



## **Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group Newsletter** **July/August 2024**

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

Supporters of Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group (ERSCAG) engaged actively in the General Election with canvassers, hustings, and media coverage to ensure that social care got attention. There was a feeling that this oft over-looked aspect of policy got more attention than usual in the national debate, and it figured in all the political manifestos. Our challenge now is to keep it centre-stage and insist that the promises made are implemented, and indeed that more imagination be committed to bringing about real change nationally and locally. See further discussion on page 4.

Locally, three Labour MPs were elected to represent the Borough of Ealing – two were re-elected (Rupa Huq and James Murray) and a third, Deirdre Costigan, is new to parliament. ERSCAG will be maintaining all these links. Ealing Council Cabinet portfolios have also changed ([Ealing Council Cabinet Reshuffle Following General Election](#)) and Cllr Polly Knewstub has taken on responsibility for Adult Social Care. ERSCAG has already had an excellent face-to-face meeting with her and hopes to hold regular meetings in future.

An early discussion with Cllr Knewstub – to be followed up at Council committee meetings due in September – concerned Council's commitment to listen to the voice of residents. There are some good signs - bodies such as the Ealing Health and Care Residents Forum, the introduction of 'Co-Production Boards'; and a commitment to more transparency by way of Freedom of Information requests - (<https://www.ealingtoday.co.uk/default.asp?section=community&spage=common/eacouncil260.htm>). Moreover, the Local Government Association has some useful guidance about effective consultation and engagement with local residents: <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/communications-and-community-engagement/resident-communications/understanding-views-2>. However, regular readers will be aware of grave concerns around the recent closure of Ealing Careline without any such engagement with users of the service: so, watch this space!

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

The summer period saw events to mark Learning Disability Week - in Ealing - [Seen, heard, and valued](#); and there was also a Big Issue Special (Issue 1620, 17-23 June). Deaf Blind Awareness Week was marked (24-30 June) but was there much publicity?

Silver Voices (a campaign group for older people – [www.silvervoices.co.uk](http://www.silvervoices.co.uk)) called (25 July) for a “time-limited” cross-party commission (<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1928095/Social-Care-NHS-Labour-Conservatives-Lib-Dems>) - *“With Labour’s overwhelming majority, there is a window of opportunity for cross-party talks to produce legislative proposals to reform and fund social care for the benefit of future generations .....all parties surely agree that affordable social care should be provided so that all older and disabled people can live*

*with maximum independence in their own homes for as long as possible, to relieve pressure on the NHS. Now is the time for politicians to come together to meet this challenge". A spokesman for the Department for Health and Social Care said: "We know that people are suffering without the care they need, and we are committed to ensuring everyone lives an independent, dignified life. "We are going to grip the social care crisis, starting with the workforce by delivering a new deal for care workers. We will also take steps to create a National Care Service underpinned by national standards, delivering consistency of care across the country."*

The August bulletin of the British Institute for Human Rights ([www.bih.org.uk](http://www.bih.org.uk)) reports that they are working with Just Fair ([www.justfair.org.uk](http://www.justfair.org.uk)) to offer free tailored support to local groups facing discrimination and disadvantage so that they can use human rights law in their everyday work. Local Ealing based group, the Southall Community Alliance (SCA) will be working with BIHR and Just Fair to develop a human rights based approach *"to address the social, cultural, religious and local needs of the area in order to make Southall a good and satisfying area in which to live and work"*.

