

25 November 2015

## **Tunstall Healthcare and The Silver Line Work Together to Combat Loneliness Among Older People**

*Technology-enabled care provider presented national charity with donation to ensure isolated older people have access to resources and a free confidential helpline*

Simon Arnold, Chief Customer Officer for Tunstall Healthcare presented a cheque for £25,000 to The Silver Line, a national charity that helps reduce loneliness in isolated, older people. The donation was accepted on behalf of the charity by Founder Dame Esther Rantzen DBE at The Silver Line Helpline National Conference in London.

The Silver Line, which is celebrating its 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary, is the only free, confidential helpline for older people. It operates around-the-clock, 365-days-a-year, providing information and support, friendship and advice, and signposting callers to other resources in their community.



Tunstall has been a supporter of the charity since it was founded in 2013, donating annually to ensure helpline callers get the advice and support they need. Together, the two organisations are working together to achieve one goal; reduce loneliness and isolation among the increasingly-aging population.

Simon Arnold said: “Loneliness is a serious concern and millions of older, isolated people are left with no real connections to the outside world. The Silver Line helpline and friendship service is making a real difference to the health economy. Over time, we expect this to reduce the number of patients presenting at GP surgeries with loneliness-related conditions.”

Sophie Andrews, Chief Executive of The Silver Line commented:

“Since our launch two years ago, our 24/7 year-round helpline has received over 660,000 calls, and this is continuing to grow. Callers to The Silver Line are among the hardest to reach older people – for example, those who are confined to their homes through physical or mental disability. For these people, the phone can be a lifeline. The Silver Line relies on donations to help combat the loneliness epidemic and we’re very grateful for Tunstall’s ongoing support.”

Dame Esther Rantzen added:

“Like many of our Silver Line callers, I know only too well what loneliness feels like. It may not be possible to heal the cause of our loneliness – for example, if you have lost loved ones or can no longer get out and about. But, by working together with organisations like Tunstall, we can tackle its effects and restore to older people the confidence, the fun, and the respect they deserve.”

Tunstall is currently working with The Silver Line and [Birmingham Telecare Service](#) (BTS) to deliver a Reassurance Calls Service which provides weekly contact to older people who are experiencing loneliness. The calls are handled by trained Silver Line volunteers who contact isolated older people once a week for a 10-minute chat. From then on it’s a case of what best fits the needs of that person; for example, several people have already been matched for the next phase in which they have a longer term ongoing relationship with trained volunteers. While currently offered on a trial basis, the service is expected to expand in the future.

Since being set up in 2013, The Silver Line has received over 660,000 calls from lonely older people. Some 68% of calls are after 6pm or at weekends; while 67% of callers contact the helpline because they are lonely or isolated, 88% live alone, and 54% say they have no one else to speak to. The Silver Line has recruited and trained more than 2,000 volunteers.

The Silver Line Helpline: 0800 4 70 80 90.

For more information on Silver Line visit <http://www.thesilverline.org.uk>

Follow us on Twitter: @TheSilverLineUK

### **About The Silver Line**

- The Silver Line is the UK's only free, confidential, 24-hour seven-days-a-week, helpline for older people.
- The Silver Line works in partnership with Age Scotland to deliver the service in Scotland.
- For interviews and case studies contact: 0748 301 5955

### **About Tunstall**

Tunstall Healthcare Group offers a range of Connected Care and Connected Health solutions across each of its main regions - UK, Nordics, Southern Europe, Central Europe, North America and Asia-Pacific. Through the use of smart technology underpinned by high quality, high touch services we support older people and those with long term conditions to live independently, securely, healthily and happily as they are able. As the market leading provider of technology-enabled care, we have been working with health, housing and social care partners for nearly 60 years. By effectively supporting health, independence and well-being, our Connected Care and Connected Health solutions improve outcomes and deliver efficiencies when compared to traditional models of hospital or residence-based care.

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