



**Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group Newsletter
March/April 2026 inc Election Special**

Local Government Elections in Ealing (7 May 2026)

If you have not yet registered to vote, or to have a postal ballot, the deadlines are now past, but you can still register (by 5pm on 28 April) for a new [proxy vote](#), where a voter nominates a registered eligible person to vote for them. For more information about the local election here in Ealing, you can contact the Council's elections team on 020 8825 7777 (8:30am and 5pm, Monday – Friday) or by emailing elections@ealing.gov.uk

Assuming you are registered to vote – who can you vote for? If you know your ward – check out the candidates on the Council's website here: [view a map of the wards](#) or, if you are not sure of which ward you live in, you can also [search by post code](#) on the Council's website. The candidates for each ward are provided here for your convenience: [Central Greenford ward](#); [Dormers Wells ward](#); [Ealing Broadway ward](#); [Ealing Common ward](#); [East Acton ward](#); [Greenford Broadway ward](#); [Hanger Hill ward](#); [Hanwell Broadway ward](#); [Lady Margaret ward](#); [North Acton ward](#); [North Greenford ward](#); [North Hanwell ward](#); [Northfield ward](#); [Northolt Mandeville ward](#); [Northolt West End ward](#); [Norwood Green ward](#); [Perivale ward](#); [Pitshanger ward](#); [South Acton ward](#); [Southall Broadway ward](#); [Southall Green ward](#); [Southall West ward](#); [Southfield ward](#); and [Walpole ward](#)

Most wards appear to have candidates from the Conservatives (https://gc9u5.r.a.d.sendibm1.com/mk/cl/f/sh/SMK1E8tHeFuBmPUFJMSYzNH87d0r/VA4FyPQgkd_X); Ealing Community Independents (<https://ealingindependents.org/>); Greens (<https://ealing.greenparty.org.uk/>); Labour (<https://www.ealinglabour.co.uk/our-plan/>); Liberal Democrats (manifesto link [here](#)); and Reform UK (no specific Ealing-related manifesto, but for national policies, see <https://www.reformparty.uk/policies>). Given the importance of social care (not least as a proportion of Ealing Council's budget), it is perhaps surprising that there is relatively little comment about the parties' plans in their manifestos (it is entirely absent from some), but you should check for yourselves.

On the 7th May polling stations will be open from 7am to 10pm – see the link to [find their nearest polling station on the council's website](#). And as to what forms of photo ID are acceptable, check out: <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/voter-id/accepted-forms-photo-id>. Don't waste your vote by turning up without the relevant ID!

ERSCAG Annual General Meeting – 8 June

A slightly different election will take place at ERSCAG's Annual General Meeting being held virtually on 8 June! If you are a regular supporter and would like to attend, vote a new committee and receive our annual report etc., please contact the Secretary (contact details on page 4).

Update on our latest activities

Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group (ERSCAG) attended the last meeting of the Health and Well Being Board (10 March) prior to the elections and asked about the recent report by Healthwatch into the transition from Ealing to Harrow Careline and the extent to which care providers in Ealing are paying the London Living Wage to their workers.

ERSCAG met with Cllr Polly Knewstub (27 March) given her Cabinet portfolio of Healthy and Equal Lives. Issues discussed included – zero-hour contracts; the NHS reorganisation and its likely impact on social care; Direct Payment support; a promised audit of disabled parking places; developments towards an Access Group etc. Most of these will continue to figure on our agenda for future meetings with Cllr Knewstub (or any successor appointed in the wake of the elections).

A regular meeting of ERSCAG's Direct Payment User Group was held (8 April) with an excellent presentation by Franklen Choi who heads up Action on Disability's Direct Payment Support Services for Hammersmith and Fulham. Action on Disability contracts with H&F Council to provide an independent support service for all Direct Payment users, and has established an equivalent of our DPUG – ie a Direct Payment Peer Support Group – to exchange ideas and concerns. The rest of the meeting looked at current concerns with the Wheelchair Service and the capacity for specialist assessment needs.

Campaigns – current or upcoming national campaigns and events

Ealing Today reports (1 April) *“Local mental health charity HFEH Mind has rebranded as [West London Mind](#) and expanded its services.... The move marks a major step in its mission to support communities across the capital. The change, which took effect on 1 April, means the organisation now operates across five boroughs: Hammersmith & Fulham, Ealing, Hounslow, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster.”*

The Campaign for Real Care is looking for support for its Charter for the Right to Wellbeing; for more information check out - <https://share.google/4O0LjN0pIkB1L7LrG>

Latest developments – locally and nationally

Carehomes:

- ERSCAG's Secretary recently booked two weeks' respite care in Acton Care Centre and was so impressed with the staff and service that she felt she should pass on details to others looking for similar provision: www.goldcarehomes.org
- To counter this – two sad items about people feeling 'forced' into care homes: <https://www.pathfindersalliance.org.uk/forced-into-a-care-home-this-could-have-been-me/> and <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0n4nkyj>
- Or for a 91 year old's alternative solution to going into a care-home (starts a bit sadly but basically uplifting <https://youtube.com/watch?v=jJBob8-g0eA&si=Qi93iaFYf7xH2sxW>
- Or check out “Who will look after me when I am old?” in John Kampfner book “Braver new world: the countries daring to do things others won't”. The author examines the

situation in Japan – the provision of innovative social care services keeping older people part of a wider community, and the long-term financing of such provision.

