



Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group Newsletter **September 2025**

Update on our latest activities

Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group (ERSCAG) continued to follow up on a series of meetings held in July / August with senior Council staff, Councillors and local MPs on issues such as: Blue Badge thefts; access options for carers, care-workers, and those with disabilities in a variety of options such as CPZs/School Exclusion Zones/stop and shop (see recent letter to Ealing Today [Stop & Shop+](#)); the transfer of responsibility for supplying community equipment to Medequip, and the hope that they will quickly create a service user group; the need to take into account the situation of care-users as employers in the debates around the Employment Rights Bill when the focus to date, understandably, has been on employee rights – see, for example: <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2025/sep/14/starmer-urged-to-make-populist-case-for-workers-rights-reforms>

In several instances, these concerns raised by ERSCAG have either fed into, or benefited from interventions by other groups – the Older Adults Partnership Board for example recently asked for investigation into disabled parking places in Acton High Street and asked that parking space for disabled drivers be taken into account in future design processes. Also raised were the importance of cars not parking across dropped kerbs, and very worrying legislation that could lead to motorised wheelchairs being obliged to use the road rather than the pavements.

At a meeting of ERSCAG's Direct Payment User Group (24 September), Sham Baig of Ealing Direct talked of developments in the Council's Direct Payment programme, presented their new DP Guide ([Ealing Guide](#)), and offered to send hard copy versions to any Ealing Direct Payment users who would like a copy.

As noted in the last newsletter local government elections to Ealing (and other) Councils will be taking place in May 2026 and it seems that local politicians are out already in communities looking for your support and help. ERSCAG intends in future newsletters to assess the commitments made in 2022 on social care by the different political parties, and what we should be asking from our future Councillors in the 2026 election – see on.

Campaigns – current or upcoming national campaigns and events

End Social Care Disgrace (to which ERSCAG is affiliated) is holding a major national event in Manchester on Saturday 25 October (1.30-5pm) live and on zoom with sessions on building the “*resistance, local campaigning and fighting for a national social care service*”. [You can find more about ESCaD here](#) and register for the 25 October event virtual or in-person [REGISTER HERE](#)

Cuts to Welfare and Disability Funding https://www.change.org/m/petitions-in-opposition-to-the-labour-government-s-proposed-cuts-to-disability-welfare-funding?source_location=petition_page&source_event=movement_indicator&petition_id=490482714 has a series of petitions that they are urging people to sign. For example, Change.org is urging people to sign a petition to [Stop The Disability Benefit Cuts](#) on the grounds as the originator writes *“Labour’s proposed Disability Benefit Cuts will drive hundreds of thousands of disabled people into poverty. Please lobby your MP to vote against the Cuts. I am a disabled person who will lose my PIP under the proposed Cuts, and I feel really distressed.”*

Are you a regular hospital user or visitor? A petition is being hosted by 38 degrees (<https://home.38degrees.org.uk/campaigns/>) to end car parking charges at hospital - to support it, see [ADD MY NAME](#) Change.org is running a petition when a family was excluded from a restaurant because they had disabled children. To support them in their demands that disabled guests are accommodated appropriately [Sign now with a click](#)

U3A had an article in its Autumn 2025 issue on the topic of volunteering – maybe we need to ‘clone’ a League of Friends volunteer at Ealing Hospital who has recently entered the Guinness Book of Records! [Beryl Carr Officially World's Oldest Female Volunteer](#)

Latest developments – locally and nationally

Care workers:

- Skills for Care organise a *“PA Network, open to both employed and self-employed personal assistants supporting people who draw on care and support. The PA Network offers opportunities for peer support, information sharing, and collaboration in co-designing resources for Personal Assistants and Individual Employers from your unique perspectives. The Network runs bi-monthly 1-hour sessions, we offer a mix of day and evening times to suit different schedules.”* To register see <https://events.skillsforcare.org.uk/skillsforcare/2193/register>
- Current levels of vacancies for care workers nationally remain very high (130,000+) and one concern relates to the crackdown on skilled worker visas. A recent Guardian article notes the impact of visa restrictions on prison officers: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/sep/12/prison-officers-uk-skilled-work-visa-rule-change>
- Care Rights UK write *“We are supporting Professional Care Workers’ Week 2025 (12-19 September 2025). We highlight the importance of staff capacity and retention in Our Vision for Social Care. Well supported and rewarded staff are essential for a strong care sector. Join in and show your support at thecareworkerscharity.org.uk, and read our recommendations for supporting a robust workforce [here](#).”*

Disability

- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/sep/21/uk-ministers-rebellion-coming-children-special-needs>

Finances

Relevant to any discussion of local government financing of social care see two recent articles in online West London newsletters (16 and 18 September) reporting about finances in Ealing’s neighbouring Council (Hammersmith and Fulham): [Council projecting £34m budget gap partly due to funding reforms](#) and London Council saves £1m in 3 years despite ‘challenging’ environment [Read more](#)

Reports/Events:

- On 7 July, UNISON in its testimony to the Covid Inquiry said *“if another pandemic were to happen tomorrow the big worry is that social care would be in exactly the same position as before”*.

