



## **Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group Newsletter** **June 2024**

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

Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group (ERSCAG) held its annual meeting on 3 June, endorsed the annual report and financial statement from the outgoing committee, and re-elected its officers and committee members (more information available on request).

A general election was called since our last monthly newsletter, so on 31 May, ERSCAG issued an 'Election Special' highlighting the contact details of the various candidates standing in the three Ealing constituencies and providing extracts about social care from various manifestos. Members also attended the national online hustings organised by End Social Care Disgrace (25 June) and local hustings organised in Acton (26 June). We attended the Hanwell Carnival and distributed leaflets and hope to do the same for other Ealing festivals in coming weeks.

Social care got a lot of attention at a national event organised by Keep Our NHS Public (KONP) on 22 June and much of the focus was on messaging. How do we convince our politicians – in the lead up to elections – or, more importantly, once elected - to give priority to addressing the crisis in social care? For more discussion see: [People's NHS Campaign Hub](https://keepournhspublic.com/peoplesnhsfactsheet_social-care/) and its social care fact sheet [https://keepournhspublic.com/peoplesnhsfactsheet\\_social-care/](https://keepournhspublic.com/peoplesnhsfactsheet_social-care/)

In the meantime, pressure continues to be deployed around the issue of the closure of Ealing Careline – just one of the latest examples of social care provision being 'rationed' for those most in need. We are pursuing the option of an official complaint as well as meetings with the (newly) responsible Council portfolio holders.

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

In the May ERSCAG newsletter, ERSCAG wrote "Your voice does count!" and explained how contact with media outlets has resulted in more national media coverage of the important (but often overlooked) issue of social care. Well, it happened again! A quick e-mail to BBC Radio London ([hellobbclondon@bbc.co.uk](mailto:hellobbclondon@bbc.co.uk)) encouraged them to devote a long segment to social care (24 June). To encourage more coverage, why not contact the BBC directly for Your Voice Your Vote <https://feeds.bbci.co.uk/news/articles/c6pp596y2q1o>. A recording of the BBC radio interview, touching on the needs of younger disabled and older care-users, carers, care-workers, residential and domiciliary care, personal and social care, and the need for a more coherent social care system is found (from 07.37 onwards) on [https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/live:bbc\\_london?partner=uk.co.bbc&origin=share-mobile](https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/live:bbc_london?partner=uk.co.bbc&origin=share-mobile)

Age UK is asking supporters to sign up to a letter to party leaders "asking them to make social care is a top priority for the next government". Go to their website: [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

The Care and Support Alliance (consisting of over 50 disability and social care campaign organisations) is campaigning for the next government to take one very specific measure – “*at least we should end charging working age disabled people for their care needs*” - <https://careandsupportalliance.com/csa-calls-for-removal-of-charging-for-working-age-disabled-people/>

Care Rights UK notes that “*it is estimated that around 50% of the electorate either draw on or need care, work in care or are an unpaid carer*” and notes that we need to make our voices heard by policy makers. For more information contact [www.carerightsuk.org](http://www.carerightsuk.org)

Silver Voices wants you to sign a petition to party leaders <https://www.change.org/p/stop-homes-being-sold-to-pay-for-social-care>

## Latest developments locally & nationally

### Carers:

- Ealing has a number of regular “carer café sessions” across the Borough - for more info contact Ealing Carers Partnership on [www.ealingcarerspartnership.org](http://www.ealingcarerspartnership.org) and/or phone 0203 475 9891)
- Just discovered! An excellent book by well-known author, Kate Mosse – *An Extra Pair of Hands*, published by Wellcome Collection 2021. Beautiful writing and very evocative and moving description of providing an ‘extra pair of hands’ to her ageing parents and in-laws. Plenty of useful statistics and insights into the crisis in care but essentially telling an uplifting story about the practicalities and emotional demands of providing care for one’s loved ones.

### Careworkers:

- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/jun/02/uk-care-agencies-accused-of-exploiting-foreign-workers-caught-in-debt-traps>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/article/2024/jun/11/europe-right-immigration-britain-nigel-farage-rishi-sunak>

### Disability:

- Ealing Council encouraged people to celebrate Learning Disability Week (17-23 June) by valuing and recognising people with learning disabilities with a theme of “do you see me?”
- West London Trade Union Club is marking Disability Pride Month (July), with a talk by Janet Mearns about disability benefits, 8:00pm, Wednesday 17 July, in the bar, 33-35 Acton High Street, W3 6ND, access details <https://wltuc.com/access>, All are welcome.

### Reports etc.

Amongst the general election material produced, the Women’s Budget Group have a series of briefings including: [Social-care-and-gender-WBG-Briefing-2024.pdf](#) and Keep Our NHS Public issued an Election Manifesto: <https://keepournhspublic.com/konp-general-election-statement/>

## Sources of advice and help

A recent Which Money carried an item entitled: *Nine things you should know about paying for care. They report “Most of us are all living longer these days, so it’s more important than ever to consider our future care needs and how they will be paid for.....Find out what you need to know about [paying for care.](#)”*

A personal friend was recently bereaved and wrote this blog about the need to be prepared for such circumstances. His book - *Dying Well* – is also to be warmly recommended - <http://richardreoch.info/thank-you-for-teaching-us-getting-ready-for-anything/>

## Social care over the longer term

A reminder of the current manifesto commitments against which we should hold our elected politicians to account after 4 July:

**Conservatives:** <https://public.conservatives.com/static/documents/GE2024/Conservative-Manifesto-GE2024.pdf> the full entry on social care, p 40, reads: “We are committed to supporting a high quality and sustainable social care system, building on our additional investment of up to £8.6bn over the last two years. At the next Spending Review, we will give local authorities a multi-year funding settlement to support social care and will take forward the reforms in our ‘People at the Heart of Care’ White Paper. We will attract and retain a high-quality care workforce, make reforms to shape the market for older people’s housing and support unpaid carers. We will implement our planned reforms to cap social care costs from October 2025.”

