



**Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group Newsletter
May 2026**

Update on our latest activities

Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group (ERSCAG) has written to all the newly elected and re-elected Councillors introducing our work and putting them on our monthly newsletter mailing list. At the same time, we will remind people of the social care commitments made in the manifestos upon which they were elected.

This call to implement their party-political manifesto commitments will be especially directed at the Labour delegation which, though reduced, remains predominant. The Council now consists of 70 Councillors (46 Labour, 13 Liberal Democrats, 5 Conservatives, 5 Greens and one Independent) and essentially this means that the majority (Labour) is still fairly intact, with a doubling of 'opposition' parties (24 compared to 12). Since the election, one of the elected Greens has stood down and a by-election will be held soon in North Acton.

Cllr Polly Knewstub (Labour) did not get re-elected, which is unfortunate from our perspective since she was always very open to meetings with ERSCAG and took her social care duties very seriously. We will be hoping for a similar attitude from Cllr Paul Driscoll who has taken on her Cabinet position of Healthy Equal Lives.

In due course we will check who is to serve on the committees that deal with health and social care but can confirm already that Cllr Ben Wesson (Labour) remains as chair, and Cllr Andrew Steed (Lib Dem) as deputy chair, of the Health and Adult Social Services Scrutiny Panel. Both have proved good friends of ERSCAG in the past. At the time of writing, membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board has still to be confirmed.

We have also written to congratulate James Murray (Ealing North MP) who has moved from Treasury to be the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. Regular readers of this newsletter will be aware that we have met routinely with James, and we hope that his new responsibilities will make him even more eager to hear about lived experience on the ground and discuss how to transform social care (locally and nationally).

Our Direct Payment User Group (DPUG) met (20 May) and discussed the practical problems that we want Council staff/Councillors/MPs to address – wheelchair provision; care assessments; community equipment; short breaks; and communication problems.

Campaigns – current or upcoming national campaigns and events

End Social Care Disgrace is organising a public meeting on the topic of Hidden Voices but this time with the focus on older people. You can register for the virtual event on 18 June, 6.30-8pm, <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/YcL6-4mUQZqPm6VwXERsMQ>

For more information on the campaign for Nina's Law (to allow care workers to continue regularly to visit and work with disabled people when in hospital) https://click.e.change.org/f/a/GZULzR_gC2yAfR5jNyWVKA~~/AANj1RA~/jMXq1MLiT WPIJBmLY7EhgXhijKtpuF76JzCNZuaBPscceAeMcvH5646YBt45viE91eWkl6tgpCpYLr uhmrTiVJP9cpchlVhoRyqs6n2FhDJnNTlnUBLgbDfqg_hvg_yuUjtmwahiYqLT78IEJvde oA~~

Silver Voices campaigns for older people and has a major petition <https://www.change.org/p/save-cash-stop-app-only-payments-support-alicia-s-petition>. They explain: “*there have been many petitions in recent times - some have concentrated on access to cash and the closure of bank branches; others have opposed digital payments or raised specific cases such as car parks. Silver Voices has linked all these aspects together and want this to be a long-running petition acting as the focal point for all campaigns to protect access to cash and to stamp out the payment systems which are hastening its demise.*”

And we should mark here again the loss of two fantastic disability campaigners. An event is being organised on 8 June to mark the life of Sandra Daniels, disabled activist, and formerly active in Act4Inclusion (contact ERSCAG secretary initially for more info). And one of our very own here in Ealing – Sian Vasey – whom many of you remember well - figured in an article that we only discovered recently: <https://www.bcu.ac.uk/research/media-and-journalism/sir-lenny-henry-centre-for-media-diversity/representology-journal/representology-journal-vol-2/sian-vasey-disability-pioneer-inside-british-broadcasting>

Latest developments – locally and nationally

Care Homes:

Care Rights UK writes “*How to choose a care home – we put together this blog about*” <https://us.list-manage.com/852lSoXSixe?e=cb25eb1cf4&c2id=07c8832944c6a33d3f4979935b97c2de>

Carers

- Radio 4 is running a series of 15 minute programmes entitled: Who cares? which is a mixture of interviews and comedy skits. by stand-up comedian and carer Mary Bourke <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m002cdlp?partner=uk.co.bbc&origin=share-mobile>

Careworkers:

For action by and on behalf of migrant care workers: see <https://leftfootforward.us16.list-manage.com/track/click?u=65b47e7ed535f89a2113322cd&id=fd6fc5b279&e=367ea0174a>

Disability

- Ealing Council reports on action taken to challenge Blue Badge fraud: <https://www.aroundealing.com/news/stolen-blue-badge-lands-man-in-court/>
- At the UK level BBC coverage reports young disabled people being threatened with institutionalisation after hospital: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c2e2zvlyy38o> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQrMB44PR1w>
- And news from the USA – more people with intellectual disabilities will be executed! <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2026/may/09/supreme-court-death-penalty-execution-disabilities>

Funding and Finances

- Council Leader Peter Mason wrote in a blog on the Council's website (14 May) “*with a better financial settlement from a new government, this administration will be re-*

investing into the front line services that have had to take the brunt of the cuts under austerity that forced councils up and down the country to prioritise the growing demands of family breakdown, homelessness and those within our families in need of care, all of which still remain”.

