



NEWS RELEASE

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HELPLINE FOR LONELY OLDER PEOPLE GETS ITS ONE MILLIONTH CALL

- 700,000 calls received overnight and weekends when The Silver Line is the only helpline available specifically for older people
- Without more public donations charity could be forced to close vital out-of-hours service for lonely and isolated older people
- Silver Line launches appeal to raise £1.65 million to keep the helpline going 24/7

The Silver Line helpline for lonely and isolated older people (0800 4 70 80 90) has received its one millionth call in just over 2½ years.

Launched by Dame Esther Rantzen in November 2013, the charity's leaders say they have been stunned by the epidemic of loneliness they've uncovered among the nation's older people.

The growing demand from lonely older people means The Silver Line now needs to raise £1.65 million to pay for the night-time and weekends service. The charity says that without more public donations the vital service will have to close.

The millionth call came on a record-breaking day for the 24-hour helpline with over 1,600 calls received from older people, out-stripping the previous highest number of calls on New Year's Day 2016.

The Silver Line's Founder, Dame Esther Rantzen said:

"I knew there was a need for the helpline but to answer one million calls in such a short space of time is desperately sad.

"Calls to the helpline increase almost every week as we uncover the epidemic of loneliness among our oldest and most vulnerable people.

"Our callers tell us that nights can be the worst times of all when they really need someone to talk to and confide in.

"We urgently need more donations to keep the night-time service going so we are always there for the people who need us most."

Over two-thirds of calls to the helpline are at night and weekends and over half of all callers say they have no one else to speak to apart from The Silver Line.

Chief Executive of The Silver Line, Sophie Andrews said:

“Every day we speak to lonely older people who have led varied and interesting lives but are now isolated and literally have no one to speak to for days on end.

“Over 90% of our callers say they live alone and rely on the helpline – especially at night when other services are closed.

“We’re the only helpline specifically for older people, which is there 24/7, every day of the week, including Christmas and Bank Holidays.”

To make a donation to the helpline, go to the website www.thesilverline.org.uk/donate

For more information or interviews contact

Kevin Mochrie , Head of Communications

Tel: 0748 301 5955 Email: kevin.mochrie@TheSilverLine.org.uk

Hannah Rogers, Media & Information Officer

Tel: 020 3794 7902 Email: hannah.rogers@TheSilverLine.org.uk

Notes To Editors

- The Silver Line (0800 4 70 80 90) is the only free, national, confidential helpline open every day and night, offering information, friendship and advice to older people.
- As well as running the helpline, The Silver Line has 3,000 volunteers who make regular friendship calls, or exchange letters with older people.
- The charity also makes a further 1,500 ‘keeping in touch’ calls every week to isolated older people.
- The cost of calls to the helpline, and The Silver Line’s other friendship services, are paid for by the donations it receives.
- 68% of callers contact the helpline because they are lonely or isolated, 90% live alone, and 54% say they have no one else to speak to.
- The Silver Line works in partnership with Age Scotland to deliver the service in Scotland.