

NEWS RELEASE

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Supporting quote: to Macmillan Loneliness story

Macmillan Cancer Support warns of looming loneliness epidemic with the number of people diagnosed with cancer set to double by 2030.

Almost one in five (22%) of people living with cancer in the UK are suffering with loneliness as a result of their cancer, rendering many housebound and unable to feed themselves properly according to Macmillan Cancer Support.

Commenting on these findings Jack Neill-Hall, Campaigns Manager for the Campaign to End Loneliness, says:

“When we feel lonely we can sometimes forget to look after ourselves properly. In fact, researchers have shown that feeling lonely can lead us to not exercising enough, eating a poor diet and having an increased likelihood of smoking and drinking too much. Unfortunately, these very behaviours can often contribute to us becoming ill, or aggravate other conditions outside of our control.

“It is vital that we understand the link between loneliness and ill health so that we can break the negative cycle of loneliness exacerbating ill-health and vice versa. By ensuring that our public health and care services are aware of the risks of loneliness, we can do more for people who may be suffering from cancer, disability, or dual sensory loss and make sure they well looked after, but also better able look after themselves.”

For further information from Macmillan, please contact:

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-ENDS-

Facts about loneliness [2]:

- *Those who are lonely are at higher risk of the onset of disability and those who are deafblind are at considerable risk of loneliness.*
- *17% of older people are in contact with family, friends and neighbours less than once a week, and 11% are in contact less than once a month.*
- *Over half (51%) of all people aged 75 and over live alone*
- *Half of all older people (over 5 million) say the television is their main company*
- *9% say they feel cut off from society*
- *61 of the 128 published Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies have acknowledged loneliness and/or isolation as serious issues. However, over half of all health and*

wellbeing boards with published strategies (53%) have not recognised that loneliness and/or isolation are issues that need addressing.

NOTES TO EDITORS

[1] Full referencing for these facts can be found here:

<http://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/loneliness-research/>

The Campaign to End Loneliness is network of local, regional and national organisations and individuals working together through community action, good practice, policy and research to combat loneliness and isolation in the United Kingdom.

Anyone can make their voice heard in their own area by letting their local health and wellbeing board know about the problem of loneliness and isolation – more information is available on our website: <http://bit.ly/1amMJCX>

The Campaign has five partners who lead the strategic direction of the Campaign: **Age UK Oxfordshire, Independent Age, Manchester City Council, Royal Voluntary Service** and **Sense**. More information about the Campaign can be found at: www.campaigntoendloneliness.org.uk