- The need indeed is great with important small local charities closing. The trustees of the Befriending project, working with the isolated and housebound, write about the closure of the project at the end of June: *“While the work of the charity remains vital, the financial backdrop for small charities like us has become increasingly challenging, and we have not been able to ensure a sustainable future”* <https://befriend.london/closure-and-support/> And Dementia Concern also announced its closure as of 22 May *“after more than four decades of supporting people living with dementia, their families, and their carers in Ealing”* <https://www.dementiaconcern.co.uk/>
- And for a wider exploration of the increasing trend of public services being privatised you may be interested in the campaigning of We Own It? Their latest Youtube video gives *“10 reasons why privatisation fails. You can [watch it here](#) (or read about the 10 reasons [on our website](#)).”*
- And/or for financing more generally, see the Journal of Social Democracy (May 2026) <https://renewal.org.uk/articles/rebuilding-the-uk-tax-system-fairness-growth-and-the-renewal-of-the-social-contract/> or re-visit the papers prepared some time ago about funding for Adult Social Care by ERSCAG (<https://erscag.org.uk/index.php/ealing-council-erscag-submission-papers/#:~:text=some%20economic%20considerations.-,View%20Here,-2022>) and End Social Care Disgrace <https://endsocialcaredisgrace.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Adult-Social-Care-and-its-funding-ESCaD-draft-for-comment.pdf>

Reports/Events:

- After a book recommendation last month, see article on what the UK has to learn from the Taiwan experience of social care: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2026/may/14/europe-big-problems-japan-taiwan-care-systems>
- New York University (Stern Center for Business and Human Rights) published a report on healthcare in the US and the growing involvement of private equity investors in hospitals, nursing homes, and other healthcare facilities. *“[Our report](#), written by Michael Goldhaber, documents the challenges to quality patient care posed by this financial model and makes a series of practical recommendations for how to address them”.*
- The School of Oriental and African Studies and the Jesuit Refugee Service UK issued a major new report at a webinar (14 May): *Disabled by Design: The Human Impact of the Hostile Environment on People Seeking Asylum*. The report explores how the hostile environment excludes asylum seekers, but also actively creates and deepens disability.

Your Help Needed

Volunteer drivers needed – for the Ealing Social Club for the Blind which meets on the fourth Thursday of each month (except August). They need volunteer drivers to collect members from their home in Ealing, drive them to the club at St Barnabas Church in Pitshanger Lane, Ealing W5 and collect them from the club afterwards and take them back home. The members look forward to their social evening – contact Rosemary on 020 8903 1097 if you can help.

Sources of advice and help

The online Which? consumer magazine (April) asked [Is the 'new' state pension better?](#) *“An overhaul 10 years ago was meant to make the state pension easier to understand. Yet research shows that many of us are still unclear. We explain how it works and what's different from the old system”.*

The Local Government Ombudsman continued to report on social care complaints received about Ealing (and other) Councils. In the [London Borough of Ealing \(25 015 181\)](#) and [London Borough of Ealing \(25 027 539\)](#), the complaints were not pursued.

And three good news stories to end with: an ERSCAG committee member reported positively on securing a falls detector alarm suitable for his brother who has mental health problems, thanks to speedy action by Harrow Careline. And a DPUG member reported being referred by her GP to a ‘talking therapy’ programme which has proved enormously beneficial. She was also positive about recent cataract surgery which allowed her, once again, to use her eye-gaze equipment to communicate: a one-page article entitled “*The eye operation that gave me back by voice*” is available on request.

Are you a local group in need of funding? Rupa Huq MP (Ealing Central and Acton) is hosting a virtual zoom meeting on 12 June (10am) where one can learn more about how the National Lottery, the Arts Council, the Sports Council, and the British Film Institute can help local groups with funds – places are limited, so to register for your free place, see <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1989214262407?aff=oddtcreator>

Social care over the longer term

The focus on ‘short term’ changes to local government with the recent local elections has meant that longer term concerns have fallen in profile. Various Council committees, thinktank sessions, and even major reports were ‘on hold’ over the last two months or so. The immediate priority locally will therefore be to establish contact with all those in decision making roles in relation to social care – establishing contact with Councillors, following up on party political commitments, and on funding questions as per Council Leader Mason’s remarks (see pp 2-3).

Nationally, the Casey Commission continues its work, and the last newsletter provided a series of articles on their work to date. The King’s speech seemed to offer little on social care <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2026/may/13/starmer-sets-out-changes-to-education-health-and-courts-in-kings-speech> And Silver Voices was very dismissive “*Kings Speech is a dud for older people*”! So, it may be worth going back to study again the King’s Fund report mentioned in our last newsletter. It addresses how one can move the topic of social care up the public and political agenda <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/reports/not-my-priority-how-the-public-social-care>). The appointment of a new Secretary of State for Health and Social Care – see page 1 and reference to ‘our own Ealing’ MP James Murray – may also open up immediate new opportunities?

ERSCAG is holding its annual general meeting on 8 June virtually. So if you are a regular supporter and would like to attend, vote for a committee and receive our annual report etc., please contact the Secretary.

[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
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ealingreclaimsocialcareactiongroup/>
Please get in touch if you need material in other formats