



PRESS RELEASE

9th May 2018

AGE UK SURREY SEES AN INCREASE IN ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION AMONGST OLDER PEOPLE

The latest wellbeing data from the Office of National Statistics shows that overall satisfaction with health (including mental health) is declining and more people are suffering from anxiety and depression year on year. Research commissioned by YouGov and Age UK has confirmed that around half of the over 55s say they have experienced anxiety. This trend is also borne out by evidence gathered by Age UK Surrey, the charity that supports people in later life. In the last 6 months over a third (36%) of counselling clients have presented with anxiety as their prevailing issue. This is in contrast to a year ago when only 14% of counselling clients reported feeling anxious.

Mental Health Awareness week (14-20 May) gives us an opportunity to consider what mental health is all about, and what steps we can all take to improve and maintain our emotional wellbeing.

Put simply, mental health is about the ways we think, feel and behave. Everyone feels down or worried from time to time, especially at times of change such as the loss of a loved one, or relationship breakdown. In fact a small degree of stress in life is perfectly normal. But living in a chronic state of stress can lead to serious problems both physical, including heart disease, and emotional, such as low mood that interferes with day to day life. Anxiety is excessive worry and if not managed can lead to panic. Anxiety and panic often manifest in physical symptoms such as increased heart rate, sleeplessness, Irritable Bowel Syndrome and tension headaches.

Counselling is one way that can help. Having someone to talk to who is non-judgemental and who can give practical techniques to help manage symptoms can make a real difference and positive impact to a person's life.

Jo Williams, Age UK Surrey's Counselling Co-ordinator said "A lot of older people are struggling with stress and anxiety and perhaps don't feel they can talk to their close friends and family about it. Talking to a trained counsellor in complete confidentiality can make a real difference to a person's outlook and wellbeing. Best of all, we can see the client in their own home, and we can get to them quickly – which is usually what someone who is worried or upset needs. The average lead time from initial telephone enquiry to the first face-to-face counselling session is currently only 12 days."

For more information about Age UK Surrey Services, including Counselling across the County please visit our website: www.ageuk.org.uk/surrey

End of press release.

Notes to Editor

Age UK Surrey is an independent local charity. We work across Surrey to help improve the lives of older people. Our services are designed to enable older people remain independent and informed, healthy and active and connected to their communities. We help combat loneliness and social isolation.

Services include: Information and Advice, Counselling, Help at Home, Computer Drop-in Centre in Guildford, Tea and Chat in Tandridge, Foot Care in clinics across the County, Shopmobility in Guildford, Men in Sheds in Ash, Making Connections in Guildford & Waverley, and Runnymede & Spelthorne, Café Culture in Cranleigh, Farnham, Staines and Guildford.

Numbers of people over 85 continues to grow in Surrey:

- A 25% rise since 2001;
- 32,300 people in this age group (2014).
- Nearly 214,000 people are over 65 (2014).
- Statistics show that people in Surrey generally live longer than the national average.
- In 2012 there were 15,456 people in Surrey living with dementia, predicted to rise to 19,000 by 2020.

Contacts:

Age UK Surrey

Diana Bignell, Marketing & Fundraising Manager

Diana.bignell@ageuksurrey.org.uk

01483 503414

www.ageuk.org.uk/surrey