

Feeling lonely?



What helped others and
what might help you

Information written with you in mind.

This information guide has been produced with the help of older people, carers and expert peer reviewers.

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What this guide is about

Everyone feels lonely from time to time. Sometimes it passes on its own – but sometimes it doesn't and can start to have more of an impact on our lives.

We held focus groups (group discussions) with older people and carers to find out about their experiences of loneliness. We heard about how they felt, what helped them and what didn't, who they turned to for support, and what advice they'd give to others who might be feeling lonely too.

This guide brings together these discussions. It explores what loneliness can feel like, some of the circumstances that can lead to feeling more lonely, and what might help you start to feel better.

And while we're all different, and what might have helped someone else might not be helpful to you, we hope that reading about other people's experiences helps you feel more able to speak about your own feelings – whether that's with a friend or family member, your healthcare professional, or a relevant organisation.

We'd like to thank the older people and carers who took part in our focus groups for sharing their experiences so openly. Any quotes used in this guide have been anonymised.

Good to know



There are lots of organisations you can turn to if you're feeling lonely. These are listed in the 'Useful organisations' section on pages 35-38.

You can also call us. Age UK's Silver Line Helpline is a free, confidential phone line for older people. It's available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to provide conversation and support whenever you need it. Call **0800 4 70 80 90** to speak to a friendly team member.

We run a telephone befriending service too. If you want to find out more about arranging a free weekly chat on the phone, search 'telephone friendship' on the Age UK website or call **0800 434 6105**.

What is loneliness?

It's tricky to define loneliness. While most of us have a sense of what it means, people describe their experiences in very different ways.

In general, loneliness can be described as the feelings you experience when you don't have the kind of social contact that feels meaningful to you.

But it's not always that straightforward. The next sections of this guide go into more detail about when and why we might feel lonely, and what's helped others feel better.

It isn't the same as being alone

You can feel lonely even if you're not alone – and being alone doesn't necessarily mean you'll feel lonely. Lots of us prefer some time – or a lot of time – to ourselves. What matters is that the amount and type of social contact you have works for you.

Lots of us feel lonely even when our lives might look quite sociable from the outside – and in fact, lots of us feel lonely even when we're surrounded by others. This can be for all sorts of reasons. Perhaps you used to share your life with someone who's died, and no one else can fill that void. Or perhaps you feel fine when you're busy, but struggle during quieter times.

Good to know



Sometimes, the phrase 'social isolation' is used to describe a lack of social contact with others. This isn't the same as loneliness, which is used to describe the feelings you experience when you don't have amount and type of social contact that feels meaningful to you.

Health problems make it more difficult for Audrey to get out and about.

Audrey, 78, lives in a flat near her daughter and grandsons. She loves seeing her family when they visit but seeing anyone else is challenging.

‘I’ve had health problems for the past decade or so. My husband did a lot to help me stay active and social while he was alive, but things are more difficult now I’m by myself.

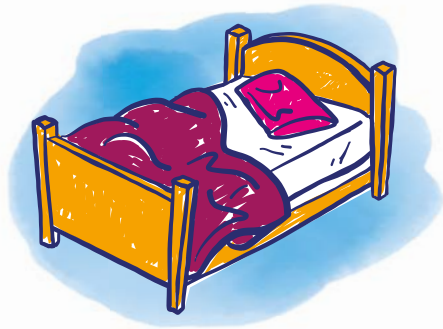
‘Being ill on and off for such a long time made me feel much more vulnerable – and the coronavirus pandemic made that even worse. So actually I’m quite relieved to just stay in, but life does feel dull.

‘My daughter takes me out when she can, but she’s run off her feet looking after two boys by herself.

‘People often tell me I’m lucky to be so close to family. And that makes it harder to talk about because I know I am – but it doesn’t mean I don’t feel lonely too.’

“Things are more difficult now I’m by myself.”





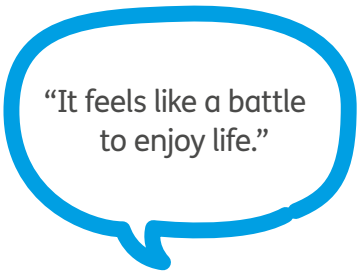
How you might be feeling

Feeling lonely often involves complex emotions. People told us that they felt:

- sad
- empty
- isolated
- anxious
- bored
- tired
- purposeless
- like things are pointless.

Some people also explained that one feeling could often make others worse – for example, feeling tired because they were worried or anxious.

