



# Newsletter

## December 2024

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### ESCaD goes to Westminster



Thanks to John McDonnell, ESCaD had a hearing in the Palace of Westminster on November 18<sup>th</sup>. We fielded about 30 activists and ten contributions, both live and on video, across the whole spectrum of social care. There was significant interest from MPs and Peers but not as many attended as we hoped. However it was great to have Lord Prem Sikka, Baroness Ruth Lister and MP Rupa Huq there for much of the meeting and appearances from Adrian Ramsey, co-leader of the Greens, Seamus Logan, SNP lead on Social Care and others.

**Gordon Peters** presented ESCaD's platform and suggested some intermediate demands.

**Brian Fisher** argued that a radical transformation of Social Care is both affordable and necessary.

**Lord Prem Sikka** made a powerful case against private provision, highlighting large care home providers making 40% profits and many being forcibly closed by the CQC.

**Rachael Tomlinson**, East Yorkshire disability activist and advocate living with MS, talked about the day to day struggle of disabled people - almost a third of whom are also carers - just to get vital support and suggested that it is now about SURVIVE or DIE!

**Helen Rowlands**, North West Disability activist and researcher, highlighted the impact of rising care charges and the huge numbers of disabled people subject to Local Authority debt recovery action.

**Jo Walton**, full time family carer from West Yorkshire, talked about the fight not only to get support for oneself and the person you are caring for

but to be heard and recognised as a partner in planning. She argued for caring to be recognised as a protected characteristic under the Human Rights Act and warned carers won't be silent any longer!

**Anna Rose** talked movingly about how her adult disabled son, Marcus, died in a residential home through what the Coroner described as "a gross failure of care and neglect" and her efforts to get responsibility assigned in order to protect others. INQUEST staff said they knew of 18 similar cases and many more deaths in "care" from other causes.

**Steve North**, President of Unison, Secretary of Salford Branch and ex care worker talked about tackling the poor pay and conditions of care workers, particularly in the private sector and called for the delivery of a democratic, not for profit, non-hierarchical, national care and support service where people who work in in the service and those in receipt of support have a real voice and the exploitation of staff is ended.

**Sybil Nandi Msezane**, senior care worker from the Pan African Workers Association, noted that care workers from abroad are being conned into paying vast sums for a certificate of sponsorship before coming to the UK, promised work or accommodation that doesn't exist and no longer allowed to bring their children. They daren't speak up about mal-practice at work for fear of losing their job as if they can't find alternative employment within 60 days they risk being deported.

**John McDonnell** called for maximising cross party, cross campaigns and grassroots pressure for change.

#### Shared themes included

- Take profit out of care; it distorts priorities
- Co-production is vital in planning services and building inclusive communities
- End drift. The need for a National Care, Support Independent Living service is URGENT.
- Immediate action is needed to address current injustices regarding care charging, benefits, access to - not pressure into - paid work, an end to unnecessary, demeaning re-assessments etc.

You can see the three video contributions here:

Rachael Tomlinson:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UtFACgWliic>

Jo Walton: <https://youtu.be/K8fKhFx37Jk> Steve North:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gE7oYle6YHk>

## Outcomes from the Meeting

We are now in touch with more interested MPs and Peers. As the short videos had a big impact we are planning to produce a series of 2 minute videos marrying personal stories with political punch and circulate these to a wide range of politicians and others, accompanied by short briefings.

**If you can send this newsletter to your MP**, maybe ask for a meeting to discuss social care and let us know if they are interested that would be a big help.

**After the meeting Helen Rowlands had discussions** with Baroness Lister who has offered to table some questions on care charging to the Government.

**At the next Trade Union Group meeting** we are hoping to talk with care workers from the Pan African Workers Association about action needed to end the exploitation of care workers from abroad. You are very welcome to join us. (See below)

**We have also submitted a response to the Health and Social Care Select Committee's call** for evidence regarding the cost of inaction on social care reform, as well as a response to the Change NHS consultation.

## Shuffling not striding on carers benefit

In October The Secretary of State of Work and Pensions, Liz Kendall announced that Government would commission an independent review of Carer's Allowance overpayments – to assess how these have been accrued on such a vast scale. While it is good to see any sort of action, once again we will have people congregating in committee rooms to uncover what is largely obvious at some length while many carers and their families continue to be crushed by court cases, fear and poverty.

ESCaD believes that full time family carers should not be offered a life of poverty in return for caring and saving the Government an estimated £162bn. They should receive a decent income, time off like other workers, opportunities to sustain some life of their own and the security of knowing that there will be provision for their loved one if they are sick or unable to care in any other way. Join Jo Walton and our Carers group to help put together and promote a paper on a Carers Income!

## Ellen Clifford takes the fight against disability benefit cuts to Court!

On 10<sup>th</sup> December disabled activists held a vigil outside the High Court to support Ellen's legal challenge which aimed to expose that the last Conservative Govt. used a "sham" consultation to try to push through "cataclysmic" cuts to disability benefits of nearly £3 billion over four years.



