

## PARENT CARERS

Whatever your child's condition or disability, there will be times of joy and other times that can be very challenging. Such difficulties can affect each member of the family in a different way. This guide is aimed to help and offer support to you.

### Are you a Parent Carer?

In Essex, around 180,000 people provide unpaid care or support to family members, friends and neighbours.

It can be difficult to recognise yourself as a Carer when you simply think you are just being 'a parent' or 'just doing what needs to be done' for your child.

### Legislation

Carer's rights are set out in the **Children and Families Act 2014** which came into force on 1st April 2016.

Parent Carers are entitled to an assessment of their needs under this Act if they may have needs for support.

The assessment must take into account the wellbeing of the parent Carer and the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the disabled child cared for and any other child living with the parent

**The Equality Act (2010)** requires that Early Years providers, schools, colleges, local authorities and other educational settings:-

**Must not** – indirectly or directly discriminate against, victimise or harass disabled children and young people.

**Must** – make reasonable adjustments, including providing aids such as induction loops, so that disabled children and young people aren't disadvantaged comparatively with other children.

**The Special Education Needs & Disability Code of Practice** states that the basic principles that need to be kept in mind, when thinking about your child's needs are:

- That all children have a right to an education to enable them to make progress in order that they:
  - live fulfilling lives and grow in confidence.
  - achieve their potential.
  - successfully transition into becoming an adult – either into further and higher education, work or training.

Whether children are in Early Years setting, school or college, all children with disabilities or with special educational needs (SEN) should have their needs met.

- When making decisions about disabilities or SEN, your local authority must:
  - ensure that children, young people and their parents participate, as much as possible, in the decisions that affect them.
  - have regard to the wishes, feelings and views of children, young people and their parents.
  - provide support to children, young people and their parents in order that children and young people can properly prepare for adulthood and do well educationally.

Local authorities must involve children, young people and their parents in developing local services and provision for children with disabilities and special educational needs.

Parents should have access to advice, support and impartial advice, they should have a say in decisions that affect their children and also know how to challenge decisions that they disagree with.

Services that provide help for your child, such as local health organisations and your local authority, need to work together in order to benefit your child.

### **How can Action for Family Carers help you?**

Action for Family Carers has a range of services for Parent Carers to help you manage and maintain your caring role. This includes:

- ✓ **Counselling** services: free for Carers in Essex.

- ✓ **Befriending:** a volunteer-led befriending service aimed at Carers who may be experiencing loneliness or social isolation, or are looking for a regular catch-up chat with a volunteer.
- ✓ **GP Liaison Service:** a mid-Essex service which supports GP practices to develop their processes and systems to identify and signpost Carers to suitable services.
- ✓ **Carer and Family Response:** independent and responsive support for Carers and their families in Chelmsford District.
- ✓ **Activity Groups:** We hold Active Minds and Keeping Active groups in Harlow, Epping and Great Dunmow for people with dementia or memory loss.
- ✓ **Respite Day Centres:** We provide day care for older people in Maldon, which also provides a few hours break for family Carers giving them some precious time to call their own.

### **Support for siblings (Young Carers)**

Siblings who are undertaking care for a brother or sister are Young Carers. Young Carers often do care tasks alongside parents such as supervision, feeding, personal care, help with getting to sleep, translating at appointments, assisting with therapies, and giving medication. Young Carers often also support their parents emotionally, especially if parents themselves have anxiety or depression.

All this pressure can sometimes have a negative impact on the Young Carer's physical and emotional wellbeing and on their education. Professionals need to be aware that a sibling can become a Young Carer at any time during their childhood.

Our **Young Carer Club Nights** across Essex provide a regular opportunity for Young Carers to have a break, take part in activities and mix with others in the same situation. They also give Young Carers the opportunity to talk in confidence to a trusted and experienced Young Carer Worker.

We understand it is important for Young Carers to have the same opportunities as their peers to achieve their goals. Without support, Young Carers can struggle at school, can be socially isolated or experience bullying.

We therefore provide support for **Young Carers in schools**, working with teachers and support staff to:

- Increase awareness of Young Carers.
- Help Young Carers develop strategies to achieve the best they can in school.
- Help to set up Young Carer groups in schools.
- Break down barriers that may prevent Young Carers from achieving their goals.

For further information or assistance please contact:

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