

To find out more, call: 0300 500 1895

At the end of 2024 The Carers Voices team had engaged with nearly 3000 unpaid carers across Essex, and we welcomed hearing the valuable feedback on what works well and what not so well in a carer's daily routine. This year, we continue to focus on the issues you have told us about; carers rights, accessing timely and appropriate support, ensuring your voice is heard by ECC and appreciating how you are making a difference.

## Some of the places we've visited:

- Spooky Market Colchester
- Family Warm Hub Clacton
- Falls & Frailty Event Clacton & Frinton
- East of England Ambulance Service Headquarters
- Friendly Club Wivenhoe
- Bereavement Café Witham
- 'Stronger My Way' event Basildon Sporting Village
- Dementia Support Group Dunmow
- Bangladeshi Women's Group Colchester
- Essex Police Wellbeing Event Chelmsford
- Hospitals in Basildon, Colchester, Chelmsford & Epping
- Limes Farm Community Event Chigwell
- Hutton Slipper Swap Event



**Let us know,**

what do you think of this Newsletter?

Email:

[carersvoices@healthwatchessex.org.uk](mailto:carersvoices@healthwatchessex.org.uk)

# **CARERS VOICES**

To find out more, call: 0300 500 1895

## **One carer's story (our carer is referred to as 'C')**

### **Background**

C has been caring for V, his wife for several years, who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's which affects her memory and speech and is progressing slowly. Because V can't communicate sufficiently, C is a constant presence to ensure her safety and provide her link to the world in daily routine. Recently, they decided to move house and have moved in with their daughter who shares the caring responsibility.

The move was quite difficult financially and emotionally and both C & V were fatigued, physically and mentally. The collective family desperately needed respite from each other and the turmoil surrounding the move.

### **Action and outcome**

C & V are both Veterans and attend a veteran's coffee morning. They regularly talk about Health and Social care, caring responsibilities and support available but both are very stoic and were reluctant to engage.

However, with encouragement from the mutually supporting group and Carers Voices, they contacted Carers First and have both benefited from an assessment and direct support which is ongoing and provides targeted breaks and outings for the family and importantly with little fuss. This has made a difference and has given them time and space to reenergise.

## Our next engagement events:

- St Osyth Village Hall 25th Feb 10am-1pm [public event]
- Toad Hall Nursery in Rayleigh 26th Feb
- Attending a meeting discussing setting up a carers club in Dunmow [public event]
- SCAFT Young Carers Wellbeing event in Rayleigh
- Stay Safe & Well event in Epping 17th March 10-4pm [public event]
- E.C.C. carers events in Wickford 20th March and Harlow 25th March 2.30-4.30pm [public events]

## Next unpaid carers focus groups:

- Waltham Abbey Fire Station Wednesday 5th March 10.30-12 noon
- Ingatestone Fire Station Wednesday 2nd April 10.30-12 noon

Times & events subject to change, please contact us for more information.

## VOLUNTEER WITH US!

### CARER EXPERTS BY EXPERIENCE

Use your experience as a carer to make a difference for others who are also caring



## Visit Our Van

📍 St Osyth Village Hall,  
Clacton Road, St Osyth, CO16 8PE

📅 25th February 2025,  
10am to 1pm



## Total number of carers engaged with in 2024: 2,982

### Age group breakdown:

Under 25 years – 39%  
Over 25 years – 61%

### Ethnicity breakdown:

White – 64%  
Asian – 19%  
Mixed and other ethnic groups – 15%

### Gender identity breakdown:

Female – 61%  
Male – 19%  
Prefer not to say – 20%

### Disability:

Physical – 36%  
Mental health – 7%  
Neurodiverse – 28%  
None – 39%

### Carer type:

Young carer – 7%  
Young adult carer – 8%  
Family carer – 26%  
Adult caring for an adult – 59%

## Carers Identified Themes

### Mental Health

- The negative impact for both the carer and cared for.
  - Lack of support for the carer when the cared-for has a range of mental health disorders.

### Carers Rights

- There is a lack of awareness due to a number of barriers:
  - Information barriers
  - Insufficient communication
  - Complexity of systems
  - Cultural or personal barriers

### Inconsistent GP services across Essex

- Highlighting the inconsistencies in support, for example:
  - Opening hours, differences in extended hours or weekend services, which may not accommodate carers' schedules.
  - Lack of awareness of carers' needs and pressures, i.e., the emotional and physical toll of being a carer.
  - Frequent GP changes resulting in carers repeatedly explaining their situations.
  - Lack of recognition – not recognising individuals as carers or involving them in decision-making about the cared-for person's health.

We have regular surveys on issues affecting carers, the feedback from these is used to influence changes in support & guidance for carers. We appreciate your time in completing them.

## Current surveys:

Mental Health & Wellbeing-

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/K5MFID/>

Young carers-

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/XX74HH/>

Essex County Council are seeking views from unpaid carers-

<https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/rci/flbbbed76/>

Looking after someone can have an impact on your mental and emotional wellbeing. This can affect your day-to-day life as well as your ability to provide the best care for your loved one. It is important that you take care of your own needs as well as the needs of the person you are caring for.

Further help & support with Mental Health issues can be found:

[Mental health | Essex County Council](#)

To learn more about looking after your own Mental Health and wellbeing, and for an opportunity to meet other carers, register for the [virtual wellbeing programme with Carers First](#). Their website also offers a range of help and advice [articles about your wellbeing](#).

*Mid and North East Essex Mind* - We are your local mental health charity.

Our mission is to listen to our communities and offer compassionate and inclusive mental health services, resources and practical support to promote wellbeing for everyone.

[About | Mid & North East Essex Mind](#)

The Carers Community Fund supports local organisations that help carers. You can find out here about the [organisations being supported by the fund](#)

Contact us 0300 500 1895

[carersvoices@healthwatchessex.org.uk](mailto:carersvoices@healthwatchessex.org.uk)

