](#) analysing feedback from a public consultation on two proposed options to improve [adult community specialist palliative and end-of-life care](#) across the region.
- Resolution Foundation held an event (17 July) to examine new research on how disabilities and caring responsibilities impact the lives of lower-income Britain and showing how disability and unpaid care is concentrated in the poorer half of Britain what it means for family finances ([www.resolutionfoundation.org](http://www.resolutionfoundation.org))

## **Sources of advice and help**

If you use Telecare, or know someone who does, you should contact your landline provider to find out what to do in time for the digital switchover currently underway: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Qklcdq7PQo>

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman issues weekly reports on complaints received and action taken. On 3 July it reports “[\*London Borough of Ealing \(24 015 556\)\*](#): *We will not investigate this complaint about the conduct of a social worker. That is because the complaint is late*”. In a subsequent edition (17 July), it reports “[\*London Borough of Ealing \(24 016 130\)\*](#): *We have upheld Mr X’s complaint about the Council’s handling of the charges for his adult social care. The Council has agreed to take appropriate steps to remedy the uncertainty caused.*”

The Which? consumer magazine has a number of useful online articles recently such as [More people are dying without a will](#); information about how banks could – or should – use a Death Notification Service to facilitate the administration after bereavement ([The bereavement service banks aren't using](#)); and [The future of the state pension](#).

Local Members of Parliament may be able to pursue your concerns/complaints? Rupa Huq (MP for Ealing Central and Acton) got a written answer from DWP in response to the request for information on departmental support available to “*people who suffer from disabilities after retirement*” and Deirdre Costigan MP for Ealing Southall (see earlier report on ERSCAG meeting) mentioned seeking a 10-minute Rule Bill on the question of “*reasonable adjustments*”.

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

On 3 July the government issued their [10 Year Health Plan for England](#) which is largely about the future of the National Health Service but clearly will have consequences for the provision of social care too. There have already been a number of commentaries: <https://keepournhspublic.com/nhs-ten-year-health-plan-risks-long-term-damage-not-recovery-but-managed-decline-say-campaigners/>; <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jul/03/labour-government-nhs-1948-10-year-plan-ai-neighbourhood-care-patients>; and Care Rights UK [here](#)

On 4 July, Chief Nurse Deborah Sturdy issued a blog about the relevance of the Health Plan for social care - [The 10 Year Health Plan and the role for social care – Social care](#)

The Kings Fund (specialist health and care think tank) has produced a series of helpful guides in reaction to the Ten Year Plan – such as [free on-demand webinar](#) featuring expert analysis; a [new podcast episode](#) breaking down the big themes; and the [latest long read](#): Truly fit for the future? The 10 Year Health Plan explained.

As ERSCAG awaits movement on the Louise Casey review of social care, we note here an article setting out our own ‘manifesto’ about the kinds of changes needed in any vision for the future - see article by Brian Fisher of End Social Care Disgrace: <https://leftfootforward.org/2025/05/heres-how-we-could-fix-social-care-and-support/>

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