



Carers & Helpers Noticeboard

A central point of contact for support for unpaid carers 0300 303 9988
Phonelines are open Monday to Friday 8am-7pm Saturday 9am-12pm
E: provide.essexwellbeing@nhs.net or <https://essexwellbeing.co.uk/support/carers/>

South Essex
February 2026

Supporting someone and knowing that you are making a real difference to their life can be extremely rewarding. Many people find fulfillment and learn about their own strengths through their experiences of being a Carer. However, the challenges of caring can lead to many carers frequently experiencing a broad range of emotions. Being constantly responsible for looking after someone can feel overwhelming, emotionally draining, frustrating and stressful, which can lead to guilt over feeling this way at times. Carers can feel isolated or lonely, plus financially stressed if their caring responsibilities limit their ability to socialize, pursue personal interests, or impact on their employment. Having to give up work can lead to a loss of identity for some, or a loss of confidence in their abilities to do anything other than caring for someone else. Sleep disturbances, fatigue, and neglect of personal health are all common among carers. The pressure to "always be available" may make it difficult to take breaks or seek help. Over time, these factors can contribute to more serious mental health issues such as depression or chronic anxiety.

Mid and South Essex's latest GP Patient Survey found carers were more likely to report poor mental health or feeling isolated.

% who reported having a long-term physical or mental health condition	Carers 72%	Non-Carers 61%
% who reported having a long-term mental health condition	Carers 16%	Non-Carers 13%
% who reported experiencing feelings of isolation in the last 12 months	Carers 9%	Non-Carers 7%

<https://gp-patient.co.uk/slide-packs/ics-carers-slide-packs/2025>

Carers First offer emotional support and 6 weeks of free counselling, plus small grants to enable unpaid carers to take a break from the pressures of caring. Referring a carer for emotional support can be done via EWS, or directly with Carers First by filling in the online form at <https://www.carersfirst.org.uk/get-support/professional-adult-carer-referral/>

The charity also hosts regular drop in and peer support groups at many accessible venues in Basildon, Billericay, Brentwood, Canvey, Rayleigh, Thundersley and Wickford. As well as a Men's Breakfast Club for male carers held monthly at The Travellers Joy Pub in Rayleigh. Find details of all support groups at <https://www.carersfirst.org.uk/essex/groups-and-events/> or call **0300 303 1555**

According to the UK Census of 2021:
Over 40% of unpaid carers identified as male
In men, the age group most likely to become an unpaid carer were those aged 60 - 64 years
A higher percentage of women were unpaid carers across all age groups up until 80+ years of age when the trend reversed.
7.4% of men aged 85 - 89 years were providing 50+ hours of unpaid care per week

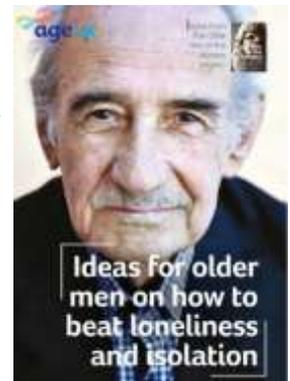
Loneliness and isolation are commonly experienced by both male and female unpaid carers. A [study](#) by Kingston University found that while 'male carers' were committed to their role, they often felt ambivalent or guilty about asking for any help or support. Men, and older aged men in particular, may feel unfair societal expectations that they should be self-reliant, stoic and emotionally in control.



is a free digital platform for unpaid carers living in Essex. The site has an extensive library of information including strategies to support carers mental health, information for working carers and a [Guide for Men Providing Care](#).

The Mobilise App is free to download and offers a place to connect with fellow carers, share experiences, and get support from others during the day or night, 7 days a week.

Ideas for older men on how to beat loneliness and isolation is one of the resources arising from Age UK's sponsored **Older Men at the Margins study**. Lived experience from marginalised groups including that of older male carers, formed the basis of this study. For more info and to view this and other resources go to <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/our-impact/policy-research/older-men-at-the-margins-how-men-combat-loneliness-in-later-life/>



"Come together to talk, listen and change lives". Talking openly and honestly can be the first step towards better mental health. Talking can reduce stigma and help people feel comfortable enough to seek help if and when they need it. [Conversations in the Community](#) is a free online course open to all that teaches how to have supportive conversations about mental health and wellbeing. Click logo for more details about **time to talk day** and to find a range of information and support offered by **Mind** or call **0300 123 3393** Monday to Friday 9am-6pm. Guidance for unpaid carers can be found at <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helping-someone-else/carers-friends-family-coping-support/>



Anyone aged 16+yrs registered with a Basildon, Brentwood, Billericay or Wickford GP can drop in to the **Human Kind Café, Billericay CM12 9AJ** on the **last Thursday of every month 12:30-2:30pm** to find out about free NHS Talking Therapies support for mental health. Vita also offers free online mental health courses designed to help people develop coping strategies to build resilience and manage stress. People can self-refer to Vita. For more info <https://vitahealthgroup.co.uk/nhs-talking-therapies/basildon-brentwood/> or call **01268 977 171**



The NHS uses information from patient records not only to support individual care, but also to understand where demand is highest and to identify health inequalities. The local NHS system is inviting residents to complete a short anonymous survey to understand what people already know, how they feel, and what question / concerns they have about the use of patient data to help plan and improve services.

