

Supporting Young Carers in Essex

The future of support for Young Carers in Essex

Tim Frances, Youth Work Commissioner



Supporting Young Carers in Essex

It is estimated that there are in excess of **10,000** young carers in Essex who provide care to someone every day, with almost **6,000** providing more than one hour of care a day.

Many young carers suffer consequences that can be serious and long lasting.

- 1 in 12 young carers is caring for more than 15 hours per week.
- 1 in 20 misses school because of their caring responsibilities.
- Significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level, equivalent to nine grades lower overall than their peers e.g. the difference between nine B's and nine C's.
- 1.5 times more likely than their peers to be from BAME and 2x as likely to not speak English as their first language.
- 1.5 times more likely than their peers to have SEN or a disability.
- Average annual income for families with a young carer is £5000 less than families who do not have a young carer.
- Essex 2015, young adult carers had a NEET rate of 30% - 6x av
- Many come from hidden and marginalised groups, including children caring for family members with mental illness or a substance dependency.

Young Carers and Young Adult Carers tell us that.....

- Many were bullied at school for their caring role
- More than 1 day per month was lost at school through lateness or absence due to caring.
- 50% find college or university difficult due to their caring role
- 29% are likely to drop out of college/university due to their caring role. This is 4 times greater than national average for degree courses
- 33% feel they have to chose jobs that are flexible or close to home
- Over 50% reported a mental health problem – twice the national average.
- Nearly 90% of young adult carers felt they had not received good career advice at school

Policy Context

- The Government commitment to young carers was reaffirmed in October 2014 -
- *“Children and young people will be protected from inappropriate caring and have the support they need to learn, develop and thrive and to enjoy positive childhoods”.*
- The Children and Families Act 2014 defines a young carer as
“..a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person (of any age, except where that care is provided for payment, pursuant to a contract or as voluntary work)”

Policy Context

- The Children and Families Act 2014, in conjunction with the Care Act 2014, seeks to make sure young carers get the support they need. Under this Act,
- **local authorities are expected to take reasonable steps to identify young carers so they can be offered a Statutory Needs Assessment leading to appropriate support.**

Young carers referral for assessment – Targeted Youth Advisers

young.carers@essex.gov.uk

Our Young Carers

from data supplied by VCS providers 2015/16.

- 749 Young Carers supported at local groups 392 through the Schools programme (SCiE)
- Most young carers attending groups are 10 -14 years old
- Age / Gender profile similar for Young Carers. However not the case with Carers all ages - more women
- Ethnic profile lower than population - numbers small
- Hours: mostly 0-19pw.
- Relationship - 56% looking after parent - 35% looking after sibling – 9% looking after grandparent/other
- Caring 20hrs pw+ more likely to care for sibling as parent
- Referral Source - 2 in 5 formal, 1 in 4 informal (self or F&F)
- Cared for condition -
 - 1 in 5 Learning Disability (Autism, ADHD)
 - 1 in 5 Physical or sensory impairment
 - 1 in 5 Mental Health
 - 2 in 5 - complex / multiple

Young Carers in Essex – pre-2015

- 15 Young Carers Groups across Essex – VCS & ECC
- Young Carers assessments completed by request by Groups
- Young Carers Assessments done mainly as ‘gatekeeping exercise’
- Limited ‘schools’ work delivered in Rochford & Chelmsford

Young Carers in Essex – since 2015

- 12 Young Carers Groups – VCS
- Statutory Young Carers assessments completed by TYA’s
- Young Adult Carers (YAC) project established (SCiE)
- Secondary Schools Support to 79 schools across Essex (SCiE)

Redesigning the Offer – activity so far

- Engagement group of current VCS young carers providers
- **Participation in national young carers conferences /events**
- Analysis of other LA's offer
- **Analysis of existing young carers groups monitoring**
- Analysis of young carers assessments – plans
- **Engagement sessions with young adult carers**

What we were told....

This isn't a
role or an
obligation, it's
a way of life

I felt isolated

I wish I had the
opportunity to go
to a school better
equipped to
support me

Nobody understood what I actually did!

I got no help
from GP's

I don't have a social life, if I get
'respite' what do I do?

*Facebook gives me seconds of
'normal'*

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Prom. It made me feel normal for a night

EVERYONE NEEDS A JULIA (SUPPORT WORKER)

**We are a family, so we
care for each other**

**Make my parent
better**

**Can't remember being
happy at an early age,
and not being able to
be happy because
something bad will
happen, so I stay sad**

**Specialist
workers
for Mum
as I'm
alone**

**My brother helps
me but he's only
7, we don't get
any other support**

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Parents don't
like people
knowing

**Teachers think it's an excuse, they don't
listen, or don't ask why I am out of
school or behaving badly**

There's no
routine, no
sleeping
pattern

**When I go into hospital, that's
when people ask me and listen
to me**

**We need better access to information
and services available**

**Feeling under
pressure for not
knowing how to
cook meals or reach
the cooker!**

**No help to take the burden off,
to have a childhood**

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Key Areas of Improvement identified

- Improved identification of young carers/young adult carers
- **Increase access to statutory assessment of young carers needs**
- Improved understanding and support in Schools/FE/HE & Employers
- **Provide personalised and appropriate support when needed**
- Provide support to 'cared for' to reduce inappropriate caring and caring burden where necessary.
- **Raise awareness and understanding of young carers**
- Improve access to information for young carers and their families

Co-production Action Plan



Action Plan

- Increase access to independent assessment
- Deliver 'Healthy Schools' Benchmark in all schools
- Support schools to achieve the Carers Trust National Schools Award
- Engage with FE/HE & Employers to better support Young Carers
- Provide a network of 'local' 1:1 Key Workers for young carers to access when needed.
- Key Workers ensure emergency plans in place
- Develop a network of 'Street Nannies' to provide support with tasks in the home
- Improve access to Essex specific web based information + app development /Facebook groups

Action Plan

- Improve engagement of GP's & Health to identify and support young carers in their roles
- Engage School Nurses in providing complimentary support
- Improve 'whole family approach' to assessment and identification
- Improve engagement with BME communities
- Provide personal budgets to most in need
- Increased access to Specialist services – Mental health
- Provide meaningful 'respite' opportunities
- Support continuation of existing local Groups

Working together with young carers themselves, we must ensure we increase the recognition, identification and support of Young Carers in Essex.