

## Message to clients/ friends and family regarding our Help at Home & Gardening Service

As a valued client, I wanted to let you know what we have put in place to help you at this very difficult time. I also wanted to apologise for not being in a position to mail this letter to you personally and with a large volume of telephone calls at the start of the lockdown, we were not always able to respond as quickly as we would have liked.

All of our staff are working remotely, telephoning and emailing clients with service updates. **Your best interests continue to be at the heart of everything we do and your understanding of the situation is very much appreciated.**

### Home visiting

In line with Government guidelines and the need to stay at home and stay safe, we are offering an essential service only. Our self-employed Home Helps & Gardeners have been instructed not to visit clients unless it is **essential** to do so. An essential service will only be possible if the Home Help or client are not displaying symptoms of the Covid-19 virus.

### Your wellbeing

Our Help at Home staff, together with the assistance of our self-employed Home Helps and Gardeners are **telephoning clients to 'check-in and chat'**. We can provide a friendly voice to chat to and to signpost any issues or questions that we cannot help with to our Information and Advice team.

### Service fee payment holiday

We are a local independent charity and are reliant on the income we receive from services and donations to deliver our services and activities. Many charities and organisations will experience a significant loss of income because of the Covid-19 crisis and Age UK Surrey is no exception.

However, we appreciate that it is a difficult financial time for everyone and we have taken the decision to offer a **payment holiday of the monthly fee collection by Direct Debit for the next three months** (April – June).

For those clients who pay in advance (cheque/direct debit) for the Help at Home service and Gardening service we will be happy to review a refund once the crisis is over – please contact your local Regional office.

### Age UK Surrey

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President: Hon. Mrs Lavinia Sealy, DL

Chief Executive: Sue Zirps



I would like to extend our enormous gratitude to those clients who wish to continue making the monthly payment despite not receiving the service, in order to support the Charity and help ensure our future.

I would also like to acknowledge our fantastic team of Home Helps and Gardeners who make a real difference to the lives of our clients by consistently providing much valued support and assistance to some of the most vulnerable members of the community and who continue to remain in telephone contact in order to help alleviate isolation and loneliness.

Many of these self-employed workers however, are suffering loss of income, as they are unable to visit. Some clients have chosen to continue to pay them at half rates, in order to help stave off financial hardship – on behalf of our self-employed workers, thank you.

The Age UK Surrey Help at Home service has been operating for over 23 years and despite current adversities, we aim to resume the full service in the not too distant future. In the meantime, thank you for your continued support and please do spread the word about our services, so that we can quickly get back on our feet when this is all over!

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Zirps', is centered below the text 'Yours sincerely,'.

Sue Zirps,  
Chief Executive  
Age UK Surrey

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