

Loneliness in the time of Covid-19

No one left behind

#LonelinessInCovid

Campaign to  
**EndLoneliness**  
CONNECTIONS IN OLDER AGE

As lockdown eases, many people are returning to some kind of 'normal' life, but not everyone will find it easy to connect socially after lockdown.

In August 2020, the Campaign to End Loneliness brought together organisations to talk about three groups of people who are at risk of being left behind in loneliness:

- People who are **clinically vulnerable** to Coronavirus and still feel the need to continue shielding or protecting themselves more than others
- People caught in a '**downward spiral**' of negative emotions and loss of confidence due to long-term loneliness or the impacts of lockdown
- People who face **physical and practical barriers** to connecting, including mobility issues, sensory impairment, communication difficulties, unfamiliarity with new arrangements etc.

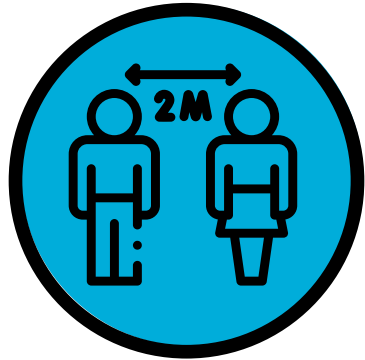
We talked about the challenges that organisations are facing as they work to support people to reconnect, and shared some of the ways people are trying to overcome these challenges.



## **Challenge:** People are not confident about coming out of their homes and meeting people

*In response, organisations are:*

- Supporting people to download **‘Please give me space’** badges or similar resources to indicate to others that they need to keep their distance
  - Offering to **accompany** people on short walks, around the block or to the local shops, or trips on public transport
  - **Checking in** with people after their first outings to talk about how things went and provide reassurance and further support
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## **Challenge:** Organisations are struggling to work out how to safely restart face-to-face work

*In response, organisations are:*

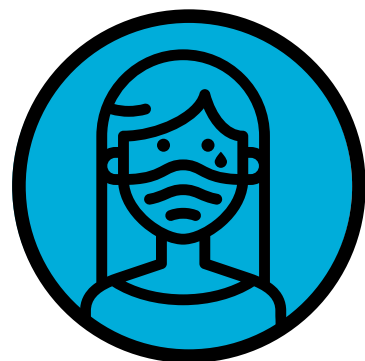
- Meeting **outdoors**, for example for socially distanced walks, rather than in buildings
- Borrowing or hiring **bigger vehicles** to provide people with more space on transport services
- Asking **service-users to help** develop simple signs or instructions, so that new procedures are easier to understand
- Working with **trusted intermediaries**, such as faith leaders, who can share information about safety with potential service-users



## **Challenge:** People are missing out on purposeful and meaningful connections, and no longer want to ‘just’ chat

*In response, organisations are:*

- Developing **art and craft packs** to send by post, and discussing them over Zoom or group phone calls
- Sending letters and postcards, or creating WhatsApp or Facebook groups, to **keep contact varied**
- Engaging people in **telling stories** and reminiscing, and documenting local or personal histories
- Asking people to ‘**bring**’ **something** to their conversations – such as a favourite piece of music to discuss, or a news item that interests them
- Posting out or dropping off **seeds or plants** and sharing pictures of their progress



**Challenge:** Volunteers are increasingly supporting people who are struggling with their mental health, and some are starting to feel burnt out

*In response, organisations are:*

- Providing **training** around mental health first aid and psychological techniques for their volunteers and the staff who support them
  - Offering online mindfulness courses and other **mental health support** to service-users
  - Building more **flexibility** into volunteer timetables, so that they can agree new call times or schedules that work for them
  - Reviewing guidance and training for volunteers to support them in establishing **boundaries** during calls
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**Challenge:** Anticipating further lockdowns, organisations want to make the most of the opportunity to support people to get out and about now

*In response, organisations are:*

- Increasing support to people to **get online** and develop digital skills
  - Providing people with support to **get up and moving** again, such as gentle exercise programmes
  - Helping people to access **welfare benefits** to which they may be entitled
  - Supporting people to get **continued deliveries** of food and medicine
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**No one has all the answers, but by sharing our experiences we hope to help organisations to ensure that no one is left behind in loneliness as lockdown eases**

**Join our community at:**

**[www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/support-us](http://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/support-us)**



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