

Young Carers Commissioning People & Families Scrutiny Committee

INTRODUCTION

Young carers need the same access to education, employment, training, social activities career and wider opportunities as other young people in the community who do not have caring responsibilities.

Section 96 of the Children and Families Act 2014 introduced new rights for young carers to improve how young carers and their families are identified and supported

From April 2015 all young carers are entitled to an assessment of their needs from the local authority. This new provision works alongside measures in the Care Act 2014 for assessing adults to enable a “whole family approach” to providing assessment and support.

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).” 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.

Additionally, transition planning should be available to support the move to adult services at 18 years.

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”.

CURRENT ACTIVITY

There is a young carers group based in each district supported by Essex Youth Service.

Additionally, Action for Family Carers (AFFC) and Supporting Children and Families Together (SCAFT) have received external funding to support pilot projects in schools (AFFC & SCAFT) and Young Adult Carers groups (AFFC). These provisions extend the range of services in some Districts.

Under the Supporting Carers in Essex (SCiE) contract, the partnership provides the following support

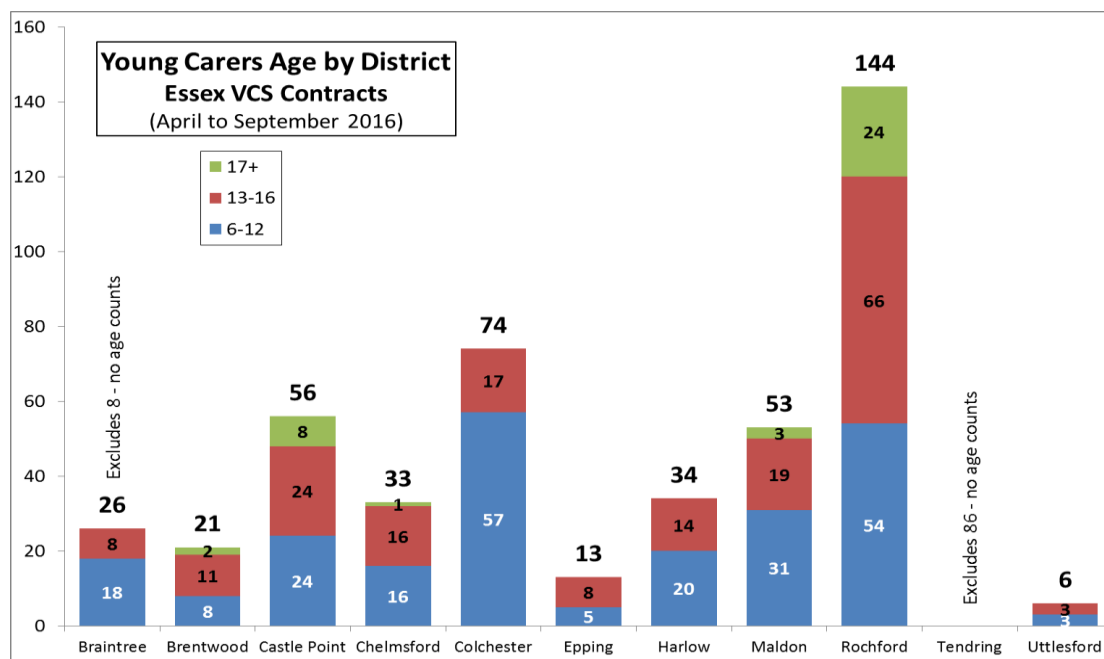
Young carers secondary school-based support for carers aged 11 – 18yrs

Young adult carers transition support for carers aged 16 – 24yrs

The Children’s Society have been commissioned in Mid-Essex to deliver the ‘Dare to care’ pilot project which supports young carers of adults with substance misuse, mental health issues and also providing emotional support to young people living in houses with domestic abuse.

In response to the Children and Families Act 2014, from April 2015 dedicated young carers assessment moved to the ECC Targeted Youth Adviser team in order to ensure an independent assessment, no waiting lists and that all the needs can be considered and an appropriate action plan can be agreed with the young carer

Mid-year data 2015 from VCS providers =



Data suggests that 4.9% of young carers attending groups are from BME communities

DEVELOPMENTS & NEXT STEPS

Healthy Schools - In order to build upon and improve support for young carers in schools, there is a need to embed awareness and on-going support in every school. This will not only provide appropriate support but also help schools improve attainment. The intention is to include a Young Carers module within the Healthy Schools programme which currently includes 95% of schools in Essex. This should ensure that those schools are working towards the quality standards specified. This can then be supported through commissioning training and awareness sessions and encouraging schools to achieve the Carers Trust Schools Award.

0 – 19 strategy - We have agreed targets for School Nurses and Community Nurses to identify and refer young carers for assessment. It would also be advantageous to follow the example of good practice as in Medway/Kent which includes confidential support to young carers from School Nurses within all schools as standard which would support the delivery of the Healthy Schools programme as above.

Young Carers Views - Young adult carers in Essex, have articulated that future commissioning should focus on providing a network of young carer and young adult carer support workers offering one to one personally tailored support and advocacy when required, rather than maintaining support to weekly recreational 'respite'

groups. Opportunities for young carers to meet together for meaningful respite activities could be funded during school holiday periods.

The existing VCS young carers groups would be supported to continue using the community capacity building model the Youth Service has successfully deployed to deliver youth activities across the county.

Young Carers asked us to explore the possibility of providing a countywide network of 'Street Nannies' who could provide practical support within the home to offer some relief from the caring burden of young carers.

Young Carers have said, there is a need to greatly improve access to information.

They have asked we ensure websites and links are up to date and easily accessible. Young people have also requested an App for Essex Young People to access Essex specific information, which could be an innovative way forward.

An additional suggestion is to support young carers is to provide access to personal budgets which could better support them to make life choices and access to FE or employment. This could help to broaden their ability to access respite and development opportunities.

There is a need in line with the national 'No Wrong Doors' Strategy to ensure improved collaborative working across Health, Adult Social Care and Family Operations which will enable young carers to be identified and offered appropriate support whenever a family is in contact with statutory services.