

10 May 2016

TYNE BRIDGE & GATESHEAD MILLENNIUM BRIDGE ARE 'LIGHTING-UP' FOR SILVER WEEK

- **The Tyne Bridge and Gateshead Millennium Bridge will be lighting up blue and white on Wednesday 18 May to support The Silver Line Helpline**
- **With over 870,000 calls from lonely and isolated older people – Silver Week will help raise funds to ensure we're always there when needed**
- **Join The Silver Line team for the big switch on**



The Tyne Bridge and Gateshead Millennium Bridge will be lighting up blue and white to support The Silver Line Helpline for lonely and isolated older people.

As the Queen's birthday celebrations come to an end, thousands of 90-year-olds will have no cakes or parties to look forward to, and spend their days alone with nothing to look forward to except a call from their Silver Line Friend.

The Silver Line runs the only national, free and confidential helpline for older people that's open day and night, and has already taken 26,000 calls from lonely older people in the North East.

The Tyne Bridge and Gateshead Millennium Bridge join iconic landmarks across the UK including The Blackpool Tower by lighting-up to mark Silver Week – a fundraising drive for The Silver Line – which runs from 15-21 May.

The Silver Line relies on voluntary donations and during Silver Week everyone can make a big difference to lonely older people by helping raise funds to support our work. Raising just £5 will

pay for a call to The Silver Line from a lonely or isolated older person, while £50 can cover the cost of recruiting and training a volunteer telephone friend.

Sophie Andrews, CEO of The Silver Line, said:

“We’re really grateful to the Tyne Bridge and Gateshead Millennium Bridge for adding their support to Silver Week.

“Everyone has been celebrating the Queen’s 90th but we know that many older people have no birthday parties, cakes, or even anyone to simply chat to.

“We are uncovering a hidden epidemic of loneliness among the oldest people in our society – the percentage of over-90s calling our helpline is double the proportion in the UK population.

“That’s why we are asking everyone to join us this Silver Week by raising funds to ensure we are always at the end of the phone when older people need us.

“And why not tweet pictures of Tyne Bridge and Gateshead Millennium Bridge to show your support using #SilverWeek2016 .”

There are hundreds of ways to get involved in Silver Week – for example by joining the ‘bake off’ craze with a bake sale of your own, organising a Silver Screening movie event, or just taking 10 minutes to sign-up to Top Cashback for great savings and the opportunity to donate to The Silver Line.

Find out more ways to take part at www.thesilverline.org.uk/get-involved/silver-week-2016/

Founded by Dame Esther Rantzen, The Silver Line Helping currently receives over 10,000 calls a week from older people seeking information, advice, or even just a chat on the phone.

We also have 3,000 volunteers trained as Silver Line Friends providing vital human contact for lonely and isolated older people.

For more information or interviews contact

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About The Silver Line

- The Silver Line is the UK’s only free, confidential, 24-hour seven-days-a-week, helpline for older people.
- Since being launched nationally in 2013, The Silver Line has received over 880,000 calls from lonely older people.
- 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.