



Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group

October 2026 newsletter

Update on our latest activities

Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group (ERSCAG) prepared a short reaction to Prime Minister Burnham's speech to the Labour party conference inasmuch as it related to social care and wrote to all three local Ealing MPs (Deirdre Costigan, Rupa Huq and James Murray - see page 4). As noted in the last newsletter, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) is inspecting the London Borough of Ealing in coming weeks. ERSCAG submitted an email with a series of comments/issues which it hopes will be addressed – assessment times; service provision; advocacy support; daycare provision; digital exclusion; workforce issues; community equipment; local accountability etc. We met with Adenike Tilleray for a CQC briefing - Ms Tilleray has been the lead-person at the Council preparing for the Inspection for a CQC briefing (she has now been succeeded as Strategic Director by Jason Strelitz <https://www.ealing.news/news/ealing-council-recruits-new-boss-for-adults-and-public-health/>). ERSCAG also met subsequently with CQC team members (28 October). The 2024/5 CQC Inspection said Ealing “requires improvement” so it will be very important to see what the CQC reports in due course (due early 2027).

Campaigns – current or upcoming national campaigns and events

End Social Care Disgrace is organising another important online public meeting entitled “Burnham – and Beyond?” on Thursday 19th November 6.30 – 8pm. Speakers will include disability activist Rachael Tomlinson, the feminist writer Rosie Read (author of *Undervalued Social Care*), Sophia Kleanthous of Disability Rights UK, economist Lord Prem Sikka, and Anne Gray (author of “Radical Approaches to the Care Crisis). To register: [blob:https://outlook.office.com/2b72df1c-2ac0-4bf4-8cd9-16bc75754586](https://outlook.office.com/2b72df1c-2ac0-4bf4-8cd9-16bc75754586)

Silver Voices (www.silvervoices.co.uk) – continues its campaign to counter the proposed landline switchover. Their Briefing Note (45/26) talks of “*a shambolic switchover process....vulnerable customers are not always receiving the personal help promised.... the target (of a January 2027 turning-off of all traditional landlines) will likely not be met...There is no evidence that the Government is actively monitoring the transition process...*” Earlier this year Silver Voices handed in a petition signed by 118,000, and the online campaign group Change.org is asking for support on the same topic: <https://www.change.org/p/save-our-landlines-stop-forced-digital-switchovers-keep-heather-safe>

Care Rights UK held a panel to discuss “how can we push for improvements to care” – see newsletter <https://mailchi.mp/carerrightsuk/newsletter-10598738?e=cb25eb1cf4>

Latest developments – locally and nationally

Carers

- Ealing Carers Hub produces a regular newsletter with information about support services for carers info@ealingcarers.org.uk; www.ealingcarers.org.uk
- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2026/oct/22/carers-cant-live-on-51p-an-hour>

Care homes The Hallett Inquiry into Covid published a report on adult social care and residential homes. For the full report see [report](#), and for Guardian coverage of same: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2026/oct/20/uk-government-failures-led-to-covid-spreading-like-wildfire-in-care-homes-inquiry-finds>

Care users

- <https://www.theguardian.com/news/audio/2026/oct/06/it-breaks-your-heart-everyday-navigating-englands-social-care-system>

Care workers

- <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2026/sep/10/fundamentally-unfair-burnham-must-overhaul-migration-reforms-says-tuc-general-secretary> - “changes to immigration rules risks over-stretching social care”.
- Ealing “is now home to the first ever Living Wage Zone in the country – every business in the zone pays their staff at least the London Living Wage” [Living Wage Zone](#)
- And for news about national developments relevant to migrant care-workers – see “In this week’s episode, we interview Ethan Chua from [Migrants Organise](#). [LISTEN HERE: Everything you should know about NHS migrant charges](#)”

