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**AGE SPACE HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT – TAKING CARE OF CARE**

**[www.agespace.org/local/hampshire](https://www.agespace.org/local/hampshire)**

Age Space is very pleased to announce the launch of its Hampshire & IOW online hub – a one stop resource and guide for anyone concerned about or caring for an ageing parent or relative, neighbour or friend. Now more than ever, this new Hampshire & IOW hub will be an invaluable resource to families concerned about their elderly relatives during the COVID 19 self-isolation period. The hub has a dedicated Coronavirus page signposting people to the key support organisations in Hampshire & IOW and links to the national Age Space site for general health, wellbeing and technology advice.

Age Space Hampshire & IOW is designed to enable families make the best decisions by helping them navigate the complicated world of elderly care. The site is broken down into seven easy-to-navigate sections: Care, Dementia, Enjoying Life, Health & Wellbeing, Legal, Money & Finance and End of Life.

Users will find guidance on everything from how to make living at home easier to recognising that extra care is needed; how to find the best local resources, charities and organisations to help.

1 in 10 adults\* in Hampshire consider themselves to be a carer, a figure set to rise as people are living longer. In 2018, Hampshire’s Care Quality Commission review revealed that people would like to see a single point of access for care information and services. Age Space aims to be that single point of access - founder Annabel James says:

*“The Hampshire & IOW hub joins our family of eight regional websites across the country and is aimed at families who find themselves caring for an elderly relative for the first time. Quite often this can be the result of a sudden change in health and people simply don’t know where to start or what questions to ask.*

*We recognise that some of the best support comes from local charities, community groups and businesses and this is why we have created our network of local hubs. By bringing all the components of care together in one place, showcasing local organisations alongside expert advice, we hope to ease some of the emotional stress and strain of caring for an elderly relative.”*

Age Space Hampshire & IOW signposts to some great local groups and initiatives in the county, including

* [**Good Neighbours Network**](https://www.goodneighbours.org.uk/) **(GNN), Hampshire**

A collection of over 120 local independent groups offering practical and emotional support to vulnerable older people through befriending. Driving, gardening, dog walking, shopping or simply sharing a coffee and a chat. Volunteers are providing a vital phone and online service for vulnerable elderly people self-isolating.

* [**Butterflies Bereavement,**](https://www.butterfliesbereavement.co.uk/) **Hampshire, IOW and West Sussex**

A community charity offering bereavement care and support to individuals and families before, during and after death. Their specialised bereavement support group connects those experiencing similar struggles.

* [**Alzheimer Café,**](https://www.alzheimercafeiow.org.uk/) **Isle of Wight**

The Alzheimer Café organisation runs seven cafe services across the Isle of Wight. They offer a supportive and friendly space for anyone whose lives have been affected by dementia. Honoured with The Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service, they are the biggest support network for those living with dementia on the island.

In response to the current Coronavirus pandemic, Age Space has created a dedicated COVID-19 section linking to the parent site [agespace.org](https://www.agespace.org/) and have released a FREE downloadable guide, packed with practical help specific to the elderly and their families. There is also a Facebook group ‘Supporting Elderly Relatives at Risk of Coronavirus’ – for daily advice and peer to peer support.

Founder Annabel James says;

*“Since the government advised anyone over the age of 70 to self-isolate, we have been inundated with questions from people worried about their elderly family members. The prospect of many weeks, and possibly months, of isolation during the coronavirus pandemic is causing enormous additional distress. This is particularly the case for those families that don’t live in the same area and are trying to navigate care and support at a distance. We hope this succinct guide offers families some practical help and advice during a period of information overload.”*

The six-page guide can be downloaded here and includes:

* Useful websites, resources, FAQ’s
* How to support relatives at home – medication, money, shopping, local community support
* Keeping busy and connected – including a ‘Time Well Spent’ weekly planner
* Planning ahead – getting your affairs in order such as writing a Will, Power of Attorney and Advance Directives.

**-Ends-**

For further information contact Director of Communications, Marketing and Content Helen Burgess 07881 523 032 or helen.burgess@agespace.org

**Notes to editors:**

1. \*2011 - 20% of Hampshire’s population (286.000) were over the age of 65, predicted to increase by 29.8% by 2021– Joint Strategic Needs Assessment in Hampshire 2011.
2. 7 million British adults aged 45 + currently care for elderly parents or relatives, set to increase by 20% in the next 15 years. (Age UK. 2017)
3. The national site was launched in 2016 by Annabel James after her Mum had a stroke and spent many weeks in hospital. Annabel felt overwhelmed and didn’t know what to do for the best for both parents, what questions to ask or where to look for information. Annabel realised that there were lots of people at this “age and stage” who were juggling work and families, perhaps while living at distance from their parents.
4. Alongside the national site there are 8 localised sites in Norfolk, Sussex, Dorset, Merseyside and Cheshire, Suffolk, Kent and Hampshire & IOW. Cambridgeshire, Essex and Surrey are due to go live before July 2020.