



PRESS RELEASE – for immediate publication

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DEPRESSION AFFECTING UP TO 1 IN 4 OLDER PEOPLE IN SURREY – AND GROWING

The most common mental health problem among people over 65 is depression. In Surrey there is estimated to be over 24,000 people aged 65 and over with depression and severe depression, and 24,000 older people to have minor depression.^[1] And these figures are set to rise by 7% by 2020 and by over 30% by 2030.^[2]

This Mental Health Awareness Week the theme is ‘surviving to thriving’, which gives us an opportunity to talk about mental health issues which affect people throughout the year. Age UK Surrey is urging people to come forward and talk. It is estimated that depression affects around 22% of men and 28% of women aged 65 years and over, yet 85% of older people with depression receive no help at all from the NHS.^[3]

To help older people suffering from depression, Age UK Surrey delivers a Counselling Service which is provided by trained volunteer counsellors. The sessions give you time and space to explore your emotions and help make sense of them.

This affordable service is available to anyone aged 50 and over. Age UK Surrey can help with a range of issues including moderate depression, bereavement and other loss, relationship problems and health worries.

The counsellor will visit you at home, although an alternative confidential location can be found if preferred. An initial 6 sessions is recommended, although further sessions can be arranged if required.

Jo Williams, Age UK Surrey’s Counselling Co-ordinator said “Depression is a common health issue but many older people are hesitant about seeking support. Talking to a trained counsellor in a comfortable safe place can make a real difference to a person’s outlook and wellbeing. If anyone is unsure whether Counselling is right for them, please do give me a call.”

Age UK Surrey’s clients have said **“The counsellor was so kind and supportive”** and **“counselling has helped me understand myself better”**.

To find out more about their Counselling Service please contact their Counselling Co-ordinator on 01483 503414 or visit the Age UK Surrey website www.ageuk.org.uk/surrey.

End of press release.

Source of statistics:

[1] Surrey Dementia and Older People's Mental health strategy July 2011

[2] healthysurrey.org.uk

[3] mentalhealth.org.uk

More information about Age UK Surrey:

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, Handyperson Service and Making Connections in Runnymede & Spelthorne, and Café Culture in Cranleigh.

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.

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