This checklist sets out the roles that different local authority functions can play in addressing loneliness in older age. Health and well being boards might reference these functions and their role in their strategies.

The World Health Organisation's, Age Friendly Cities initiative seeks to improve the quality of life of older people[1]. It identifies eight topic areas, each relevant to addressing loneliness and isolation amongst older people in urban and other areas. It provides a checklist of the range of issues that local authorities will need to address if they are to develop a holistic response to the problem.

Housing

- Older people feel secure in their home and safe in the area they live in (fear of crime can prevent older people leaving their homes)

- Common areas in public housing are safe and well maintained.

- Housing design facilitates the integration of older people into the local community Housing design provides accessible, welcoming venues for community activities.

Transport

- Public transport is perceived as safe (for example, older people can be anxious about bus drivers pulling away from stops when they are still finding a seat)

- Services are coherent (for example, bus services join up with trains)

- Community transport is available

Environment

Parks and other public spaces:

- are well maintained and safe;

- have regularly spaced seating;

- have clean, well maintained, public toilets.

Economic development

- A range of opportunities are available to older people who wish to continue to work past retirement age or for people who have retired early, including paid work and volunteering.

- Initiatives developed to help people into employment or self-employment should be available to older people too.

Education

- Intergenerational projects can bring older people and school age children together to share skills and experience.

Information and communications

- Older people have access to information about the services available to them in different formats (on-line and off-line).

- Information dissemination is co-ordinated in an accessible service that is well publicised.

Global Age Friendly Cities: A Guide, WHO (2007) contains a series of more detailed checklists about the issues that impact on the quality of life of older people.

See also Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors (I'DGO) (http://www.idgo.ac.uk/)

See also example: Manchester City Council, Valuing Older People Team and example: Belfast's Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership.

Reference:

1   *WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities*

    http://www.who.int/ageing/age_friendly_cities_network/en/index.html