- Ealing Council celebrated Falls Prevention Week (between 15 and 19 September) and had two free workshops to help residents stay safe and steady. For a Falls Prevention Toolkit: <https://ealing.pagetiger.com/clinykr/1>
- The parliamentary debate about the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill continues. After consideration by the Houses of Commons and Lords, and two committee reports published by the [Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee](#) and the [Constitution Committee](#), deliberations continue. See also <https://ukconstitutionallaw.org/2025/09/12/stephen-tierney-the-terminally-ill-adults-end-of-life-bill-a-dangerous-licence-for-executive-law-making/> It seems a further report will look at implementation of the bill by 7 November. Will they look at palliative care provision also? <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/sep/12/assisted-dying-hospices-struggling-house-of-lords>
- The Women's Budget Group is providing training on using equality impact assessments since "EQIAs can make sure policies work for women". The next session is being held in Cardiff on 4 October – for more info see: www.wbg.org.uk
- A coffee morning is being organised in Ealing for wheelchair users by AJM Healthcare and other local support services on 7 October (11-1pm) contact – userforums@ajmhealthcare.org

Your Help Needed

- Ealing Council wants to routinely consult with residents and suggests that anyone interested in being signed up to the GoVocal platform "to have a much better experience of taking part in local decision-making" and should contact them by email research@ealing.gov.uk.

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 underway: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Qklcdq7PQo>. If you need more information about recent changes around community equipment and Medequip services, check out Ealing Council's website or contact the Council contact centre: 020 8825 8000). An article in consumer magazine – Which's 15 September online version - provides advice about how one can [Protect yourself from number spoofing scams](#)

Inclusion London has events to encourage senior personnel (CEOs or Directors) of Deaf and Disabled People's Organisations (DDPOs) to meet and share ideas and support - Future meeting dates include: 29th January, 30th April, and 23rd July 2026. *"It's a tough job being CEO or Director of a DDPO. You have huge responsibilities and face big challenges. Many of these are out of your control, including a hostile environment of cuts and chronic underfunding, a staffing and recruitment crisis, and ever-growing demand for support. Being the leader can also be very lonely as it can be hard to discuss problems, especially confidential ones, with staff or trustees. The PowerUp CEO Network is here to help. We passionately believe in the power of collective peer support to tackle isolation, energise, problem-solve, and build resilience, skills and learning".*

The Local Government Ombudsman www.lgo.org.uk issues a weekly report of complaints received nationally and the results of their investigations. In the issue of 25 September they reported on the case of - [London Borough of Ealing \(25 000 832\)](#) "Summary: We will not investigate Miss X's complaint about the Council not providing her with section 117 aftercare following her discharge from hospital. This is because the Council agreed to resolve the complaint early by providing a proportionate remedy for the injustice caused by the likely fault."

Ealing Council has issued a new Community Charter which “*aims to make sure residents and community groups are always able to get involved in council decision-making processes. The council has developed the charter through a series of workshops with residents, feedback from a public survey, and the help of an advisory group*” See [COMMUNITY CHARTER](#)

Social care over the longer term

Time Magazine (18 August 2025) carried an article under the title of “*why can’t seniors afford long term care?*” and set out some of the problems with social care provision in the United States. Similar concerns could have been written about the UK: we await Baroness Casey’s review looking at key issues such as the financing and organisation of social care in future.

Closer to home and, as noted earlier, political parties are beginning to plan for the local government elections due in May 2026. The Liberal Democrats have encouraged Ealing residents to feed in any of their thoughts about what they hope for from their party’s manifesto, so if you have ambitions for social care at the local level, why not engage? <https://ealing.news/politics/ealing-council-elections-2026/lib-dems-consult-public-ahead-of-2026-ealing-council-elections/> See also [Ealing Liberal Democrats Launch Resident Survey](#) Additionally, if you are active in another political party, maybe you should ask about their manifesto plans regarding social care?

At the time of writing, most of this year’s party-political conferences are over (20-23 September, Liberal Democrats; 28 Sept-1 October, Labour; 3-5 October, Greens; and 5-8 October, Conservatives) but it was notable that few of the think tanks who organise workshops at all these events organised anything specifically relating to social care. ERSCAG is asking local politicians whether any decisions/resolutions/debates took place on social care – it will be very worrying if this key issue has fallen down the political agenda. The forthcoming local government elections may provide us all with an opportunity to remedy that?

At the national level, there was an interesting) flurry of campaigns recently on questions of privatisation and in-sourcing from We Own It (weownit.org.uk). In their 27 August newsletter, they reported that the government is planning to amend the Procurement Act 2023 and has opened a consultation to inform their decision. We Own It says that one of the key changes government is considering is using a public interest test before making sourcing decisions on public contracts, and they have provided a template by which you can contact the Cabinet Office: [Email the cabinet office](#) This review of procurement could be relevant to the amount of flexibility local authorities will – or won’t - have when commissioning community equipment (see last week’s newsletter about the collapse of NRS) or other services? If you feel that it is important that considerations other than “the lowest possible cost” are borne in mind in such decision making, it may be worth finding out more about this legislative review which has only just come to ERSCAG’s attention.

[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

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