

December 2007

## **HOME ALONE ELDERLY IN SAFE HANDS THIS CHRISTMAS**

Many older people will be settling in for a Christmas alone this year, and while they may not feel vulnerable, the isolation does put them at risk should they have an accident or fall. To help avoid the possible risks, Age Concern Essex is introducing a new scheme providing vital contact for those that need it this Christmas.

After identifying a number of elderly that will be alone at Christmas, the scheme will involve local organisations checking in with the lonely and isolated over the festive break. The East of England Ambulance Trust, Neighbourhood Police Action Teams and NHS Direct have signed-up in support of the scheme.

Tony Southam, Chief Executive of Age Concern Essex, explains: "Last Christmas I was shocked to hear of an older lady who was found on the floor of her home having fallen four days earlier. This lady was without family or social contact and unfortunately there are many individuals in this situation. Through this scheme, those that will be alone will receive a friendly face at the door, or friendly voice at the end of the phone to make sure all is how it should be."

Aside from their core responsibilities, the East of England Ambulance Trust and Neighbourhood Police Action Teams will be knocking on doors of the identified individuals over the Christmas week. The Trust has 500 'first responders' that are spread across the rural areas of the county and are the first to attend suspected heart attack scenarios, for instance. NHS Direct will also be calling the individuals on Christmas day to check all is well.

Should any organisations fail to receive reassurance that the individual is well, Age Concern staff will be on call to provide contact details for next of kins.

To find out more about Aid Call or to arrange a free no obligation demonstration please call 0800 77 22 66 or visit [www.aidcall.co.uk/personalalarms](http://www.aidcall.co.uk/personalalarms).

Tony added: “Age Concern is already conducting a winter warm campaign as a reminder for older people to take care of themselves this winter. This scheme not only supports that message but reinforces that older people at home alone are at risk and therefore need regular social contact.”

In addition, Age Concern Essex will be introducing a county-wide befriending service in the New Year, which will involve continually identifying those lonely and isolated older people in Essex and providing them with a regular Age Concern contact.

“Age Concern can become a trusted support so older people no longer feel alone in times of need. We would also encourage people to consider our Aid Call personal alarm system. One touch of the button connects to a dedicated response centre, staffed 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Once alerted, the operator can contact a chosen keyholder - a friend, neighbour or relative – or emergency services if no contact is available, who will visit and offer assistance,” concludes Tony.

To find out more about the scheme in Essex or to get more information on Aid Call alarms, visit Age Concern Essex at 112 Springfield Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 6LF or call them on 01245 264499

- Ends -

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **ABOUT AID CALL:**

Aid Call is a discreet personal alarm system owned by Age Concern that summons help, at the touch of a button. Over 40,000 people throughout the UK rely on the Aid Call emergency alarm service. Users are not exclusively older people; some have a physical disability, or a chronic condition such as epilepsy or diabetes, some are recovering from illness, while others are more concerned for their security than their health.

All of Aid Call’s profits help to fund the works of Age Concern, both in campaigning and lobbying at a national level, and providing essential services to the older community at a local level.

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## Aid Call Personal Alarm Service

Instant help at the touch of a button



### **ABOUT AGE CONCERN:**

Age Concern is the leading charity in the UK concerned with ageing and older people, and works to improve the quality of life for all older people. Nationally, it is involved in campaigning, policy guidance, research and information, and through its trading arm, Age Concern Enterprises (ACEnt), offers a range of products and services specifically designed for older people.

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