



# THE BROMLEY LONELINESS SUMMIT

## WELCOME

FRIDAY 21 JUNE 2019  
10AM TO 2PM  
BROMLEY CIVIC CENTRE



#LETSTALKLONELINESS

FIND OUT MORE AT  
[www.bromley.gov.uk/loneliness](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/loneliness)



# Welcome

## Councillor Colin Smith, Leader of the Council

# Objectives of the Summit

## Councillor Aisha Cuthbert

THE BROMLEY  
LONELINESS SUMMIT



1. Enabling everyday services to connect those at risk of loneliness. Focusing on intergenerational working: New Mums, Care Leavers and Older people
2. Enabling community groups to support people to come together – what can we do differently?
3. Building a local conversation, tackling stigma around loneliness. Just as we understand the importance of looking after our physical health and increasingly our mental health, so too must we look after our social connections, and understand that they are key to our wellbeing.



# National and Local context

## Naheed Chaudhry, Assistant Director Strategy, Performance and Engagement

# Defining Loneliness

## Loneliness

- Loneliness is a personal experience and can mean different things to different people
- Loneliness is defined nationally as “*a subjective, unwelcome feeling of lack or loss of companionship. It happens when we have a mismatch between the quantity and quality of social relationships that we have, and those that we want*”<sup>1</sup>

## Isolation

- Loneliness is often used interchangeably with isolation, but while they are linked and can often overlap, they are not the same.<sup>1</sup>
- It is possible to be isolated without feeling lonely and conversely to feel lonely while surrounded by people.

# What causes loneliness?



- Loneliness seems to fluctuate over the life course, with different causes and needs at different ages.
- It's not just about a decline in contact or change in relationships, but about a person's identity and sense of belonging, and whether they feel their social network is 'normal' for their life stage.
- The causes of loneliness will vary from person to person and we don't always know exactly what it is about. But there are some common themes.
- Previous experiences and personal perspectives are thought to be important, combined with 'trigger' events can push a person into loneliness

# Impact of Loneliness



Loneliness and social isolation affects people's health, wellbeing and behaviour.

41% of victims of doorstep crime reported they felt lonely and 57% lived alone.<sup>5</sup>

Social isolation has been proven to lead to engagement in adverse health behaviours such as smoking, drinking and maintaining an unhealthy diet, increasing risk of coronary heart disease, stroke and depression.<sup>2</sup>

Loneliness can be as harmful for our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.<sup>6</sup>

Lack of supportive social networks has been linked to a 60% increase in risk of dementia and cognitive decline.<sup>4</sup>

Individuals who are socially isolated are between 2 and 5 times more likely than those who have strong social ties to die prematurely.<sup>3</sup>



# New Mums



The sudden loss of time to socialise, the change in lifestyle and challenges such as lack of sleep and reduced resources, almost inevitably impacts the opportunity to maintain social contacts.

82% of mums under 30 feel lonely some of the time.<sup>8</sup>

18-25 years: 49%  
26-30 years: 37%  
feel lonely often or always.<sup>9</sup>

80% of mums under 30 meet their friends less after having their child.<sup>7</sup>

Mindful Mums: 90% said they felt less isolated because of involvement with activities.

# Care Leavers



The transition undergone by young people in care to independent living can create a risk of loneliness and care leavers continue to feel lonely and isolated much later in life.

1 in 5 Care Leavers (19%) reported being lonely often/always. This compares with 10% of the general population (16-24 year olds).<sup>10</sup>

Coram Voice found that 23% of care leavers have low well-being.<sup>11</sup>

The Bright Spots Survey found that: Care Leavers in Bromley were 2.5 times more likely to report that they often or always felt lonely (26%) compared to young people generally.

# Older People



Three life events in particular are associated with social isolation and loneliness among older people:

1. Retirement and losing connection with colleagues
2. Falling ill and becoming less mobile
3. A spouse dying or going into care.

Over 1 million older people said they always or often feel lonely (Age UK, 2014).<sup>12</sup>

Half of people aged over 65 said the television or pets are their main form of company (Age UK, 2014).<sup>14</sup>

3 in 10 of those aged 80 and over report being lonely (ONS, 2015).<sup>13</sup>

A study on experiences of loneliness in Older Men (April, 2019), found that groups did not want to be siloed in groups for 'old people', but mixed-generational groups were preferred.<sup>17</sup>

2017/18 Adult Social Care Survey (aged 65+):

- 22% had some social contact but not enough
- 4% felt socially isolated
- 55% don't leave their home

# Building on what works

THE BROMLEY  
LONELINESS SUMMIT



- The most effective answer to the challenge of loneliness is the simple decision of families, friends, faith groups and communities to include each other and to be open to new social connections.
- Communities can play an active role in connecting people and building resilience by creating opportunities to bring people together, taking active steps to include the most isolated and vulnerable members of the community, as well as those from different backgrounds.
- The voluntary sector already plays a vital role in tackling loneliness and bringing people together. It can create strong, integrated communities and challenge obstacles that isolate people or groups.

# Intergenerational Projects

THE BROMLEY  
LONELINESS SUMMIT



## In Bromley:

- Shaw Trust – Older people, people with learning disabilities and primary school pupils participating in horticulture activities.
- Bromley Mentoring Initiative – Linking adults, including recent retirees, with care leavers to provide motivation and encouragement.
- Connecting the Elderly – Sunday afternoon tea linking older people with adult volunteers.
- Mindcare Day Centres – New mums and babies visiting people with dementia at day centres.

The All Party Parliamentary Group found (May 2019) there were benefits in nurseries, schools and care homes fostering connections between the different generations who use their services.<sup>16</sup>

# Workshops



- Share examples of projects/activities that have worked well, either in Bromley or elsewhere – what made them a success.
- Brainstorm intergenerational projects which members of the group could take forward.
- Identify 1 or 2 projects which the group will commit to delivering and develop.

Code	Group	Location	Facilitator
	Older People 1	Committee Room 3	Kelly Sylvester
	Older People 2	Committee Room 5	Mark Ellison
	Care Leavers	Council Chamber	Melissa Bob-Amara
	New Mums	Council Chamber	Rachel Dunley

# Workshop feedback



- Feedback on the intergenerational projects that the workshops developed and want to take forward

# Closing remarks

## Councillor Aisha Cuthbert

THE BROMLEY  
LONELINESS SUMMIT



- ✓ Our summit today enabled services to connect those at risk of loneliness. We focused on intergenerational working: we will follow up on our project to support New Mums, Care Leavers and Older people
- ✓ Our summit and market place enabled community groups to network, we want to support a thriving community to reduce loneliness
- ✓ Our summit today facilitated a conversation around loneliness. We understand that tackling loneliness is key to the wellbeing of our communities