To participate in this survey go to <https://virtualviews.midandsouthessex.ics.nhs.uk/how-the-nhs-uses-patient-data-share-your-views>



Right now, at least 1.25 million people in the UK are living with an eating disorder. For those supporting someone with ED Beat offers information, free online training to learn how to support that person towards recovery and tips on taking care of their own wellbeing, as well as online peer support. For information on recognising eating disorders signs and on supporting someone with an ED click on logo. Or go to <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/get-information-and-support/services/carers/>

Research suggests that between 4% - 23% of people with an eating disorder are also autistic. For guidance on autism and ED go to <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/get-information-and-support/about-eating-disorders/eating-disorders-and-autism/> For free training for HCP go to <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/get-information-and-support/training-for-professionals/> The **Beat Helpline** is available by phone Mon to Fri 3pm-8pm **0808 801 0677**, by email help@beateatingdisorders.org.uk & [webchat](#)



Essex Carers Network works co-productively with Essex County Council and other key organisations to ensure the lived experiences and voices of families informs and influences the future landscape and opportunities for people with a learning disability, including autism. ECN is inviting families to take part in their in-depth questionnaire which is split into manageable sections to help build a picture of lived experiences, challenges, and aspirations, and of what needs to change. The questionnaire will close on **2nd March 2026** and all insight shared from the results will have any identifiable details removed. Participants completing the About You section plus three further sections will be entered into a draw to win one of three £50 shopping vouchers. Scan the QR code or go to <https://www.essexcarersnetwork.co.uk/annual-voice-it-questionnaire/>



Anyone caring for a person living with a learning disability, autism, dementia, or other long-term condition may be entitled to money off their Council Tax. Income and savings do not affect eligibility and the Carer does not need to be receiving Carer's Allowance to qualify for a reduction. ECN's latest factsheet explains everything clearly so households can easily check what they should be paying. Go to <https://www.essexcarersnetwork.co.uk/understanding-council-tax-a-guide-for-family-carers/> or E: info@essexcarersnetwork.co.uk



new **Digital Friends** service offers free digital skills support to housebound Essex residents aged 60+yrs. Friendly, DBS checked volunteers provide 1-to-1 support to individuals in their own homes, working at their own pace in up to 6 relaxed sessions. The help offered includes learning how to download and use the NHS App, make GP appointments online, do online shopping, setting up Alexa and other devices, how to stay socially connected using video calls and other platforms. Individuals will need to have access to a working digital device such as a smartphone, tablet, or computer, plus access to either mobile data or a Wi-Fi internet connection. To refer or find out more about the service, or if interested in becoming a Digital Friend Volunteer, email enquires@agewelleast.org.uk or call **0300 373 33 33**



Local KE community groups	Days held	Venue	For more details see Kinder Essex or email the local KE coach
Learn to Crochet Workshop	13th Feb 10:30am-12:30am	Thundersley Methodist Church	Kelly.mckenzie@ceessex.org.uk
Hug in a Shrug	1 st 3 rd & 4 th Mon 10am-12pm	Great Tarpots Library	
Crafty Cockney Games Club	Tuesdays 2pm-4pm	The Crafty Cockney Café, Canvey	Corrina.odonnell@ceessex.org.uk
Walk & Talk Group	Fridays 9:30-10:30am	1 st Hawkwell Scout Hut, Hockley	
Liz's Ladies Friendship Group	1 st Thursday 7-9pm	Hockley Royal British Legion	Kelly.coombs@ceessex.org.uk
Hug in a Shrug	Tuesdays 1pm-3pm	Megacentre Community Space	
Hug in a Shrug	Thurs 10:30am-12:30pm	Pinetree Care Home, Rayleigh	Sarah.Hawkes@ceessex.org.uk
Hug in a Shrug	Thursdays 5pm-7pm	The Megacentre Rayleigh	
Community Chat Table	1 st Wednesday 10am-12pm	Manzano Lounge, Rayleigh	Amy.robelou@ceessex.org.uk
Hug in a Shrug	Last Wed 10:30am-12:30pm	Hanningfield Reservoir Nature Centre	
Walking Group	Last Wed 10:45-11:45am	Hanningfield Reservoir Nature Centre	
Hug in a Shrug	4 th Wednesday 2pm-3:30pm	Human Kind Café Billericay	
Wickford Wellbeing Café	Weds 11:30am-1:30pm	Nevedon Centre, Wickford	
Wellbeing Walk	Fortnightly Fri 10am-12pm	Warley Place Nature Reserve	
Community Chat Table	Fortnightly Fri 12:30-2pm	Brunch HQ, Warley HQ	
SEN Parent/carers Support Group	Fortnightly Thurs 10-11am	Online	



Mobile Advice Centre initiative is offering to bring free energy advice directly to local community spaces and car parks in Essex. Residents can visit the van to chat with NEA specialist Energy Advisers about

- Keeping homes warmer & reducing draughts

- Understanding your energy bills (bring them for a quick MOT!)
 - Saving energy and cutting bills
 - Carbon monoxide safety and free CO monitors
 - Priority Services Register eligibility check and sign-up
 - Support with money, water bills and applying for energy grants.
- Email Energy Advisor natasha.james@nea.org.uk if you are interested in having the MAC Van come along to speak to your service users, group members or local community.

Inspired by Sheffield Young Carers work with families on the MPACT programme. The **Finding My Way workbook** is a resource for professionals supporting children and young people aged



8yrs+ who are currently living with, or have previously been impacted by addiction within their family. Creatively working through the workbook enables young people to safely develop knowledge, explore their feelings, build resilience and understand that they are not alone. To view or download a copy of this workbook click on image or email information@symp.org.uk