

CARERS VOICES



To find out more, call: 0300 500 1895

healthwatch
Essex

Since its launch in January 2024, the Carers Voices team has connected with **4,136** unpaid carers across Essex, offering a platform for them to share their lived experiences and receive personalised support and guidance.



Our next engagement events:

- **Burnham Community in a Cup**, supporting Dementia Awareness Week. Thursday 15th May 2-4pm at Burnham United Reform Church, 53 Station Road, Burnham, CM0 8HF.
- **Healthier Habits Hub**. Tuesday 20th May 9am-2.30pm at Champions Manor Hall, Hullbridge Road; South Woodham Ferrers, CM3 5LJ.
- **Outreach event at Witham Wellbeing Hub**. Saturday 24th May 10am-2pm at The Witham Hub, Unit 17, Newland Shopping Centre, Witham, CM8 2YT.
- **Volunteer Recruitment Day**. Wednesday 4th June 10am-2pm. Braintree District Council are hosting a Volunteer Recruitment Day at Braintree Town Hall and are inviting local groups, clubs and organisations along to tell potential new volunteers how they can get involved! At Braintree Town Hall, Fairfield Road, Braintree, Essex, CM7 3YG.
- **Healthwatch Essex at the Jaywick Martello Tower**. Friday 6th June 2-4pm. An informal drop in for passers-by and visitors to The Tower, to engage with Carers Voices/ Information & Guidance teams.
- **Age well Fair**. Tuesday 10th June 10am-2pm at Braintree District Council, Causeway House, Braintree, CM7 9HB.
- **Broomfield Hospital atrium**. Wednesday 11th June 10am-2pm.
- **Healthier Habits Hub**. Friday 20th June at The Sunspot in Jaywick, 10-4pm.
- **Essex Pride**. Saturday 21st June at Central Park in Chelmsford.

Let us know, what do you think of this Newsletter

Email: carersvoices@healthwatchessex.org.uk



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Recently we conducted a survey focused on the mental health and wellbeing of unpaid carers. With 170 responses, the feedback provided valuable insights into the challenges carers face. These findings have been analysed, and a detailed report has been shared with Essex County Council to help inform future support services.

- Carers said they were not aware, or not informed, about mental health and wellbeing. Awareness training at the very start would have prepared carers and they could have recognised the signs and put coping mechanisms in place.
- The lack of a supportive network of family, friends and social inactivity increases the risk of poor mental health and wellbeing.
- Quicker and easier access to local and appropriate support groups can alleviate the impact of poor mental health and wellbeing.
- Many carers have physical and mental impairment and are likely to be more susceptible to succumbing to poor mental health.
- Carers focus on the cared for and do not realise they are suffering from poor mental health themselves.
- Caring reduces the ability to socialise, work and leads to loneliness and isolation. This impacts on mental health and wellbeing.

Carers told us that financial and practical difficulties, lack of support, exhaustion, lack of time to themselves, isolation, balancing caring with other responsibilities and the impact of caring on their physical health contributed to the negative impact on their mental health and wellbeing. In addition, carers told us their experiences of physical/mental deterioration in those they care for can also negatively impact directly their mental health and wellbeing.

Organisations that can be contacted for further support with Mental Health & Wellbeing:

- Your GP
- Samaritans 0116 123, calls are free and are available 24hrs, 365 days of the year.
- Text 'Shout' to 85258, texts are free and available 24hrs 365 days of the year.
- MIND [Home - Mind](#)
- The Essex Wellbeing Service Mental Health & Emotional Support – [Essex Wellbeing Service](#)[Essex Wellbeing Service](#)

On 24 February our Research Manager, our Carers Voices Lead Officer and two Carer Ambassadors attended Parliament to meet with Chris Vince, MP for Harlow and Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Young Carers [About the All-party Parliamentary Group (APPG) – Carers Trust], to hear about our work, ambitions and the challenges that unpaid carers are facing.

He listened intently to the experiences the carers shared and spoke about his ideas for the future of young carers. After our meeting, we were given a guided tour of Parliament which was a great opportunity for us all.



Dementia Research Study

being conducted by Dr Smruti Bulsari of the Institute of Public Health and Wellbeing, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, CO4 3SQ.

The objective of this study is to understand these issues and how they progress with years since dementia diagnosis.

If you are interested in participating, or have any questions, please make contact by email on smruti.bulsari@essex.ac.uk

