



Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group Newsletter
January 2025

Update on our latest activities

The first meeting of the year of Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group's (ERSCAG) committee allowed us to agree a work programme for 2025 including engagement with the Louise Casey Commission (see page 4). We also agreed to follow more closely what is happening in our neighbouring Council area (Hammersmith & Fulham) where they do not charge for adult social care <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jan/19/is-this-the-way-to-fix-social-care-in-england>.

One of our aims is continue attending the public sessions of relevant Council committees. The most recent Health and Wellbeing Board met (23 January) - see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZTePl21zNKs> - and questions were asked by ERSCAG about staff training, digital exclusion, and the problems caused for carers by CPZs (see also [Calls for Rerun of Ealing and Acton CPZ Consultation](#) and [Visitor Parking Costs Increased Across Ealing Borough](#)).

The Council reports - see <https://www.aroundealing.com/leaders-notes/how-we-plan-in-2025-to-deliver-what-we-promised/> - "*We promised to help our residents lead healthy and equal lives. This year we will roll out our Better Lives model to ensure people can continue to access care within their own homes. We will also make sure that our social care teams are based within our 7 towns to ensure they understand the unique needs of our different communities*".

Another issue to be pursued at future Committee meetings and at our regular ERSCAG meetings with staff, Councillors, and local MPs will be the Care Quality Commission report [CQC publishes report on London Borough of Ealing's care act responsibilities - Care Quality Commission](#); and see also https://www.ealingtimes.co.uk/news/24863373.ealing-adult-social-care-needs-improving-say-inspectors/?ref=ebln&nid=724&block=article_block_a&u=60d787a931362758191bbeade08cb9ec&date=170125.

ERSCAG made a written submission in December 2024 to the parliamentary Health and Social Care Select Committee's Inquiry into "Adult Social Care - the cost of inaction", and we will monitor the Inquiry's progress - see www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0026tsn.

Campaigns - current or upcoming national campaigns

Maybe it is too early in the new year to have been notified of many campaigns but there are two articles to raise your campaigning spirits and a petition you might want to support. See for example: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jan/13/how-to-live-better-in-2025-the-power-of-giving> and <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/15/stand-up-and-be-counted-six-ways-to-protest-that-will-make-your-voice-heard> and Change.org is running a petition called 'Nina's Law' about allowing PAs to remain with patients when in hospital - "*It is estimated that around one in eight hospitals currently don't allow external carers to operate within*

their buildings, either because of their own policy or because of failures to agree terms with care companies”. [Would you sign my petition now with a click?](#)

Latest developments locally & nationally

Artificial intelligence: [Praise for Ealing Council's Use of AI in Adult Social Care](#)

Disability: In ERSCAG’s October newsletter, we commented on concerns about the language being used in public debate which might imply that disability benefits were being fraudulently used, when government figures show that this only applies to between 0.1% and 0.5% of claims. So, it was interesting to read how many people are not claiming their benefits at all! <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/dec/23/benefits-unclaimed-vulnerable-pension-credit-government>. And, some more **reading/viewing on disability related topics** which people may find of interest: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/jan/02/errol-graham-disabled-man-death-review>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c36eknj1nz4o>; or a video – see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfNZ9XvxEjM> - about the book mentioned before in our newsletters “The view from down here: life as a young disabled woman”, by Lucy Webster; <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jan/19/millions-shut-out-society-social-care-crisis-disabled-adults>; and <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jan/02/alice-wong-interview>.

Funding: In terms of local government financing, the following article may be of interest: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/nov/28/council-funding-redirected-rich-areas-most-deprived-england-local-government>. Of more direct relevance to those paying for social care, a Residents Survey in Greater Manchester found that “*at least 2 in 5 people had cut back or cancelled their care package in the previous 12 months as it was no longer affordable, and they were having to prioritise food and energy costs.*”

NHS: Since the well-being of the NHS is also dependent on solving the social care crisis, you may be interested in recent articles about the challenges it is facing: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/dec/31/the-guardian-view-on-labours-nhs-reform-structural-change-while-slashing-waiting-lists-is-a-big-ask>; <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/dec/26/nhs-chiefs-free-bring-change-now-ippr-thinktank-adebowale>; and <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jan/02/seven-in-10-gps-in-uk-suffer-from-compassion-fatigue-survey-finds>.

Your Help Needed: In North-West London, which includes Ealing, a public consultation is underway about adult community palliative care services, running until 24 February 2025 “*We want to hear from as many people as possible – patients, residents, carers, members of the public, staff, voluntary sector representatives and advocates as well as partners. Your views are important to help shape future adult community specialist palliative care services for people across north-west London. You can read the [consultation document here](#) and you can [Complete the public consultation questionnaire](#), or download and send it to FREEPOST, HEALTHIER NORTH WEST LONDON (no stamp needed)*”. A series of public meetings are also being organised.

