



PRESS RELEASE – for immediate publication

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Older people don't need to suffer depression or anxiety in silence

New YouGov research from Age UK reveals that nearly half of adults (7.7 million) aged 55+ say they have experienced depression and around the same number (7.3 million) have suffered with anxiety - revealing the scale of the mental health challenge facing older people in the UK today.

The death of loved ones (36%) ill health of themselves (24%) and financial worries (27%) are the most common triggers for mental health problems, yet worryingly more than a third (35%) say they did not know where to go for help and support.

This comes as NHS England has published new guidance - 'Mental health in older people' - to help GPs spot the tell-tale signs of anxiety and depression, and identify a range of mental health problems including those which specifically affect older people.

One in 4 older people (25%) said they felt it was more difficult for older people to discuss mental health issues such as anxiety or depression, compared to younger people. The top reasons given were:

- When older people were growing up, society didn't recognise depression or anxiety as a health condition
- Depression and anxiety used to be seen as a weakness, so it is not something the older generation are comfortable discussing
- The older generation were taught to approach life with a "stiff upper lip"

Sue Zirps CEO, Age UK Surrey said: **'Depression and anxiety affects so many older people, but can often go unnoticed and untreated. Older people should not miss out on help and treatment because they don't know where to go for help or because of a "stiff upper lip" approach to dealing with problems.'**

Age UK Surrey runs a range of services to help support older people with mental health problems and to help reduce loneliness and isolation from Making Connections to a dedicated Counselling Service. 94% of people who have had counselling from Age UK Surrey in the last 9 months say it has made a difference to their lives.

END OF PRESS RELEASE

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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