Disability

- An event to mark the theme of UK Disability History Month 2026 (i.e. Disability, Politics and Democracy) is planned for 3rd December 8pm at West London Trades Union Club. Two short videos will be shown and the Equalities Officer for Ealing Labour Group will also speak: [Access | West London Trades Union Club](#) . Queries: equality@wltuc.com
- In a blogger’s response to the Timms Review underway (6th October): “...there was also a lot to welcome, including fewer unnecessary PIP reassessments and an emphasis on getting more decisions right the first time but I want to see them go much further (and) I’m launching [new research](#) which exposes how wasteful mandatory reconsiderations are.”
- Resolution Foundation (www.resolutionfoundation.org) organised a 15th October seminar “A new deal for disabled people, reconnecting support with the needs of recipients” .
- For more information on a media campaign about disability hate see: <https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/campaigns-and-policy/crime-and-disabled-people/disability-media-action/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2026/oct/16/right-scronger-rhetoric-benefits-labour-compassion-welfare> - comment piece by Frances Ryan (author of ‘Crippled’)

Finance

<https://www.ealingtoday.co.uk/page/shared/common/eacouncil309.htm> In Ealing “the biggest pressure is Adults & Public Health (which) is forecast to overspend by £14.171m driven by costs for long-term learning disability, mental health & older adult, mainly because of new demand.”

Health

- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2026/oct/20/public-support-funding-principles-nhs-falling-across-uk-population>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2026/oct/11/overdiagnosis-money-fonagy-review-mental-health-support-public-funding>

Reports/Events:

- IPPR (www.ippr.org) reported on the Labour party conference claiming that the party’s commitment to a National Care Service was a welcome adoption of [IPPR policy](#). They said that “making social care free at the point of need would be a major reform but delivering it also forces a wider debate about how we pay for an ageing society, how fairly the burden is shared between generations, and what we expect the state to provide”.
- The Labour party conference also led Policy Exchange (2nd October) to refer to its 2025 report - [Beyond Our Means: A Plan to Tame Public Spending](#), and argue that “changes to the triple lock are unlikely to save much money – almost certainly not enough to cover the significant new spending on ‘free’ social care announced at the same time.”

- Radio 4's 'Radical' offers a radical care solution - help from volunteer students:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m00325dy?partner=uk.co.bbc&origin=share-mobile>

Your Help Needed

- If you want to be interviewed by Care Quality Commission for their Inspection of Ealing (see earlier) contact Adenike Tilleray, tilleraya@ealing.gov.uk
- Call to carers: Ealing Healthwatch is carrying out a survey of carers' experiences (deadline end of calendar year) - <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/G1E32F/>

Sources of advice and help

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (www.lgo.org.uk) issued several rulings about complaints received about Ealing: see [London Borough of Ealing \(25 013 715\)](#), [London Borough of Ealing \(26 009 625\)](#), [London Borough of Ealing \(25 009 283\)](#), and [London Borough of Ealing \(25 023 700\)](#) – none of which were upheld. However, in [London Borough of Ealing \(25 024 121\)](#) – “*We upheld Miss X’s complaint about delay in completing a financial assessment for her mothers’ care costs. The Council has agreed to take suitable action to remedy the matter*”. This trend seems to run counter to an item in last month’s newsletter Ealing News that 10 out of every 12 Ealing complaints are upheld - <https://www.ealing.news/news/adult-social-care-complaints-ealing-council-tops-london-figures/> ?

Which online magazine (5 October) notes: “*Our latest survey found the average age that people make a power of attorney is 68 – but that could be too late. We hear from those who have one about their experience and the pitfalls to avoid when setting it up for loved ones. Don’t wait to make a power of attorney*”.

Ealing Council is organising a series of workshops to help people tackle digital exclusion. They suggest that interested people can visit www.ealing.gov.uk/getonline to explore free digital support, training and resources available across the Borough. You can also read more about Ealing Gets Digital on the [Around Ealing website](#).