<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/court-hears-disabled-activist%E2%80%99s-challenge-%E2%80%98cataclysmic%E2%80%99-cuts-out-work-disability-benefits#>

The plans to tighten the work capability assessment announced in the 2023 autumn budget, would see more than 400,000 disabled people losing out on £416 a month by '28-29, with many claimants facing strict new conditions and the risk of sanctions. The new Labour Government has yet to say if they will implement the WCA cuts.

Ellen said "This is a necessary first step in deaf and disabled people working towards a system that prioritises our lives, rather than cuts or savings".

**John McDonnell has tabled an EDM**

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/62866>

"That this House notes the shocking evidence published by John Pring in his recent book of the harm, too often leading to fatalities, inflicted on disabled people by the Department of Work and Pensions since the introduction of the Work Capability Assessment; and calls on the Government to establish an independent public inquiry into the role played by Ministers, civil servants and advisers and their culpability for the suffering identified in this research.

## Care Workers are also fighting back!

The long running dispute by mental health workers in Barnett over unsafe staffing levels etc. continues despite 81 days of strike action last summer.



<https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2024/10/21/we-walked-out-for-81-days-and-the-service-is-as-unsafe-as-it-was-before/#>

Salford care workers have also been involved in a long running dispute over staffing levels and pay.

<https://salford.media/exhausted-salford-care-workers-could-strike-for-months/#>:

However there is good news from Salford too. Migrant care workers have been instrumental in the creation of a North West Region Migrant Care Worker Charter which has already been signed by Salford Mayor, Paul Dennett.

And in Plymouth Unite are backing planned strike action in the New Year by nearly 50 workers at Independence@Home. They are challenging management's insistence that travel time and small gaps between visits due to unforeseen cancellations are classed as down time which staff must make up later by working for nothing.



<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/clyv497exelo>

## NEXT UP for ESCaD

We are planning to have another Public Meeting on zoom around the end of February – possible Monday 24<sup>th</sup> Feb. We thought it would be good to focus on examples of good or at least better practice around the country and maybe abroad too to inject some radical thinking and sense of possibilities into national and local political thinking. If you would like to help plan this and other activities, do join our next Politicians Group Meeting – see next column.



## You are warmly invited to join our Working Groups. We need your talents and experience!

Groups meet approximately monthly and are the key engines for planning in ESCaD. Just Email [endsocialcaresdisgrace@gmail.com](mailto:endsocialcaresdisgrace@gmail.com) or phone/ text 07419 295754 for more information.

Meanwhile here are links for January's meetings. No registration is required. Just click on the Zoom link.

### Carers Group: Monday 6<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1.30 – 3pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87339291252?pwd=zFptXeQ8JAUaHSnae7R3iIsoxdMH8.1>

Meeting ID: 873 3929 1252 Passcode: 804155

### Politicians Group: Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> Jan. 4pm – 5.15

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88078991313?pwd=AA2mE46lUrtCubcntfvaStJsHXKu5.1>

Meeting ID: 880 7899 1313 Passcode: 815920

### Publicity Group: Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> Jan. 3 – 4pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82606047838?pwd=p0zaao40zxd5fLAc1ghiQvZqx2QHGk.1>

Meeting ID: 826 0604 7838 Passcode: 541819

### Trade Union Group: Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January at 5pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87511943076?pwd=k7KSld5BPoSimLHnlSdmuoCclOOVkk.1>

Meeting ID: 875 1194 3076 Passcode: 406570

And if you would like some ESCaD postcards for meetings, stalls etc. just let us know and we'll send some for free. For badges & T shirts, please enquire.

**END SOCIAL CARE DISGRACE**  
Campaign for a National Care, Support and Independent Living Service

Free at the point of use	Publicly funded, provided and accountable
Radically re-imagined and co – produced with service users, carers, workers and local communities	Offering choice, control, dignity and independence
Full, fair support for carers	Staff pay and conditions to reflect their high value and skills: one workforce - no exploitation

We are a non – party political alliance of disabled and older people's organisations, health campaigns, trade unionists etc. Please join us, work with us, affiliate your org.  
[www.endsocialcaresdisgrace.org](http://www.endsocialcaresdisgrace.org) [endsocialcaresdisgrace@gmail.com](mailto:endsocialcaresdisgrace@gmail.com) Tel. 07419 295754  
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**Our social care system is failing everyone except the private providers who are rinsing it for profit**

Half those requesting support get no help. Around 10,000 are stuck in hospital for want of community services. Increased charges have led some people to give up support and thousands are being hounded over debts. Many struggle to survive, stay safe and avoid total isolation. Care is institutionalised; abuse is rife. Care workers are leaving in droves because of rock bottom wages. Staff enticed from abroad to prop up crumbling services are living in conditions akin to modern slavery and now blocked from bringing children to the UK. Over 8m unpaid carers get little support. Some are being criminalised for failures in the benefit system. **Almost half of those in poverty are in families where someone is disabled.**

**Join us and help to raise a mighty roar to end this social care disgrace and violation of human rights**

**RESIST ALL MEASURES**  
which increase poverty and exclusion

**FIGHT FOR A 'NOT FOR PROFIT'**  
RADICALLY RE-IMAGINED,  
National Care, Support and Independent Living Service



Many thanks for your support and very best wishes for a joyful Xmas and lively New Year!