Carers

- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2026/mar/22/mps-threaten-fresh-inquiry-into-carers-allowance-scandal-amid-redress-delays>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2026/apr/11/carers-allowance-britain-unpaid-workforce> - at 65p per hour, Frances Ryan asks “who cares for the carers?”

Careworkers:

- Community Integrated Care has published a report Unfair to Care, 2026 and reports “Our research reveals a 28.6% take-home pay gap between social workers and their equivalent NHS Band 3 staff” [See our campaign](#)”
- <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2026/apr/06/sick-pay-rule-changes-benefit-uk-workers-tuc>

Disability

- End Social Care Disgrace organised an excellent virtual meeting at the end of February on “Hidden Voices” – for the recording see <https://youtu.be/ecqJMPw6fcE>
- On a related topic, an exhibition was recently organised in London – “Homes not Hospitals – the fight for freedom” <https://www.mencap.org.uk/event/homes-not-hospitals-fight-freedom-exhibition#>: The exhibition shares the real experiences of people with a learning disability and autistic people who have been detained in mental health hospitals: thousands of people remain locked away, because the right support is not available in the community. Many have been detained for years, separated from their families, overmedicated, restrained, and denied ordinary lives.

Funding and Finances

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c1wzyw3eexpo> reports on Tower Hamlets’ experience of having introduced a no-charge system for homecare.
- Ealing Today reports [Ealing Council Proposes Maximum Council Tax Rise](#) and in Ealing Council’s newsletter there is more news about the Council’s budget: [Watch video](#)
- <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2026/mar/29/disabled-benefit-claimants-face-lower-payments-if-conditions-not-deemed-lifelong-charities-say>; and see also - <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2026/apr/02/labour-disability-cuts-universal-credit>
- For more info on the Timms Review of Personal Independence Payments (PIPs) see:

[Click here to read the article](#)

- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2026/mar/28/the-great-care-home-cash-grab-how-private-equity-turned-vulnerable-elderly-people-into-human-atms>

Reports/Events:

- A Compass report [Care is a Societal Challenge: Purpose Before Process](#) argues “for systemic overhaul in the care sector, including oversight moved to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, and impetus primarily placed in Local Authority Social Services Departments”.
- End Social Care Disgrace held an interesting event to learn more about Co-ops working in the arena of social care – the speaker indicated her willingness to be approached directly if anyone wanted to learn more: Tabitha.hamilton@uk.coop
- Social Care future developed a “State of Our Nation” podcast

• The State of Our Nation podcast

- The Campaign for Real Care has produced this helpful toolkit: <https://www.campaignrealcare.org/toolkit>

Your Help Needed

Ealing Healthwatch is looking for submissions from local residents to its Workplan for the coming year (2026-2027): see <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/54WIU7/> ERSCAG's response emphasised the importance of Healthwatch finding mechanisms to study social care alongside its studies of NHS services - social care is much more dispersed than medical care, often happening in people's homes, so may require particular research techniques?

Social care over the longer term

In light of the relative absence of discussion of social care in the Ealing party manifestos (see page 1), we may all have to study carefully the conclusions of a recent report by the Kings Fund. The report (<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/reports/not-my-priority-how-the-public-social-care/>) discusses how the general public views social care and what can be done to move the topic up the public and political agendas.

The latest stage (module 3) of the **Covid Inquiry** reported (16.4.26) positively about the response of NHS workers to the challenges – see [Read full update](#) and the [response](#) from Care Rights UK. For ERSCAG's submission to the Inquiry see www.erscag.org.uk

Baroness Louise Casey who is carrying out a major review of social care (<https://caseycommission.co.uk/>) issued a statement prior to her interim report expected this summer and there were several interesting responses:

- BBC coverage of her statement : <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cg4gg9ywereo>.
- The government responded: [Letter from the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to Baroness Casey](#).
- The Local Government Association replied: <https://share.google/mRUwwAeASz3CkZjdG>;
- Social Care Future summarised her comments and early recommendations - [shared her first thoughts and some early recommendations](#). They concluded that: “*Dame Casey has powerfully drawn attention to the many challenges facing those of us who have reason to draw on adult social care to live our lives, and we share her frustration at the slow pace of reform. We take hope from her ambition for a radically reimaged and redesigned approach, fit for the future and we stand ready to work with the Commission to bring it about, including to ensure that the experience and expertise of those of us who draw on adult social care take centre stage as this work evolves.*”
- Silver Voices seemed much more critical in its members' briefing: “*The Speech had all the hallmarks of being cobbled together to try and show that this exercise is a serious effort to resolve the social care crisis (but there was) a dearth of any serious proposals*”....
- Being the Boss response: [Louise Casey: England's social care system faces 'moment of reckoning'](#)
- The Health Service Journal reports: <https://www.hsj.co.uk/policy-and-ulation/nhs-has-hollowed-out-community-care-says-government-adviser/7041226.article>.
- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2026/mar/10/britain-social-care-politicians-public-national-care-service> - by Polly Toynbee, of The Guardian.

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

For more information contact ERSCAG Secretary

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ealingreclaimsocialcareactiongroup/>

Please get in touch if you need material in other formats.