## Latest developments locally & nationally

### Careworkers:

- Ealing Council has a Living Wage Action Group which regularly celebrates and promotes Ealing as a Living Wage Place (Around Ealing, 3 July) but there is still more work to be done regarding care workers employed in day-care and residential settings
- <https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2024/07/30/labour-scraps-planned-increase-to-adult-social-care-training-funding/>
- Royal College of Nursing reports a sixfold increase in the exploitation of foreign care-workers [https://ablink.editorial.theguardian.com/ss/c/u001.Yw\\_JkLMEmFuifc\\_XG18IRyTntZQ7fiEMgs\\_zcCSneHEBBIk0IKG9jSqU3Q199jJHK8N\\_rDNi9a48I3tuD4qGRPQS4vfs0R7PiZoxHqWIk\\_EilgnK-\\_NARgs2Vh860WVWBbEc7u7m43t1MiSbzDDA7KtP2yCiuYRtBLM9zrBNU5T3uDSJWXIs\\_eR5R9BPON4CDXUgVw6z706n4vplx8tXRkzE0TmasWDbnjvgGw4hpg4n88CctXqKETmj44EAOHXs7nzOBHjbGqlx4UtNjtx1\\_skxvZ78jgLeKb524XrwuXVYhpFx4k5CTqnijuwO9wDQiEhUjSXu4CVtmVaRI\\_tL6g/492/QHpNJwyMTyiytQ1jLEnXNA/h37/h001.X7HKzpDD04vku4lp1t1fMvqw3V6f23vsaTQVr1e4oE](https://ablink.editorial.theguardian.com/ss/c/u001.Yw_JkLMEmFuifc_XG18IRyTntZQ7fiEMgs_zcCSneHEBBIk0IKG9jSqU3Q199jJHK8N_rDNi9a48I3tuD4qGRPQS4vfs0R7PiZoxHqWIk_EilgnK-_NARgs2Vh860WVWBbEc7u7m43t1MiSbzDDA7KtP2yCiuYRtBLM9zrBNU5T3uDSJWXIs_eR5R9BPON4CDXUgVw6z706n4vplx8tXRkzE0TmasWDbnjvgGw4hpg4n88CctXqKETmj44EAOHXs7nzOBHjbGqlx4UtNjtx1_skxvZ78jgLeKb524XrwuXVYhpFx4k5CTqnijuwO9wDQiEhUjSXu4CVtmVaRI_tL6g/492/QHpNJwyMTyiytQ1jLEnXNA/h37/h001.X7HKzpDD04vku4lp1t1fMvqw3V6f23vsaTQVr1e4oE)

### Disability:

- ERSCAG has expressed concerns about the theft of disability parking permits before but the situation is getting worse [Tenfold Increase in Blue Badge Thefts in Ealing Borough](#)
- <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/new-governments-approach-disability>

### Events

- Women's Budget Group (date and website) *"we are thrilled to announce.....that on 5th September, we're co-hosting with our sister organisations in the devolved nations a four-nations conference, [Care, Women, and a New UK Economy](#),"*
- Social Care Future's "People Power Gathering" on 19 September in Manchester is aimed at *"making sure disabled and older people get their voices heard when decisions are being made about social care at all levels"*. For more info: [socialcarefuture@gmail.com](mailto:socialcarefuture@gmail.com)
- [The King's Fund annual conference](#) (11-12 September) in London invites people to join them where *"we will explore finding hope amid uncertainty through the work of health and care system partners, including local authorities and the voluntary and community sector. Discussions will cover developing meaningful partnerships, engaging communities, supporting staff wellbeing, promoting anti-racism, and tackling severe health outcomes. In light of the general election, additional sessions*

*will focus on what meaningful change looks like and how to make a difference for both workers and service users in the health and care system”.*

### Funding

- For a Money Box Live BBC Radio 4 programme entitled “Affording Care” see <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m0020y35?partner=uk.co.bbc&origin=share-mobile>
- According to Which? consumer magazine (19 August) “One government change you might have missed recently was the cancellation of social care funding reforms in England. These would have introduced a lifetime cap on the total amount anyone would spend on personal care to £86,000 from next year. [We explain how to cut costs if you're affected.](#)

### Reports

- For a very helpful exposition of the Key Facts and Figures about social care – What it is? How much it costs? Who is eligible for support etc. see <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/data-and-charts/key-facts-figures-adult-social-care#:~:text=In%202021%2F22%2C%20the%20average,externally%20provided%20home%20care%20services>
- There were several media reports regarding concerns around the national Care Quality Commission <https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/jul/26/englands-health-watchdog-not-fit-for-purpose-says-wes-streetering>; [Government acts after report highlights failings at regulator](#) and for the report itself see - [Review into the operational effectiveness of the Care Quality Commission](#)
- For Ealing Healthwatch’s annual report for 23/24 see - <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:EU:94a77450-a923-428f-85e4-beb18de9e833>

### Your Help Needed:

Healthwatch England is carrying out a survey where you may want to “Have Your Say” about social care or healthcare more generally: [https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/have-your-say?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0BMAABHetLXeAAmcKwRKDbbZPUjmUYdPEG\\_v0k-LfKKLS0peL6lkKvSeo5MmBKQ\\_aem\\_77ar38x8km9u-o1WGc-m3w](https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/have-your-say?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0BMAABHetLXeAAmcKwRKDbbZPUjmUYdPEG_v0k-LfKKLS0peL6lkKvSeo5MmBKQ_aem_77ar38x8km9u-o1WGc-m3w)

