



**Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group Newsletter**  
**February 2025**

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

Ealing Reclaim Social Care Action Group (ERSCAG) has had a busy month meeting with different Ealing Council people to discuss a variety of issues around social care in the local area. We met separately with Carleen Duffy of Ealing Healthwatch, Kerry Stevens (Strategic Director of Adult Social Services and Public Health) and Cllr Polly Knewstubb (portfolio holder for healthy equal lives).

At all of these meetings, we pursued concerns around the recent Care Quality Commission (CQC) report and its findings on Ealing social care provision. Despite being disappointed at the overall rating ('requires improvement') and approach (which arguably showed little knowledge of the experience of London Boroughs), Council representatives told us that there was important learning that will be actively pursued. A focus will be on the assessment waiting lists, the needs of carers, and improved communications (via website/town hub signposting options/ and non-digital means). The CQC report will figure on the agendas of future Health and Well Being Board and Health and Adult Social Services Scrutiny Panel, and ERSCAG will monitor progress.

Another concern we raised at several of these meetings was the impact on users of social care of the Council decision to extend the Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) and School Streets Programmes: how will care-workers get to their clients in time to provide important medication etc? It is unclear to what extent the needs of care-users, carers and care-workers have been taken into account – and we will be pursuing this. In related campaigning, we have been pursuing, both with the Council, and the London Assembly, the problems of Blue Badge thefts – see local petition underway: <https://www.ealinglibdems.org.uk/campaigns/blue-badge-petition>

Ealing Healthwatch will be reviewing the work of Harrow Careline in coming months and ERSCAG is preparing a 'note of concerns' for them about the closure of Ealing Careline and its replacement with Harrow Careline, fearful that some vulnerable people may have inadvertently missed out on this vital emergency alarm service (see 2024 newsletters).

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

End Social Care Disgrace is organising a public meeting (by zoom) on Thursday 13 March, 6.30-8pm. Entitled "Resist; Rise Up; Reimagine, the meeting will hear from Jan Shortt, General Secretary of the National Pensioners Convention; Rachael Tomlinson, disabled activist and family carer; and Simon Duffy (director of Citizen network). These meetings are excellent, and you can register on – <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/Tu-E8g-YRpaXEzAPqdtB9Q>

The National Pensioners Convention (a campaigning organisation for older people in the UK) is active on a whole range of issues, and has a number of specialist working parties looking, for example, at gender issues and digital information. For an article entitled “*Shocking proof Winter Fuel Payment cuts are causing misery for 3 in 4 older people*” [Click here to read the article](#) and/or see their campaign urging the UK government to back the UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons and/or their annual review of NPC work throughout 2024 ([www.npcuk.org](http://www.npcuk.org))

And in Ealing, Liberal Democrat Councillors have expressed concern about the future of adult day services: see [Call for Reassurance on Future of Adult Day Service Facilities](#)

## Latest developments locally & nationally

### Artificial intelligence:

[Prime Minister Meets with Ealing Council Staff to Discuss AI](#) and its contribution to social care.

### Care workers:

- <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/feb/11/migrant-workers-in-uk-to-fill-care-roles-charged-up-to-20000-in-fees>
- Social Care Support Officers at Lancashire County Council are currently striking “as their roles have expanded to handle complex cases like abuse, neglect, and mental health—tasks once done by social workers..... Without better pay and conditions, skilled workers may leave, risking the collapse of vital services for vulnerable individuals and families.”

### Disability

- The Guardian <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/feb/04/trump-dei-judith-levine> reported statements made by President Trump in the wake of a tragic air accident in the USA: “*It’s worth noting that Trump is not targeting all (equality) hires this time. He’s going after crips...At the post-crash briefing on Thursday, the president took pains to recite a list of disabilities ...in his characteristic mafia extortionist’s drone, emphasizing each disability with a note of astonished distaste. They include hearing, vision, missing extremities, partial paralysis, complete paralysis, epilepsy, severe intellectual disability, psychiatric disability and dwarfism.... ‘This is part of the FAA’s diversity and inclusion hiring plan. which says diversity is integral to achieving FAA’s mission of ensuring safe and efficient travel. I don’t think so. I don’t think so.’*”
- For concerns closer to home, see a BBC news piece explaining the problems created for people’s independence and very dignity when left waiting for simple home adaptations: - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx2jvpjr7dro> or the human cost of cuts to social care: <https://news.sky.com/story/it-feels-like-we-dont-exist-the-human-cost-of-social-care-cuts-13294776>
- A more upbeat – and Ealing-based - disability related story can be read at – [KULDIP’S STORY](#) – under the title of “my wheelchair does not define me”.
- And to explore “*What are the trends in ill-health and disability, and how reliable is the data? To what extent can we expect the welfare reform to solve a wider societal problem? How can the Government rebuild trust in the benefits system, support people into work, and reduce spending? And can it do this without hitting living standards of vulnerable people?*”, Resolution Foundation (Thursday 6 March, 9.10-10.45) is organising an event and you can [REGISTER NOW](#) to attend in person or online.
- And on a related topic, you might be interested in an article by disability campaigner Frances Ryan <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/feb/05/labour-cuts-benefits-tories-vulnerable> “*I can’t help but wonder how many of those currently crowing to get disabled people ‘off benefits’ will speak out against failings in the Access to Work*

*scheme* that are causing disabled people to lose their jobs. Wanting to get disabled people off the ‘welfare bill’” is not the same as wanting to help them work.”