The winter issue (December) of the Adult Services Newsletter (with articles on keeping well, carer services, & home-sharing) also reported: “*The Adult Social Care user survey is coming soon. In January we’ll be sending out the adult user survey questionnaire to randomly selected social care users to understand how well we’re delivering services and where you think we could do better. It also gives us an opportunity to see how Ealing services compare nationally....so if you receive the*

survey, please complete and return it. If you have any questions about the user survey, please contact our social care performance team on PMT@ealing.gov.uk”.

Sources of advice and help

If you are concerned about your own or others’ mental health, the following sources might be of use - [Check your mental health symptoms - NHS 111](#); or [Where to get urgent help for mental health - NHS](#).

Care Rights UK – www.carerightsuk.org - reported in its December newsletter “We’ve helped people every day to navigate the worst of the care system, from unfair charges to evictions, from poor care to visiting. Like any good charity, we wish our service didn’t need to exist but unfortunately change in the sector is slow. One of our longest serving members, Joanna Lyall, guest [wrote a blog](#) for us about her experience of the charity, highlighting what’s changed and what sadly hasn’t, since we were established over 30 years ago by Dorothy White.”

Silver Voices - www.silvervoices.co.uk - report about successfully challenging a local authority’s financial assessment “We supported Mrs Stirling and her husband to ensure his mortgage contribution could be continued and considered as part of his personal allowance. Citing the Care Act, our adviser was able to ensure Mr Stirling’s wishes were fulfilled, by challenging the local authority’s original assessment. [Read the full story](#) on our website and get advice on money and costs.”

The British Institute of Human Rights - www.bih.org.uk - organises events about using the Human Rights Act to make positive change, for example, one [event was all about co-production and a human rights-based approach](#).

Amongst the people who can be contacted if you have concerns about your social care remember your ward Councillor (for contact details see www.ealing.gov.uk), your local MP (see www.parliament.uk) and, in very serious cases, the service of the Ombudsman (www.lgo.org.uk). ERSCAG receives weekly reports of their national findings – and two recent issues (19 December and 9 January) carried news of complaints received about Ealing Council (neither were upheld).

And to complete this section of “advice and help” with some very good news – see: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/dec/17/consuming-arts-and-culture-is-good-for-health-and-wellbeing-research-finds>.

Social care over the longer term

To start with some global news – two articles about international health and care issues <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2025/jan/06/uk-cuts-health-aid-vulnerable-countries-recruiting-nurses-analysis-royal-college-nursing-research>; and Gordon Brown commenting on the important work of the World Health Organisation - <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jan/22/donald-trump-leave-who-world-health-organization-pandemic-coming-gordon-brown>.

Closer to home, government announced a Commission to look at social care over the long term “The government has announcedthe establishment of an independent commission led by Louise Casey, Baroness Casey of Blackstock, DBE, CB. It is a once in a generation opportunity, transcending party politics to engage in genuine debate on how we can deliver a National Care Service, ensuring all voices are heard and putting those with lived experience at the heart.” See also [New reforms and independent commission to transform social care](#) and a comment piece by Wes Streeting, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care,

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jan/03/britain-social-care-crisis-labour-plans-to-fix-it>.

While many of the commentaries in the immediate wake of the announcement welcomed any progress, most expressed concern about the long delays to reform that this implies. **Age UK's** press release (3 January) said "*Far reaching reform and refinancing of social care is long overdue, so today's announcement is unequivocally good news - it could potentially finally break the logjam that has stood in the way for many years. We say 'potentially' because while we've no doubt Baroness Casey will do an excellent job, the real question is whether the Government will act decisively on her conclusions.*" **Care Rights UK** wrote (16 January) "*We urge the Government to shorten their timeframes and deliver plans for reform urgently, to end the indignity of the current crisis. Read [our full response](#) on our website*". **Silver Voices** in a briefing to members (12 January) is even more trenchant in its response. Under a heading "Labour's Social Care Commission – what a cop out" they write "we need a new Commission like a hole in the head"!

For just some of the extensive press coverage of the Commission, see: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jan/03/ministers-shake-up-adult-social-care-england>; <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jan/05/labour-had-plenty-of-time-to-ponder-social-care-now-it-has-a-chance-to-deliver>; or Radio 4's Today morning news programme and Women's Hour on the same day: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m002694s?partner=uk.co.bbc&origin=share-mobile>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m002694x>; or for a more general approach see The Expert Factor podcast <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/the-expert-factor/id1709487231?i=1000683448835>.

Watch out for further developments in our forthcoming newsletters - 2025 could be busy!

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