Ealing Council Adult Social Care invite you to have your say on services that support your needs and write: *“Do you or someone you look after, and support receive care and support from the council? Ealing Council works with a range of organisations to deliver this support. We set out what is required and then select the organisations who can deliver this care. We would like to invite you to tell us your requirements and how you would like services delivered. If you would like to receive information on what we are asking organisations to provide, or would like to share your views and ideas, please contact us by email on: [Beinvolved ASC@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:Beinvolved_ASC@ealing.gov.uk) You can find out more by visiting **Adult Social Care Consultation - Do Something Good** You can complete an online questionnaire by clicking the following link: <https://forms.office.com/e/jRWqj5Szun>”.*

Or would you like to comment on the Strategic Plan 2025-2028 of the national Equality Commission and ask them to include social care in their future work? They want our feedback (the consultation runs from 11 July to 3 October) and you can [Fill in the survey](#) or call them on 0161 829 8100 or email [correspondence@equalityhumanrights.com](mailto:correspondence@equalityhumanrights.com) and check out the easy-read and BSL versions.

And a local questionnaire (closing date 6 October) seeks our feedback on Ealing’s pharmacy services – check out: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Ealing2025PNAPublic>

### Sources of advice and help

Are you looking for free legal information about social care - AccessAva is an online solution that delivers legal information about community care to older or disabled people, their families, and carers. AccessAva is designed to take the user through their situation and identify a letter that they can send to help resolve the problem they

face. AccessAva uses technology to guide you through a set of questions designed to get you the right information for you. AccessAva is free and can be accessed by visiting <https://accesscharity.org.uk/> (look out for the avatar at the bottom right of the screen). If you also want to give feedback on the chatbot itself, the Product Manager, Finbar Mulholland would love to hear from you at [finbar.mulholland@accesscharity.org.uk](mailto:finbar.mulholland@accesscharity.org.uk).

Ealing Council recently circulated a range of material about support available to unpaid carers. See [www.ealingcarerspartnership.org](http://www.ealingcarerspartnership.org) (or 0203 475 9891) to learn more about respite in the home; group respite events; carer cafes across the Borough. Or are you interested in free somatic therapy – providing one-to-one support by zoom for mindfulness-based practices? Or what about Carers' Corner – “*where nurturing caregivers and the environment is our focus with a variety of gardening activities*” - meeting up once a week (email [carrie.scott](mailto:carrie.scott@westlondon.nhs.uk) or [freya.farmer](mailto:freya.farmer@westlondon.nhs.uk) both @westlondon.nhs.uk)

Which? consumer magazine (August) reported that 200 branches of the Nationwide Bank intend to host clinics offering health and financial planning to those affected by dementia - including family members and carers: [Nationwide to open dementia clinics](#)

### **Social care over the longer term**

So, we have a new government – will anything change? All the major political parties included social care fairly prominently in their manifestos (see May and June ERSCAG newsletters).

The first opportunity to find out to what extent these commitments will be carried through now that the elections are over will be at the range of party-political conferences now due: Greens (6-8 September in Manchester); Liberal Democrats (14-17 September in Brighton); Labour (22-25 September in Liverpool); and Conservatives (29 September-2 October in Birmingham). If you are active in any of these parties, or have friends who are, encourage them to ask questions about the party's intentions regarding social care. The Opposition parties in particular should be encouraged to demand accountability from the new government – by agreeing to routinely ask PQs about progress, putting forward members to the Health and Social Care Select Committee, and any All-Party Parliamentary Group looking at social care. The manifestos suggested that there was a fair degree of unanimity about the crisis in social care and even a fair degree of agreement about what needs to be done – so now we need to see action.

Moreover, ERSCAG and others have argued that it makes economic (as well as moral and social sense) to invest in social care. For further arguments about the popularity of this agenda, see Prof John Curtice (polling guru!) talking on Newsnight ([shows](#)) on the eve of the election about the very high level of popular support for good public services rather than tax cuts!

[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  
[maggiebeirne@googlemail.com](mailto:maggiebeirne@googlemail.com) or [erscaginfo@gmail.com](mailto:erscaginfo@gmail.com)