Social care over the longer term

The Casey Commission is continuing with public participation panels etc. and producing regular newsletters: http://caseycommission.co.uk/2026/10/september-2026-newsletter/?utm_source=d102_email_alert&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=casey_email_alert&utm_content=email_post_url

There was little (no?) focus on social care at the majority of party-political conferences held in recent weeks, but the speech by Prime Minister Andy Burnham to the Labour Party conference (29th September) dramatically changed the public debate. In his speech Andy Burnham said that a National Care Service was needed - “*A person-centred, high-quality care service that starts in the home; a system in the best traditions of this party, where everyone contributes and everyone is covered; free at the point of use and no care charges paid out of your basic state pension; care that is about people not profit.*”

ERSCAG’s reaction was to “*warmly welcome the fact that the Prime Minister gave such prominence in his conference speech to the importance of addressing social care provision after decades of neglect. Social care (or its inadequacy) affects millions of people, either directly as care-users, or as care-workers, and family or informal carers.*”

And went on to say “(we) were very encouraged to hear the Prime Minister’s intention to establish a National Care Service, but disappointed to hear that it will be introduced only in the next Parliament. The need for change is very great, and we had thought that the very purpose of Baroness Casey’s work was to build a consensus that could be arrived at before ‘election season’?” We also noted that, whilst the Prime Minister’s reference to his family experience of caring for elderly relatives with dementia was very poignant, reform must also address the large percentage of social care users who are working age adults with disabilities.

ERSCAG’s response focused on the ‘what’ of social care rather than funding. We argued that the purpose of all care packages must be to encourage independent living – and, given this, the practice by many Local Authorities to ration care for financial reasons is counter-productive. Short visits, or basic needs visits (limited only to dressing, bathing, feeding, toileting), will not deliver agency to the care-user. Mechanisms like Direct Payments (allowing people to have their own budgets and organise their own care) can be very helpful and empowering in this regard. ERSCAG also emphasised the importance of advocacy given that social care users and those caring for them often feel very isolated and uncertain about where to turn to for help. We also noted that, in the absence of a public social care service akin to the NHS, much of social care has been privatised leading to the profit motive predominating over other criteria, or market failures with very serious consequences (citing some local experiences by way of concrete examples).

For other reactions to the Burnham speech, a series of blogs is being hosted by Social Care Future (www.socialcarefuture.org.uk) on the “what” of social care with Baroness Jane Campbell, Dr Anna Severwright and others – see, for example, <https://r1.technology-trust-news.org/c/AQjU5hUQgqC5Ahj6qZMZIOih2xgohfjGCqytbFfeso2uSoMaRLO0JfIE32SjSuOPTT739P-sWpXC>; https://r1.technology-trust-news.org/c/AQjU5hUQ9oG3Ahj6qZMZIISQmxgo5euiCilzxn2DXnGUysacr7rx8yWU3V_XN3-InmTmCh7OHrcX And elsewhere for discussion on Open Democracy see: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/r/b18e220e?m=cd234601-6393-49ae-bd07-296f0d2c9b98>; End Social Care Disgrace: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leEagqROyDY>; Left Foot Forward - https://leftfootforward.org/2026/10/jam-tomorrow-for-some-and-gruel-today-for-everyone-burnhams-social-care-plans/?_; Disability News Service <https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/>; and Guardian comment pieces such as: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2026/oct/05/social-care-disabled-adults-crisis-elderly-people-government-silent>. Some reactions focused more on questions of financing with Silver Voices (3/10) “Burnham dumps triple lock to pay for delayed social care plans”; <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2026/oct/19/funding-social-care-is-a-collective-responsibility>; and <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2026/oct/16/target-pensions-or-welfare-not-banks-imf-tells-john-healey>.

For all the criticisms and comments on the Prime Minister’s speech, ERSCAG is very pleased that social care has moved up the political agenda and will continue to campaign for a National Care Support and Independent Living Service worthy of the name.

Check out our website - www.erscag.org.uk

For more information contact ERSCAG Secretary

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

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