Loneliness harms health
If you have half an hour...

Write a letter to your local health and wellbeing board

The aim of this letter is to bring two things to the attention of the health and wellbeing board: the problem of loneliness and what the board can do about it. You don't need to be an expert though; we've already pulled together information for boards in our online "loneliness toolkit for health and wellbeing boards". So, you're highlighting the problem but also providing them with a tool to help them come up with the solution. Why not ask other friends or colleagues who feel strongly about the issue to send one of these letters. This will help the board recognise that there's a real strength of feeling about this issue.

Who do I send it to?

It is best to send the letter to the chair of the health and wellbeing board. If you don't know who this is, send it to the main county council building to 'Chair, Health and Wellbeing Board'. Or, you could find this information out by searching online or by calling your council. If you're the kind of person who likes to research more thoroughly and want to learn more about health and wellbeing boards, click here. Otherwise, read on…

Local statistics

Do remember, it helps to use relevant local statistics, so if you can find some, this will strengthen your case. Such statistics may include some of the following:

(i) Lone pensioner households – numbers of households with only one person, who is over pensionable age, living alone

(ii) Estimated number of chronically lonely older people in your area (multiply number of people over 65 in your area by 0.1 to reach this figure.)

(iii) Number of pensioners and the expected increase over the next 20-30 years

(iv) Number of winter deaths in the over 65s

(v) Number of falls in over 65s

(vi) Cases of dementia

(vii) Fear of crime in over 65s

(viii) Data on people who have recently lost their partners who are

over 65

Much of this information is likely to already be available in your local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) or in other local authority strategies. These will be available on your council website or give the council a call or do an internet search for your "county name" (e.g. Buckinghamshire) and the words "joint strategic needs assessment". If not, you'll be able to find much of it on the [Office of National Statistics website.](#) Again, if you want to, to learn more about the JSNA, [click here](#).

Share your activities– log your action on the [online map](#) on our website to inspire others

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Dear Chair,

I am writing to you as part of the *Loneliness Harms Health* campaign from the *Campaign to End Loneliness*, a coalition of organisations and individuals working together to tackle loneliness in older age ([www.campaigntoendloneliness.org.uk)](http://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org.uk). Loneliness and social isolation in older age is a significant determinant of current and future health needs and social care use in older populations. Research demonstrates it has a similar impact on mortality as smoking and has significant links to a range of chronic conditions, including hypertension, depression, and dementia – increasing the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease by 50%.

We know that consistently around 10% of the population over 65 feel lonely all or most of the time. This means that in [YOUR AREA], around [POPULATION OVER 65 MULTIPLIED BY 0.1] older people are chronically lonely. Currently, there are [POPULATION OVER 65] in [YOUR AREA] and of these, [PERCENTAGE IN YOUR AREA] per cent of pensioners live alone. The population is projected to increase by [INPUT PERCENTAGE] in the next 30 years and as the size of our population aged over 65 grows, the problem of loneliness and isolation amongst older people is likely to grow with it.

[INLCUDE ANY OTHER RELEVENT DATA SUCH AS CASES OF DEMENTIA, CASES OF DEPRESSION IN OLDER PEOPLE, NUMBER OF FALLS BY OLDER PEOPLE]

To tackle this problem the Campaign to End Loneliness, working with health and wellbeing boards and with funding from Department of Health, have created a loneliness toolkit for health and wellbeing boards to help assess the need and set out strategic methods of tackling loneliness.

This toolkit will enable our health and wellbeing board to better understand, identify and commission interventions for the issue of loneliness in older age.

The toolkit was launched on July 10th 2012 by Paul Burstow MP, Minister of State for Social Care (2010-2012), who said:

"Loneliness can have a significant impact on people's health. Yet, unlike risks such as alcohol and obesity, it is still out of sight.

Relationships can help keep us well, and we can all play a part in tackling loneliness. That is why we have funded work on a toolkit for Health and Wellbeing Boards to support local councils and the NHS to take action to address the issue of loneliness in their area."

Content

The toolkit explains how to best include assessments of loneliness prevalence and indicators in Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies (JHWSs). It covers key research on the detrimental impact of loneliness on our health and offers a financial case for taking preventative active.

It also demonstrates how loneliness relates to Adult Social Care and Public Health Outcomes Frameworks. The toolkit includes four steps - each with a series of downloadable tools and examples, starting with 'Step 1: Gather the data' and ending with Step 4: Monitor and evaluate.

Where to find the toolkit

You can find the toolkit online at www.campaigntoendloneliness.org.uk/toolkit

I am a local resident and I encourage you to work with your colleagues and your local population of older people to work through this toolkit and consider the impact of loneliness on our community.

[INCLUDE ANY OTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THIS IS AN ISSUE IN YOUR AREA]

This toolkit will be updated regularly. If you'd like to receive updates and information on future events and publications from the Campaign to End Loneliness, you can sign-up at:

www.campaigntoendloneliness.org.uk/support-us/

Yours sincerely,

[YOUR DETAILS]

Campaign to End Loneliness
CONNECTIONS IN OLDER AGE