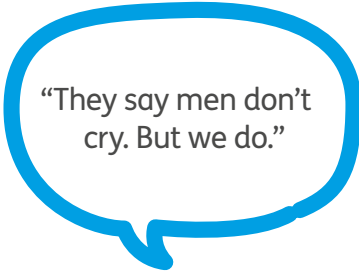
You might be experiencing different emotions to the ones listed above. Sometimes, it can be difficult to put a finger on exactly what it is you're feeling, or describe it to someone – but there are still steps you can take to feel better. There's more information about things that could help on pages 12-25.



"It feels like a battle
to enjoy life."



"I sometimes feel like
I just don't matter...
like I'm surplus to
requirements."



"They say men don't
cry. But we do."



"I have plenty to do,
but I'm still lonely."



"I'll sometimes put a film
on, not because I'm that
interested in it, but just
to have something on."

When you might feel lonely

When we feel most lonely is a very individual thing. But our conversations showed that there are certain times people associated most closely with feelings of loneliness.

Times of change

We heard that feelings of loneliness are often triggered by changes in our lives. These include:

- **a change in your daily routine** – retiring from work, for example, can be challenging as you adjust to seeing colleagues less and having less structure to your week.
- **a change in your relationships** – it may be that you or a loved one moves away, your relationship with a partner comes to an end, or someone you care about dies.
- **a change to your health** – not only can this lead to worries and becoming more withdrawn, but it can mean you have to stop doing some of the things you used to.
- **a change in your confidence** – there are lots of reasons you may not feel as confident as you used to, which can make it more difficult to keep doing things you enjoy.

You might have experienced other changes that have led to feelings of loneliness. And it could even be that while you feel something has changed, you can't quite identify what it is.

“It’s when I go home in the evening that it gets to me. There’s no noise, no radio on – just nothing.”

Derek, 66



Specific situations

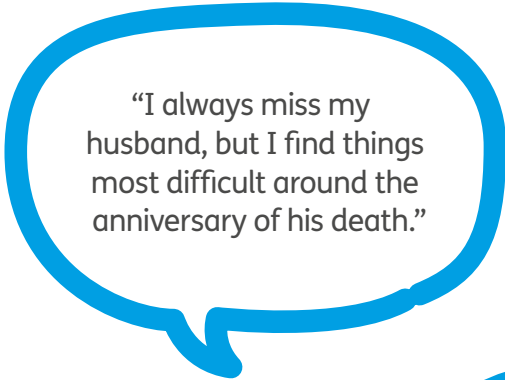
While there are certain periods of change in our lives when we might be more likely to feel lonely, these feelings can be triggered by certain circumstances, places or times too.

Feeling lonelier in situations like these is natural. But there can come a point when these feelings are having a wider impact on our lives. There's more information about steps you can take to feel better on pages 12-25.

Some of the situations that came up in our conversations might feel familiar to you.



"I struggle to fill the evenings until I go to bed."



"I always miss my husband, but I find things most difficult around the anniversary of his death."



"There's something about Christmas that makes me feel down every year."



What might help if you're feeling lonely

It might be reassuring to know that there are things that have helped others feel less lonely. Making changes can be daunting, especially when you're feeling low or lacking confidence or motivation – but deciding to make an active change can help you feel more in control.

We understand that this can be easier said than done. Perhaps you're not sure what might help you feel better or what support might be available. Perhaps you know what your options are but you're worried – or even overwhelmed – by the thought of trying them. Or perhaps it's a bit of both.

This section outlines some of the things we heard about in our conversations that helped other people experiencing loneliness feel better.

One of the key things we heard was that different things worked for different people – so if something doesn't feel right, that's OK. What matters is to do what works for you, even if it takes trying a few different things to find what that is.

Volunteering helped Jack adjust to living alone after his divorce.

Jack, 67, lived with Rosemary for years. It wasn't easy to get used to being by himself after their relationship ended, but getting involved in the local community helped.

'It took me a long time to find my feet without Rosemary. I don't think I'd fully realised how much structure she brought to my life. At first, every day felt empty.

'One day, I saw a poster about a repair café on the village noticeboard. I've always been good at woodwork, so I decided to give volunteering there a go. People bring in all sorts for fixing – it's nice to get lost in a project for a few hours.

'What's great for me though is meeting new people every week. A lot of the other volunteers are older chaps too, and a few are even in a similar situation to me.

'It still isn't easy – but I don't feel as lost as I used to. My week has more structure and I have something to look forward to.'

“It's nice to get lost in a project for a few hours.”



Talking about it

Many people found that acknowledging their feelings was an important first step towards feeling better. Lots of us prefer not to think of ourselves as 'lonely' but being upfront about your feelings – with yourself and with others – can take a weight off your mind.

