

Age Scotland begin emergency fundraising appeal

Age Scotland has had an unprecedented demand for its Helpline service since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Today it begins an emergency fundraising appeal.

This is Scotland's leading charity for older people, and it is asking for support to allow it to help more of them during this time.

Since the beginning of the outbreak, Age Scotland has seen a tenfold increase in the volume of calls from vulnerable older people and their families to its free Helpline, with numbers rising from an average of 70 calls a day to more than 700.

The charity expects that figure to rise significantly in the coming weeks and months as the effects of the pandemic begin to deepen, and older people become more secluded and lonely.

Older people are the most severely affected by the coronavirus measures, and the government has urged all over 70s to stay at home.

As a result, tens of thousands of older people in Scotland are growing more isolated, and struggling to carry out everyday tasks, such as shopping for food and picking up medication.

The surge in calls to Age Scotland's Helpline has reflected this, with older people and family members who live far away seeking urgent advice and information to keep their loved ones safe and well.

Age Scotland is now appealing to its supporters and the wider

community to donate in order to maintain and expand its work during this difficult time.

Brian Sloan, Age Scotland's chief executive, said: "These are very difficult times for everyone, but we are seeing first hand that older people are particularly badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. From a lack of access to food and medication, getting the social care that they need, understanding how the latest news impacts them, or to have a friendly chat, older people have been relying on us to help.

"This is not a crisis that will be over in days or weeks. We are going to be battling the effects of this pandemic for many, many months.

"The longer it goes on the harder life is going to be for older people, particularly those who are alone and in danger of becoming chronically lonely. We need to be here for them.

"In the past two weeks our helpline has been transformed into a virtual call centre with teams working tirelessly at home to manage the surge in the number of calls we are receiving. We have been handling around 700 calls a day and fully expect that number to increase significantly in the coming weeks and months.

"We would urge anyone who can, to contribute towards helping older people in Scotland.

"In order to keep up with the demand for our service, we rely on the generosity of our supporters and everyone in Scotland who cares about the safety, wellbeing and dignity of older people.

"Please, if you can, consider donating to Age Scotland. Your contribution will go directly to supporting our frontline service and help us deliver advice, information and friendship calls to even more older people at an extraordinarily challenging time.

“You can donate online www.age.scot/donate or text AGESCOT to 70490 to donate £10 (Texts cost £10 plus one standard rate message).

“Thank you for helping us be there for Scotland’s most vulnerable older people.”

The Age Scotland Helpline is available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, on 0800 12 44 222

Donate: www.age.scot/donate

Ways to help: www.age.scot/5waystohelp

Coronavirus advice: www.age.scot/coronavirus

Main website: www.agescotland.org.uk