



Newsletter

February 2025

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Labour kicks the can down the road

In January the Government announced that they were going to set up a cross-party Commission on Social care which won't produce a final report until 2028. We have little confidence that it won't end up in the shredder or on a dusty shelf like the many that have gone before. An analysis by The Health Foundation found that over the past 27 years, there have been two government commissions, one shorter government-commissioned review, three independent commissions, five white papers and 14 parliamentary committee inquiries on social care reform and we are still nowhere!

<https://www.health.org.uk/reports-and-analysis/briefings/social-care-commissions-looking-back-to-move-forward>

Labour have had plenty of time to get their act together. In the run up to the election we had the Archbishop's Commission and the Fabian report on social care and organisations of disabled and older people, carers and care workers queuing up to offer their advice. What we need from Government now is bold and radical action. What we are getting is a suggestion that care workers could do more management of medication without plans in place to address the shortage of care workers, training and development. Nor do Labour seem to recognise that their own policies are stemming the flow of care workers from abroad who are keeping the system afloat. They have not reversed the Conservatives' spring '24 ban on care workers from abroad bringing their children to the UK. Sadly they also seem to be trying to beat Reform at their own game by showing



Together with other organisations we will keep saying

28 is way too late!

they are tough on immigration rather than trumpeting the vital, welcome contribution to our health and care services made by migrant workers.

Join the 'Rattle the Can' band

With Labour not only postponing action on their promised National Care Service but planning to cut benefits, herd people into work, scrap the winter fuel allowance for older people etc. it's more vital than ever to raise a mighty roar about current injustices, challenge the devaluing of disabled and older people and raise the torch for radically reimagining care, support and independent living within inclusive, mutually supportive communities.

Join our Public zoom Meeting to share ideas and discuss what we can all do together



RESIST: RISE UP: REIMAGINE



Thursday 13th March 6.30 -8pm
with

Jan Shortt	General Secretary, National Pensioners Convention
Rachael Tomlinson	Disabled activist, advocate and family carer with ESCaD & DPAC
Simon Duffy	Director of Citizen network – on radical reimagining UK & abroad plus one other tbc

Half the meeting will be allocated for questions and contributions from attendees.

REGISTER HERE:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/Tu-E8g-YRpaXEzAPqdtB9Q>

Government needs to focus on fixing a society that makes people sick, not cutting benefits

In a report from The Resolution Foundation last July, Research Director Lindsay Judge said that the increased spending on working age incapacity and disability benefits "isn't down to people gaming the system, or support somehow being easier to claim." "Instead, the growing health-related benefit spend reflects the fact that Britain is becoming older, sicker

and experiencing more disability, and that previous reforms have often been poorly designed”<https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2024/06/20-Under-strain.pdf>

Meanwhile the access to work scheme is buckling in the face of a surge in applications (up from 34,000 to 49,920 in 2023 – 24) with a growing backlog of people waiting over 6 months for support. Last week Disability News reported that Sir Stephen Timms, Minister of State for Social Security and Disability, announced that the scheme was “unlikely to be sustainable in the long term” and they are looking at whether employers can do more.
<https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/minister-suggests-cuts-are-coming-to-access-to-work-scheme/>

There is much wringing of hands about rising mental ill health but little being done to address it. The answer is not only more and better support services but tackling the social determinants of anxiety, depression etc. The British Medical Association notes that mental health services in England received a record 5 million referrals during 2023 (up 33% from 2019) but there is strong evidence that those in areas of higher deprivation are more likely to be in contact with mental health services.
<https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/nhs-delivery-and-workforce/pressures/mental-health-pressures-data-analysis#>:

And it’s not just economic insecurity that needs attention but the impact of obscene inequalities, the profit driven replacement of human interaction by screens - for those who can access them (!), on-line surveillance and bullying, climate inaction etc.



The rise in referrals of children to whittled down child and adolescent mental health services is particularly worrying. In March 2024 the Children’s Commissioner noted that 40,000 children waited at least two years for support, with anxiety the main reason for referral and clear evidence of postcode lotteries.
<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/blog/over-a-quarter-of-a-million-children-still-waiting-for-mental-health-support/>

If interested please note this upcoming Conference

National Conference for grassroots mental health campaigns and campaigners on Saturday 26th April 11-6pm at St Mary’s Works in Norwich

You can download the flyer with more details here: <https://keepournhspublic.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/GRASSROOTS-CAMPAIGN-FLYER.pdf> and register by Emailing: norfolksuffolkcrisis@gmail.com

And now for at least a little cheer



Family carer, Andrea Tucker won a legal victory over the Dept. of Work and Pensions, overturning a demand that she repay £4,600 for alleged breaches in benefit rules. She should never have had to fight for justice but thanks to Andrea for this ray of hope.
<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/feb/12/unpaid-carer-wins-overpayment-penalty-case-against-dwp>

Health campaigners shout up for Social Care



February saw a raft of protests about the dire situation in overflowing, unsafe A&E Departments. Thanks to the RCN’s hard-hitting report on ‘corridor care’, the media couldn’t turn a blind eye. Keep Our NHS Public seized opportunities to highlight the lack of social care and support services which is a major factor keeping 1 in 8 people stuck in hospital when they don’t need to be there.

Unison steps up the fight for migrant workers

Last November migrant workers in UNISON lobbied



Parliament to try to secure reforms to the visa system. MP Neil Duncan-Jordan tabled an Early Day Motion (EDM) calling for changes which

would allow care workers to switch employers within the sector without massive risk. This February Unison have released a report “Caring at Cost” based on a survey of 3,000 people who have come to the UK on health and care worker visas. It provides solid evidence of widespread exploitation and mistreatment. Unison is calling on Government to take over sponsorship of migrant care staff from employers and implementing a fair pay agreement.
<https://southwest.unison.org.uk/news/2025/02/migrant-care-staff-having-to-share-beds-sleep-rough-and-charged-thousands-in-illegal-fees/>

Best wishes and much solidarity to our wonderful, feisty supporters!

