

Advice line for lonely older people forms partnership with CQC

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A new partnership has been announced, between England's care regulator the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and The Silver Line, in order to reach out to older people at risk of social isolation and loneliness.

Having launched last November, The Silver Line has been a great success as a free and confidential helpline which has received 275,000 calls from older people in need of information, friendship and advice.

Chief executive Sophie Andrews says: "Silver Line has been described as ChildLine for Older People and we are delighted to mark our first birthday, with this life-saving new partnership. We will work jointly with CQC to help older people and their families raise concerns about the standard of care they are receiving whether in a care home or in their own homes.

"One of the first calls to The Silver Line was from a lady in a care home who was too afraid to give her name but did give the name of the care home where the residents had been left without food and the heating turned off. The police were involved and the residents are now safe.

"The Silver Line is in a unique position to reach and be reached by people who would not otherwise report poor standards of care and neglect and to work with CQC to better protect the most vulnerable and growing sector of our society – the frail oldest people. We are now exploring opportunities with Care Inspectorates in all the nations. "

Chief Inspector of Adult Social Care at the CQC, Andrea Sutcliffe, also sees the partnership as another means by which to stamp out bad care. She says: "I am very pleased that CQC will be working in partnership with The Silver Line to reach the most isolated older people who are receiving care and may need our support and protection.

"We believe that, working together, we will be able to improve the standards of care for older people that may be falling short of the quality they need and deserve. It is also an opportunity to recognise examples of excellence and to highlight best practice to share with others."

Founder and President of The Silver Line, Esther Rantzen, also comments: "This Christmas will be a very tough time for thousands of older people on their own. Many of them have families in the UK, but still have to spend the holiday entirely alone with only memories for company. I am so glad that The Silver Line was launched in time for Christmas last year, and I know from speaking to our callers, and reading their letters that we really made a difference.

"But without help from the public we cannot continue to be there for all the people who need us. There are many good causes these days but I believe at Christmas time we need to remember our older people. They have been neglected and abandoned too long, they deserve our love and respect, and after all, they have earned it."