#### **Funding:**

- Kings Fund: “With the recent Darzi review describing the health and care system as being in a ‘critical condition’, place and neighbourhood have come into focus as one of the key means through which the government can achieve its aims of creating a *new approach to health and care* and building a ‘neighbourhood health service’ that prioritises primary and community services closer to home, preventing ill health and supporting people to lead healthier lives.” See [www.kingsfund.org.uk](http://www.kingsfund.org.uk) to register online for this event (4-5 March).
- Social care charging for local authorities: 2025 to 2026 for official regulations and see also some of the press coverage that talks of the financial pressures on Councils <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/feb/20/english-councils-exceptional-financial-support-packages>; and <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cpwd51z78e8o>; and <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/adult-social-care-reform-london-council-tax-bankruptcy-b1212707.html>

#### **NHS:**

- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jan/29/complacent-health-chiefs-in-england-lack-drive-to-transform-nhs-say-mps>; and less than a month later, the Guardian reports - <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/feb/25/wes-streeting-to-axe-thousands-of-jobs-at-nhs-england-after-ousting-of-chief-executive>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jan/30/almost-one-in-eight-britons-now-has-private-medical-insurance-say-healthcare-analysts>
- <https://lowdownnhs.info/topics/staffing/government-retreats-from-promises-and-targets/>
- Our local sister campaign group -Ealing Save Our NHS – included the following comments in a recent newsletter: “You might like to read *this excellent and very powerful article from Dr Emma Jones, an A&E Consultant based in the Midlands.*”

#### **Parliament:** several debates of interest for example:

- The assisted dying legislation is continuing through parliament, see <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jan/28/expand-assisted-dying-bill-to-help-those-with-parkinsons-and-dementia-mps-to-hear>
- [Dr Daniella Jenkins presented to the Work and Pensions Committee](#) on the challenges faced by women pensioners during its Pensioner Poverty inquiry.
- See [our response](#) - Care Rights UK submission to inquiry into Social Care and the price of inaction.
- The National Pensioners Convention talks of a report - [Click here to read the article](#) – by the parliamentary Women and Equalities Committee (WEC) which warns of ‘widespread’ and ‘culturally embedded’ ageism.

#### **Your Help Needed:**

- **SIGN UP** for workshops in venues across the Borough to discuss “Your Voice, Your Town” and what change you want to see locally.
- And/or find out more about the Community Charter – how do you think Ealing Council should involve residents in making decisions that affect them? **TAKE PART** in a survey to shape the Council’s first ever Community Charter.

#### **Sources of advice and help**

Ealing MPs are always available for you to raise issues of concern either by way of Written Parliamentary Questions or in their surgery offices – relatively new MP Deirdre Costigan (Ealing Southall) has recently become a Parliamentary Private Secretary in the Department of Health & Social Care; MP Rupa Huq (Ealing Central & Acton) asked a

question recently about visual impairment (see [Written Answers - Women and Equalities: Business: Visual Impairment](#)) and [Education, Health and Care Plans - \[Dr Rupa Huq in the Chair\]](#); and James Murray MP (Ealing North) stays with the important Treasury Team.

A Swedish reader of our ERSCAG newsletter wrote to say that a group there called Senior Power are discussing future priorities: *“We are interested in focusing on the human rights perspective related to elderly persons, particularly those in institutions. What we mean is the right to – dignity; participation and social inclusion; privacy, and non-discrimination.”* Sounds like a good approach?

The “We Care” campaign urges people to *“tune into our podcast “Care Fully Considered” which gives a number of firsthand stories that inspire and challenge”*. <https://x.com/WeAreCarers/status/1886686639134507094>

The British Institute for Human Rights (5 February 2025) reports *“last month’s news reflected on the work done throughout 2024 to support individuals, community groups, public body workers and policymakers to champion a culture of respect for human rights across the UK. This month, we’re excited to share some of the work we’re doing in 2025 with a focus on mental health care and human rights - including the opportunity to book onto our brand-new short course for senior mental health practitioners.”*

North-West London is seeking to improve adult community specialist palliative care – ERSCAG’s January newsletter ‘advertised’ their consultation. They now report *“One area that people have asked us to provide more information on is enhanced end-of-life care beds and we have [published an article on our website](#) in order to do so. This covers why we are proposing their introduction and who will be providing the care and support to patients admitted to the beds.”*

The last ERSCAG newsletter failed to note (6 February) *“the country’s biggest mental health conversation”* - <https://timetotalkday.co.uk/>

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

Our January newsletter reported the creation of an independent commission to look at social care, and concerns about the timescale envisaged. In contributing to this work, ERSCAG and others will have to get to grips with a lot of statistics such as: [Adult social care in England, monthly statistics: January 2025](#); <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/data-tools-and-services/data-services/adult-social-care-data-hub> and the Kings Fund “Facts and Figures” which **estimates** that local authorities spent £28.4bn on social care in 2022/23; 818,000 people received publicly funded long-term social care in 2021/22, with a further 224,000 people receiving short-term care. It seems now that the first round of cross-party talks feeding into the commission have been postponed: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cg5d2jg8dr1o> -

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

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