

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Esther Rantzen Launches 'The Silver line'**

**On Monday Esther Rantzen will launch The Silver Line, a new 24/7 phone line designed, in part, as response to loneliness and isolation among older people.**

Commenting on the launch of The Silver Line, Kate Jopling, Director for the Campaign to End Loneliness, says:

“Loneliness is a shockingly common problem, but admitting we are lonely can be incredibly hard to do because of the stigma that surrounds it. When people find the courage ask for help, it is vital that someone is there to listen – which is why a 24 hour phone line, where people are always on hand to take your call, is such an important addition to the safety net available to older people.

“Many of us feel isolated and lonely - but there are people and organisations out there ready and willing to help. We hope that Esther Rantzen’s new project The Silver Line will provide a really prominent new gateway to this support.”

End

#### **Facts about loneliness:**

- Loneliness and isolation are associated with poor mental, physical and emotional health, including increased rates of cardiovascular disease, hypertension, cognitive decline and dementia. Socially isolated and lonely adults are more likely to undergo early admission into residential or nursing care.
- Those who are lonely are at higher risk of the onset of disability and those who are deafblind are at considerable risk of loneliness.
- Almost 3 million older people are lonely: about 20% of the older population is lonely sometimes and another 8 to 10% is intensely lonely.
- 17% of older people are in contact with family, friends and neighbours less than once a week, and 11% are in contact less than once a month.
- Over half (51%) of all people aged 75 and over live alone
- Half of all older people (over 5 million) say the television is their main company
- 9% say they feel cut off from society
- Just under 20% of older people are sometimes lonely and 6-13% of older people say they always feel lonely
- 75 of the 146 published Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies have acknowledged loneliness and/or isolation as serious issues. However, just under half of all health and wellbeing boards with published strategies (49%) have not recognised that loneliness and/or isolation are issues that need addressing.

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

**The Campaign to End Loneliness** is network of local, regional and national organisations and individuals working together through community action, good practice, policy and research to combat loneliness and isolation in the United Kingdom.

Anyone can make their voice heard in their own area by letting their local health and wellbeing board know about the problem of loneliness and isolation – more information is available on our website: <http://bit.ly/1amMJCX>

The Campaign has five partners who lead the strategic direction of the Campaign: **Age UK Oxfordshire, Independent Age, Manchester City Council, Royal Voluntary Service** and **Sense**. More information about the Campaign can be found at: [www.campaigntoendloneliness.org.uk](http://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org.uk)