



Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017

## Campaign to End Loneliness responds to Welsh Inquiry on Loneliness

**Claire O'Shea, Campaign Manager for Wales, said:**

“Loneliness and isolation is one of the most significant and serious issues facing older people in Wales. The health impacts of loneliness are devastating; it is as bad for you as smoking 15 cigarettes a day and worse for you than obesity. Lonely people are more likely to develop depression, heart disease, and dementia. The strain that this puts on our health services is clear.

“We are disappointed that the Welsh Government does not plan to publish its strategy for tackling loneliness until 2019, and wholly support the recommendation to move this date forward. Lonely older people need action now. There are many high-risk communities in Wales that will be impacted by the epidemic of loneliness, and we cannot wait until 2019 to see decisive action taken. With the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness due to publish its recommendations next week, Wales must not lose the opportunity it presents to build critical momentum on this issue.

“The Campaign to End Loneliness believes that loneliness is everyone’s business. Businesses, communities, the government and individuals all have a role to play in tackling it. There is a clear opportunity here for Wales to lead the way in response to loneliness and build connected, resilient communities. We look forward to leading the way on this work, and we urge the government to be ambitious in its response. Together, we can end loneliness in Wales.”