- **A friend or family member** might be more open and responsive than you expect if you tell them how you're feeling. It might even give them a chance to talk about their feelings too – after all, we all feel lonely sometimes. If you're reading this guide because you're worried about someone else, there's more information about starting this conversation on pages 26-29.
- **A healthcare professional** can also be a good person to talk to. They're there to help, not judge, and they might be able to help you find more support.
- **An organisation** can talk things through and help you work out your next steps. See pages 35-38 for a list of organisations that can offer support.

“It's easy to overthink so much that nothing else can get through. Talking helped me untangle my thoughts.”

Christine, 57



“I couldn’t believe how much it helped to have a listening ear.”

David, 68



In our discussions, people told us that they felt better after talking to someone about what was going on.

It wasn’t always easy – in some cases, people had put off these conversations for weeks, months and even years.

Sometimes, this was because it wasn’t the kind of thing that was talked about when they were younger. Sometimes, it was because they just couldn’t find the words to explain how they felt. And other times, it was because they didn’t want to feel like they were burdening others by talking about it. But once they’d talked about it, they wished they’d done it sooner.

While the conversation can feel daunting, there are things you can control, such as when and where it happens. For example, you might prefer to go for a walk together rather than sitting down for a face-to-face chat – or you might prefer to start the conversation over text or on the phone.

When we’ve bottled something up for a long time, it can feel more difficult to say out loud. But it’s never too late to tell someone how you’re feeling – even if you’ve learned to cope with it over time.

Trying clubs and activities

Being socially connected doesn't just help us feel less lonely – it can positively impact our physical and mental health too. Trying a new activity, revisiting an old hobby, or joining a club can help you meet and connect with others.

You could try something:

- **active** – from walking and swimming to yoga and dance, there's all sorts you could have a go at. Getting a bit of exercise in while meeting new people can be an effective way to boost your mood overall.
- **artistic** – have you ever fancied trying your hand at painting, or joining a choir? Lots of groups are open to beginners, so you don't need to worry if you haven't done it before. Chances are, there'll be others looking to meet new people and try something different.
- **educational** – groups dedicated to learning can offer the opportunity to meet people with similar interests to you. The University of the Third Age (page 38) is a good place to start.



These are just a few ideas – and what’s available will vary from area to area. But it can be easier to find common ground with new people if you already share an interest, so it’s worth having a think about the things you enjoy most or something you’ve been meaning to try.

And because lots of us want to meet like-minded people who share our interests, there are plenty of different clubs and activities out there.

“It’s easy to slip into staying home, and then it’s just the TV or the radio for company. I try to get out a couple of times a week.”

Bridget, 71



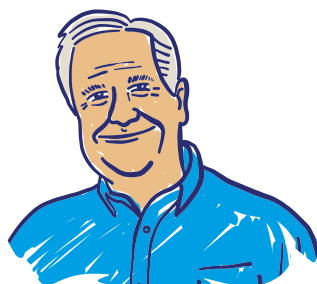
Good to know



Your local Age UK can help you find out what’s on in your local area. They might also run their own social activities – from bridge groups and coffee mornings to photography clubs and walking football. In Wales, contact your local Age Cymru.

“It helped so much to be around people who understood what I was going through without me having to explain it.”

Stefan, 73



Local support groups

There might be groups in your community that could help with the feelings you're experiencing. For example, if you're finding it hard to talk about the death of a loved one, a bereavement support group could be helpful. Even if you're not sure you're ready to talk, just being in a space with people who are going through something similar could be reassuring.

There might be a support group for you if you have a certain health condition too. For instance, Macmillan (page 36) has a directory of cancer support groups.

Social prescribing

Sometimes, your healthcare professional might refer you to social prescribing. A social prescriber can help you explore ways to improve your overall wellbeing by helping you access things like volunteering opportunities, classes and activities.

If you haven't already talked about feelings of loneliness with your healthcare professional, it's definitely worth mentioning. See page 14 for more information about talking about how you're feeling.

Getting connected

If seeing people face to face feels a little overwhelming, or you have difficulty getting out and about, using the internet could make socialising easier. Being online helped many people we spoke to feel more connected – for example, through playing games online or watching YouTube videos.

There are lots of online spaces designed to bring people together. Social media sites like Facebook and social networking sites like Gransnet can be a great way to feel more engaged with others. You might even find that you feel comfortable talking about how you feel under a username that keeps you anonymous – especially if you're connecting with people in a similar situation.