**The Greens** <https://greenparty.org.uk/about/our-manifesto/caring-with-fairness-compassion-and-dignity/> This link will bring you direct to their social care segment and a major financial commitment: “Green MPs will push for investment of £20bn to: introduce free personal care along the lines successfully brought in by the Scottish Government, to ensure dignity in old age and for the disabled; and increase pay rates and introduce a career structure for carers to rebuild the care workforce. For those still living at home, this will enable earlier access to help maintain independence and wellbeing. For those living in residential settings, the personal care elements will be fully funded, alongside a tapered approach to other costs based on the level of income. For those struggling to afford the accommodation element of residential care, including because their spouse is still in the family home, local authorities need to be properly funded to provide the right level of financial support.”

**Labour Party:** <https://labour.org.uk/change/build-an-nhs-fit-for-the-future/#social-care> In a chapter devoted to the NHS, there is a segment on social care reform, including: “Labour will undertake a programme of reform to create a National Care Service, underpinned by national standards, delivering consistency of care across the country. Services will be locally delivered, with a principle of ‘home first’ that supports people to live independently for as long as possible. Our new standards will ensure high-quality care and ongoing sustainability, and ensure providers behave responsibly. Labour will develop local partnership working between the NHS and social care on hospital discharge. We will enhance partnership working across employers, workers, trade unions and government and establish a Fair Pay Agreement in adult social care.....Alongside these changes, we will build consensus for the longer-term reform needed to create a sustainable National Care Service. We will explore how we best manage and support an ageing population; how integration with the NHS can be secured; how to best support working age disabled adults; and how to move to a more preventative system.”

**Liberal Democrats:** <https://www.libdems.org.uk/manifesto> – see the three-page chapter 7 devoted to social care. The party has by far the most extensive list of commitments and has publicly made social care a priority issue. An abbreviated list of commitments includes: “We will introduce free personal care.... so that provision is based on need, not ability to pay; create a social care workforce plan; establish a Royal College of Care Workers to improve recognition and career progression; introduce a higher Carer’s Minimum Wage; establish a cross-party commission to forge a long-term agreement on sustainable funding for social care; give unpaid carers a fair deal including paid carer’s leave and a statutory guarantee of regular respite breaks.....”. For full text, check out manifesto directly.

**And some of the media coverage since the publication of the manifestos:**

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cjmmww3ne8wo.amp> 3 June

- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/article/2024/jun/04/the-guardian-view-on-social-care-the-lib-dems-have-a-plan-it-should-be-welcomed>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/article/2024/jun/11/social-care-dementia-tax-carers>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/jun/18/labour-says-it-would-let-nhs-in-england-buy-more-social-care-beds>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/crgg97pylpxo.amp> (BBC report on care users)
- <https://www.politico.eu/article/age-crisis-britain-politicians-social-care-elections-2024-nhs-health-care-welfare/>
- And on the topic of “why are politicians not talking about social care?” see this article by BBC’s Alison Holt <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c511ew07jwgo>
- Or listen to the Kings Fund ‘Election Special’ podcasts about what politicians should do: <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/the-kings-fund-podcast/id1363947403>
- And/or check out the disability podcast, *Access All*, which has interviewed representatives of all main political parties and is available on BBC Sounds.

A major statement was made to all party leaders by the Local Government Association – see [The value of adult social care to us all: joint statement to National Party Leaders | Local Government Association.](#) A few key quotes: *“When resourced adequately and organised well, social care is the means through which adults of all ages, with different conditions and reasons for drawing on care, are able to live their best life. That is a pursuit to be proud of and one which generates and replenishes energy, commitment and dedication. As National Party Leaders and the figureheads for all your parliamentary candidate colleagues, we encourage you to talk more about adult social care in the remaining weeks of the election campaign and to talk about it in the above way”.*

And if you want to hear directly from those most affected by social care and the importance of this debate in current elections see [https://youtu.be/q\\_YrZBrnAz0?si=an067UIqiWZu3B3](https://youtu.be/q_YrZBrnAz0?si=an067UIqiWZu3B3)

**So don’t forget to vote on 4 July; and bring along your ID.**

If in the last few days you meet any canvassers, have your questions ready: if they talk of the economy: ask them to consider the way poor social care provision is a drag on people’s lives, on productivity, and on the country’s economy; if they talk about the importance of the NHS, mention: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/may/17/hospitals-struggle-as-social-care-crisis-cancels-out-funding-boost-nhs-report-says> and that the number of delayed discharges, with people stuck in hospital for more than three weeks awaiting care provision, has risen 15% on pre-covid levels.

But ideally encourage them to understand the importance of social care on its own merits given the independence it offers to older and disabled people and ask them what they would do to push for long-term solutions to the crisis in social care.

[Check out our website - www.erscag.org.uk](http://www.erscag.org.uk)  
**and join our Facebook group [Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group.](#)**  
**For more information contact ERSCAG Secretary**  
[maqqiebeirne@googlemail.com](mailto:maqqiebeirne@googlemail.com) or [erscaginfo@gmail.com](mailto:erscaginfo@gmail.com)