**Impact Press Release**

SeniorLine, the national confidential listening service for older people provided by trained older volunteers, has been shortlisted for the [2017 Community Impact Award](http://thewheel.cmail20.com/t/i-l-oduetd-zhkkikrhy-r/) organised by The Wheel.

The purpose of the Award is to celebrate the work of community, voluntary and charitable organisations, clubs and other non-profit groups that have brought about positive change across Ireland. Established in 1999, The Wheel has evolved to become a forum and resource centre for the community and voluntary sector.

SeniorLine, celebrating 20 years of service next year, is Ireland’s only peer telephone service for older people and one of the few worldwide. SeniorLine is a national programme of Third Age, a not-for-profit organisation committed to social inclusion. All Third Age programmes provide a bridge of friendship, connection and contact for people who may be isolated by age, language, technology, or frailty.

SeniorLine’s purpose is to provide a supportive service to people in need. As the number of older people in the community – many living alone - continues to increase, the need for health-promoting services such as SeniorLine becomes paramount. We began offering companionship to reduce loneliness. The wider context today is our ageing population, and the gap in services to meet the needs of older people to remain at home for as long as possible.

SeniorLine receives c10, 000 calls each year. Many callers are lonely and isolated and tell us we are their lifeline. Some callers contact with specific worries and problems and derive comfort and support from having someone their own age to talk to. Peter\*, 81, single, who lives alone in rural Ireland, began phoning in 2007, and was delighted with his welcome. Peter loves company, but over time, his old age has pinched deeper. He can no longer drive, his two sisters have died, and he is confined to home. He phones daily and says he would be ‘lost’ without SeniorLine. He likes to talk about sport, politics, farming and Irish life long ago. He has access to 170 volunteers who collectively give colour, meaning and routine to his life. Peter - one life, one caller, comforted and reassured by knowing we are there – a phone call away. (\* not his real name)

**SeniorLine with Freefone number 1800, 80 45 91** is open every day of the year from 10am-10pm. Of 10,000+ calls in 2016, 82% found the call ‘useful’ or ‘helpful’. Success is based on an effective listening and empowering model.

The direct impact of SeniorLine is in the practical support offered to thousands of older people each year. The wider impact is becoming ‘the voice of callers’ , representing the needs and concerns of Ireland’s older population, and advocating for them through media, presentations, and to government.

**The Wheel invites people to vote for their favourite nominee before December 6. To vote for SeniorLine, click on the link** [**www.charityimpactawards.ie/community.html**](http://thewheel.cmail20.com/t/i-l-oduetd-zhkkikrhy-y/)**,scroll down and select ‘medium’, then select ‘shortlist’, then go to the SeniorLine picture and select ‘vote’ . Then exit. For more information, contact Anne Dempsey Third Age Communications Manager 087-7450721**