

CARERS VOICES

To find out more, call: 0300 500 1895

Since the last newsletter, the Carers Voices Team have engaged with unpaid carers in every corner of the county. We have engaged on the High Street, at schools and colleges, clubs and at health and wellbeing events.

We have facilitated forums in person and online and engaged carers from a wide range of backgrounds; gender, ethnicity, age and or disability. We have also reached many who are isolated, emotionally, geographically and digitally.

We have reached out to those communities who, ordinarily, may not have the opportunity to speak about their experiences or be heard; we have listened intently and with empathy, without judgement, and facilitated them having the confidence to tell us about their caring experiences.

Let us know,
what do you think of this Newsletter?
Email:
carersvoices@healthwatchessex.org.uk

We have taken notes diligently and provided feed back to ECC, EWS and those organisations that support carers and importantly, the carers themselves. Wherever we have reached carers we have found that their circumstances are unique to them and that services available to them are not easily reached, accessed or utilised due to these unique circumstances.

Our engagement with unpaid carers found that, despite a generally satisfactory range of services available across the county, there are still many barriers to accessing care services that provide the right balance for the cared for whilst also ensuring that the carers get the best support and the timely and appropriate information they need to provide sustainable care, don't suffer burnout and importantly can provide preventative solutions that complements the social care provision.

There are signs that access to social care services is improving, and awareness of services is rising. One indication is that the Carers Community Fund recipients are becoming more visible in the county and are starting to deliver on some of the support they offer.

The CV team continue to work hard to engage and will have a presence at a range of events across the county, which you can find out about in this Newsletter.



For more information on our findings click here:



We know how important it is for carers to feel supported and connected. That's why we're excited to share a range of upcoming events and opportunities to get involved.

Whether you're looking to learn more about our work, connect with others, or simply take some time for yourself, there's something for everyone.

For more information click here:



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SUMMARY OF YOUNG CARERS SURVEY

Our Young Carers Survey is still running and has been valuable in gathering their thoughts and experiences. Our Young Carers have busy routines, they find little time outside of caring and academic studies to engage so the online survey was a good way to capture some of their views, quick and easy to complete and a snapshot of our findings are below.

Of our 75 respondents:

- 87% were aged 17 or younger, the rest were between 18–25.
 - 57% were female and the remainder male.
- 82% were white British and the remainder Asian/other or mixed ethnicity.

It is clear our Young Carers face challenges that have impacted on their mental health and wellbeing, with some responses below.

Question 1a- How has being a young carer affected your emotional well-being and mental health?

- 58.33% said that being a young carer had a negative affect on their emotional well-being and mental health. They included how it was difficult to *'regulate my emotions'*, they also reported feeling increased *'anxiety'*, *'stress'* and *'burnout'*.
- 12.5% stated that being a young carer made them feel good. One individual said that it made them *'feel happy and help people and that I can relax and have my own space'*. There were some who had mixed emotions towards their caring responsibilities, having both positive and negative aspects of being a young carer.

'Sometimes it's really difficult always being the strong one but sometimes it's the best thing ever'

Question 1b- Can you share any specific challenges or positive experiences you have encountered?

- 18.18% individuals said that balancing things whilst being a carer, such as academic studies and having a social life was difficult.
- 9.09% said that there was difficulty when communicating and speaking with people who do not understand the difficulties for themselves and person they are caring for.
 - 18.18% made reference to how Young Carer organisations providing activities and respite had a positive impact and allowed them to make friends and feel understood by people who understand their experiences.
- Other challenges mentioned included *'findings things to do'* and *'remembering to make sure my mum takes her medication before bed'*.
 - 9.09% said that they had faced no challenges.