

Loneliness and isolation statistics

Nearly 40% of older adults do not speak to someone outside their home every day

The Lifecourse Tracker is a bi-annual survey commissioned by Public Health England to follow 'health behaviours' including nutrition, physical activity, smoking and drug use, and the things that influence these behaviours (including income, education, friends and family) across the life course.

From two surveys conducted in 2012, **we now know that** adults aged 55 or over on average reported lower levels of wellbeing and self-reported health than the general adult population. 61% of older people said that they spoke to a relative or other adult outside their house every day, and older females living alone were significantly more likely to speak to someone every day than the older men interviewed (67% vs. 51%).

- 5% of the 55-64 age group, 13% of 65-74 group and 23% of 75+ group live alone and do not see or speak with someone every day
- 13% aged 55+ speak to someone three or four days a week
- Just 2% of older people say they see or speak to an adult outside their household less than once a week, or never

The majority of older adults had had a conversation with family or friends about health-related subjects in the three months before the interviews. Older people living alone were likely to be sedentary for an hour longer than those living with a partner or children. Finally, adults who think a healthy lifestyle is the norm for friends or family were more likely report positive health behaviours.

These statistics have a number of implications for practice even though the Lifecourse Tracker only uses objective measures of social isolation and not loneliness (focusing on quantity of contact, not quality). Services that support older people should remember that the frequency of contacts declines with age and those aged 75 and over in particular may need extra help to stay connected to family and others.

The research is clear that all adults want to talk through health concerns or illness with people they know, and services could try to use the influence of family members and friends if trying to encourage positive healthy behaviours such as improving diet and increasing physical activity.

You can read the full research and report [here](#).