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**CONTACT**  
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# Loneliness and social isolation

## Key messages

- Loneliness is a personal feeling that most people will experience at some point in their lives. It can affect anyone of any age and background.
- Some groups are more at risk of experiencing loneliness than others. Most at risk are:
  - Young renters with little trust and sense of belonging to their area
  - Widowed homeowners living alone with long-term health conditions
  - Unmarried, middle agers, with long-term health conditions.
- It is normal to feel lonely from time to time but when people feel lonely most or all the time, this can have a significant impact on physical and mental health.

## Did you know?

- Older people experiencing loneliness are more likely to be the victim of scams, especially women over the age of 74. (refer to MECC information sheet 'Scams').
- Young people are affected by loneliness.
- Loneliness and isolation are not the same thing. Most of us have probably felt lonely at some point in our lives. You can feel lonely even when we have contact with others. Often, it's not about the number of people you know, but the quality of these relationships. Isolation, on the other hand, is a lack of contact with others.

## Why is it important?

- People who often feel lonely have significantly poorer health, such as weight gain, a greater risk of dementia, poor mental health.

## Help the person to understand their feelings of loneliness

- There are many triggers that can cause loneliness:
  - Experiencing life events such as bereavement, changing jobs or moving to a new area
  - Living in certain circumstances such as being a single parent, having a disability, little contact with family or friends, or living in financial difficulty
  - Young people may feel lonely for other reasons, such as feeling anxious or worried about something, coping with school, or finding it hard to make new friends.
- Helping to understand the reasons is a good place to start thinking about steps they can take to look after themselves.
- Talking to someone and feeling listened to may help them to feel better.
- Example questions you could ask: "How do you feel about how you spend your time?" "How would you like things to be?"

## Self help

- Volunteering can be a rewarding experience as well as for the people or organisation they help. Other benefits include gaining new skills, making new friends and improving mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- It's never too late to learn something new. Courses provide an opportunity to learn a new skill, meet people, gain a qualification, or further a career.
- Plan ahead. Make sure social contacts are maintained and finances are in place for later life.  
[www.healthydudley.co.uk/ageing-well/later-life-planning/](http://www.healthydudley.co.uk/ageing-well/later-life-planning/)
- Meet others by staying active. For ideas visit Let's Get Healthy Dudley: [www.healthydudley.co.uk](http://www.healthydudley.co.uk)

## Get involved with your community

- Everyone can help to end loneliness. Start a conversation with those around you. Take time to engage, say hello, ask how people are doing, show an interest in their lives.
- How we care and act for those around us could mean the difference between an older person just coping, to them loving and enjoying later life.
- Be the "eyes on the ground" to spot loneliness amongst older people, patients, friends, relatives, and neighbours.

## Helpful contacts

### Dudley Community Information Directory (online)

Search for local groups, clubs, activities, services, and events at [www.dudleyci.co.uk](http://www.dudleyci.co.uk)

### Volunteering

Dudley CVS visit [www.volopps.com](http://www.volopps.com), call **01384 267414** or email [volunteer@dudleycvs.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@dudleycvs.org.uk)

Dudley Council call **01384 816256** or email: [publichealthvolunteers@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:publichealthvolunteers@dudley.gov.uk)

### Adult and Community Learning

Provides learning opportunities for adults and families across Dudley borough. Courses to learn a new skill, meet people, gain a qualification, or further your career. Tel: **01384 818143** or visit: [www.dudley.gov.uk/adultlearning](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/adultlearning)

### Libraries

Visit one of 13 libraries across the Dudley borough. There is also the Archives and home library service.

[www.better.org.uk/library/dudley](http://www.better.org.uk/library/dudley)

### Self-Management Programme

A free six-week course for adults with a long-term health condition, or adults who have a caring responsibility.

Tel: **07976 637404** or email: [smp@dudleycabx.org](mailto:smp@dudleycabx.org)

### Pleased to Meet You

For people aged over 60 who may be feeling lonely or isolated, who would like support with getting out and about.

Tel: **01384 812761** or visit: [www.dudley.gov.uk/ptmy](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/ptmy)

### The Beacon Centre - Befriending Service

For people aged 65+ living in the Dudley borough who might be feeling lonely. Receive regular contact from a volunteer who will be matched with you on common interests. Tel: **01902 880111** or email: [referrals@beaconvision.org](mailto:referrals@beaconvision.org)

### The Silver Line

A national confidential helpline providing information friendship and advice to older people, open 24-hours a day, every day of the year. Telephone free on **0800 4708090** or visit: [www.thesilverline.org.uk](http://www.thesilverline.org.uk)

### Black Country Healthcare Foundation Trust

Free 24/7 mental health support line for Black Country residents. Tel: **0800 008 6516** or text: **07860 025281**

### Dudley Talking Therapy Service

If you are registered with a Dudley borough GP and are suffering from anxiety or depression.

[www.dihc.nhs.uk/talking-therapy](http://www.dihc.nhs.uk/talking-therapy)

### Reach Out Dudley

A suicide prevention website offering support to people who are having thoughts of suicide and people who are affected by suicide [www.reachoutdudley.co.uk](http://www.reachoutdudley.co.uk)



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