Loneliness and social isolation

Older people are especially vulnerable to loneliness and social isolation – and it can have a serious effect on health. But there are ways to overcome loneliness, even if you live alone and find it hard to get out.

Hundreds of thousands of elderly people are lonely and cut off from society in this country, especially those over the age of 75.

According to Age UK, more than 2 million people in England over the age of 75 live alone, and more than a million older people say they go for over a month without speaking to a friend, neighbour or family member.

People can become socially isolated for a variety of reasons, such as getting older or weaker, no longer being the hub of their family, leaving the workplace, the deaths of spouses and friends, or through disability or illness.

Services available for people to reach out to if they’re feeling lonely through the Christmas period:

Age UK Milton Keynes

Age UK Milton Keynes is a local independent charity that works with and for older people to make a real and positive difference that contributes to their wellbeing and quality of life.

Please get in touch to see how we can help you and your family in Milton Keynes

Please ring us on 01908 550700 to see how we can help.

Keep in touch by phone

Having a chat with a friend or relative over the phone can be the next best thing to being with them. Or you can call The Silver Line, a helpline for older people set up by Esther Rantzen, on 0800 4 70 80 90.

You can also call Independent Age on 0800 319 6789, Age UK on 0800 169 2081, or Friends of the Elderly on 020 7730 8263 to receive a weekly or fortnightly friendship call from a volunteer who enjoys talking to older people.

Community Network brings people together on the phone each week. To join or start a telephone group, call 020 7923 5250.

Emptyclosets.com is an online community for people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, curious or unsure.
The Samaritans offer nationwide 24-hour support for anyone in distress or despair. Phone helpline on 116123 (no dialing code required).

Carers Milton Keynes

Carers Milton Keynes exists entirely to support and promote the wellbeing of family Carers. We support Carers of all ages and in different caring roles, including young Carers, parents of children with a physical or learning disability, older Carers, Carers from the black and minority ethnic community and those looking after someone with mental health problems, including depression.

Dedicated to supporting carers 01908 231703

Royal Voluntary Service Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire

Royal Voluntary Service in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire can help older people maintain their independence and stay involved in the local community.

We have volunteers across Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire who offer help and support so older people can stay independent at home in Bedford, Luton, Milton Keynes, Leighton Buzzard, High Wycombe, Aylesbury, Marlow, Buckingham and the surrounding areas.

See our local services below but we may be able to offer you more. If you can't find something suitable for you or a loved one then just ask.

Email address: bedsandbuckshub@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk
Telephone: 01908 787330

Men in Sheds

Men's Shed is a larger version of the typical man’s shed in the garden – a place where he feels at home and pursues practical interests with a high degree of autonomy. A Men's Shed offers this to a group of such men where members share the tools and resources they need to work on projects of their own choosing at their own pace and in a safe, friendly and inclusive venue. They are places of skill-sharing and informal learning, of individual pursuits and community projects, of purpose, achievement and social interaction. A place of leisure where men come together to work.

Men in Sheds MK - at Kiln Farm
Men in Sheds- West Bletchley

Faith Groups

InterFaith MK is a multi-faith group, made of people who are interested to learn more about the different religions that are practised in Milton Keynes.
Walking for Health is a network of free and safe health walking groups across MK, coordinated by Sports Development (MKC), led by trained volunteers, and supported nationally by Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support. The walking groups offer a social opportunity to enjoy the parks and open spaces and gain many physical, social and mental benefits for those taking part, especially increased companionship between walkers.

The Salvation Army in Milton Keynes can be contacted on 01908 606916.

The MIND page on how to cope with loneliness explains loneliness, giving practical suggestions for what you can do and where you can go for support.

Elefriends is a supportive online community where you can be yourself. We all know what it’s like to struggle sometimes, but now there’s a safe place to listen, share and be heard.

Join the University of the Third Age

The University of the Third Age (U3A) operates in many areas, offering older people the chance to learn or do something new. Run by volunteers, U3A has no exams. Instead, it gives you the chance to do, play or learn something you may never have done before, or something you’ve not considered since your school days. U3A is also a great place to meet people and make new friends. Find your nearest U3A online.

Quotes about Loneliness

The most terrible poverty is loneliness, and the feeling of being unloved.
—Mother Teresa

Loneliness is the ultimate poverty.
—Pauline Phillips

Music was my refuge. I could crawl into the space between the notes and curl my back to loneliness.
—Maya Angelou

The eternal quest of the individual human being is to shatter his loneliness.
—Norman Cousins

Loneliness is never more cruel than when it is felt in close propinquity with someone who has ceased to communicate.
—Germaine Greer

Keep in mind that to avoid loneliness, many people need both a social circle and an intimate attachment. Having just one of two may still leave you feeling lonely.

—Gretchen Rubin