

Example of a grant awarded from Funds set up with Essex Community Foundation (ECF) and that received matched funding from the Proceeds of Crime Scheme also managed by ECF:

- There are many estimates about the number of young carers in the UK, which can range anywhere from 120,000 to 700,000.
- On average, a young carer will miss 27 school days per year.



Kool Carers South East (KCSE) knows that young carers can be particularly vulnerable to crime, and wants to ensure that they are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves, and those they care for, safe.

They received a grant of £1,129 from the **Jack Elliott Fund** to provide youth safety sessions in Basildon and Brentwood on a wide range of topics, including cyber safety and county lines.

KCSE was established in September 2017 by a qualified social worker and an experienced youth worker. Their focus is to develop personal and social relationships, improve independent life-skills and resilience and generally help to reduce the isolation which young carers experience.

KCSE has developed their overall support, which includes group activities, therapeutic interventions, and respite opportunities and are currently working with around 150 young carers regularly. Despite expanding their delivery, they still have a waiting list of 80.

Activities are led by the voice of the young people, and family support is encouraged during parent/grandparent sessions. They take a very holistic approach and as well as the young carers, KCSE will support the families as a whole, working with health care providers and schools, to ensure families are accessing the right support and care.

Worryingly, but unsurprisingly, a recent survey confirmed that young carers struggle with a range of concerns, which impacts their health and wellbeing. With our funding, Kool Carers has been able to continue their sessions, helping the young carers to build their self-confidence and the chance to develop life skills which they would not otherwise have had the chance to do.



A recent survey undertaken by Kool Carers found that:

- 83% of the young carers said they feel happier since attending Kool Carers
- 70% feel that their mental health has improved
- 80% feel less isolated.

Rachel Tungate, CEO at KCSE said, *“We provide a valuable service for young carers, who are often in danger of missing out on the normal activities of their early developmental years. The support, empathy and guidance we provide, plays an important part in their transition to adulthood, while at the same time ensuring that they are able to continue to undertake their important caring duties.”*

She went on to say:

“We are so incredibly grateful to the funding received, which has enabled us to ensure that our young carers are aware of the dangers (both in the real and virtual world) and that they are empowered to tell someone that they trust when they have concerns. As a result of the funding received, we have been able to ensure that the young carers are armed with knowledge.

The sessions have improved the knowledge and awareness of young carers and their families to crime. We have encouraged families to have discussions about real-world and virtual safety, encouraging and supporting young carers to make positive choices which will help to keep them safe.

Our Mentor continues to deliver a targeted 12-week intervention for young carers who are at risk of becoming involved in crime. Young carers work through a Personal Development Plan which includes self-assessment tools to demonstrate improvements in communication; self-care; resilience; being active; having a positive outlook, developing new interests and making positive and informed choices. This is worked through in conjunction with the mentor, who sets tasks for young carers to complete to address areas that they are concerned about.

Our safety sessions have been embraced and welcomed by young carers, parents and staff alike and we would all like to personally thank Essex Police for making this funding possible which is supporting our work, as this funding has helped us to impart knowledge that is crucial in ensuring the safety of our young carers.”

One of the young carers helped is D and his brother R:

D (a 9-year-old male), a young carer, was at mainstream school. He became physical towards staff and would throw tables and chairs. Whilst the school endeavoured to meet this young person's needs it became more increasingly difficult. D had to be moved to a specialist unit, the Kool Carers (KC) mentor was then funded to be able to begin working with him. He initially struggled, but with the support of his KC mentor he was able to develop his coping strategies and develop a positive personal development plan, which he totally embraced. It is envisaged that D will be able to return to mainstream education in the foreseeable future, as he has made such positive progress.



At home, the KC mentor began to work with D's older sibling, R, who was at risk of becoming involved in county lines and exclusion from school. The KC mentor works with both young carers separately, but also works with them together to look at their relationship and the impact their behaviour has towards each other. These sessions have helped to reinforce the one-to-one work that is being undertaken within the mentoring sessions.