Staying safe online

While using the internet can be a great way to connect with old and new friends, it's important to be careful when you're online – unfortunately not everyone is who they say they are. Our **Staying safe** guide has more information about how to keep yourself and your personal information safe.

Next steps



Some local Age UKs run computer classes. For more information, contact your local Age UK. In Wales, contact your local Age Cymru.



Looking after yourself

When you're feeling out of sorts, it can be easy to slip into not taking care of yourself as well as you normally would.

People told us that it can be easy to get into a routine of staying at home – but that getting out and about normally helped them feel better.

A bit of exercise, even just a walk to the shops, can really boost your mood. If you can, being in green space can help you feel more connected to the world around you too – whether that means a stroll around your local park or a cuppa in the garden.

“Real friends don’t grow on trees. It took me a long time to adjust after Helen died – and looking back, I didn’t take very good care of myself.”

Grace, 82



Eating and drinking well is important too. Some people told us that they found it harder to find the motivation to cook – especially if they lived alone. But planning meals, finding blogs and recipes online, and even exploring local cooking classes helped people feel more motivated.

Others said they noticed they were drinking more alcohol when they felt more lonely. There's plenty of support out there if you think you're drinking too much. Drinkaware (page 36) offers advice and support to anyone who wants to reduce how much alcohol they drink.



Next steps



Our **Healthy living** guide has lots more information about taking care of your physical and mental health, as well as tips to help prepare meals.

Acknowledging barriers

We've outlined lots of things that helped others and might help with how you're feeling too. But we understand these things can often be easier said than done.

Several people told us that they knew there were steps they could take to help themselves feel better, but that it felt almost impossible to get started. And there are lots of reasons you might be feeling this way too.

Feeling reluctant to ask for help

It isn't always straightforward to ask for help. Some of us prefer to keep our problems private and try to figure things out by ourselves. This can be particularly true for those of us from a generation that didn't discuss feelings as much because they felt they were expected to 'just get on with it'.

Finances

The cost of getting out and about can easily add up. And while there are free or low-cost options for meeting with others – such as organised walks or local coffee mornings – finances can often be a barrier.

Next steps



To find out about money you might be entitled to, see our **More money in your pocket** guide. If you're in Wales, Age Cymru has its own version.

You can also use our free and simple online benefits calculator at www.ageuk.org.uk/benefits-check to find out what you might be able to claim.

“We were very involved with our church community in the city before we moved. We go to the church here and it’s nice – but it’s not the same.”

Tony, 83



Cultural differences

Several people described how cultural differences had made them feel more lonely at times. Some told us how difficult it is coming from a different cultural background to integrate in clubs and activities that aren’t very diverse.

We also heard that more day-to-day differences could lead to feelings of isolation – for example, not having access to familiar food or the right place of worship.

Worrying about burdening others

Some people told us that they didn’t want to feel like they were putting their problems onto others. They didn’t want to make a fuss or have their friends or family worry about them.

In many instances, people didn’t want to tell their children how they were feeling. This was sometimes because their children were busy with their own lives or had the grandchildren to look after – and sometimes because, as the parent, they felt they shouldn’t be the one reaching out for support.



Feeling that no one cares

We heard that some people had put off talking about how they were feeling because they didn't think anyone would care. It can be even easier to convince yourself of this when you're already feeling low – but you might be surprised by how much people do care if you can open up to them.

Overcoming barriers

Many of the people we talked to told us that the biggest barrier they had to overcome was actually themselves. They spoke about coming to terms with the fact that they needed to accept some responsibility in making a change happen – either by reaching out to the support that was available or deciding to have a conversation they'd been avoiding.

Some people had put it off for a long time, only to wish afterwards that they'd done it sooner, because the worries they'd had beforehand hadn't become a reality. Because while it was challenging, it was ultimately what helped them most.

We heard that feeling lonely can feel like being stuck in a vicious cycle. The stigma attached to loneliness can mean you can start to lose confidence which, in turn, makes it feel more difficult to overcome some of these barriers, connect with other people, and do the things you enjoy. It might get to the point that it feels exhausting to try to make a change.

If you recognise this feeling of being stuck, you're not alone. And while there isn't a straightforward solution, there are people you can talk to and organisations that can provide support (see pages 35-38).

And it doesn't all have to happen at once. There isn't a quick fix for what can be a complicated set of feelings – instead, it's a case of making small changes until you find what works for you and feels sustainable.

Good to know



It's normal for moods to fluctuate, and there might be days or weeks where you feel lower than usual. Even if this is manageable most of the time, we did hear that these times can be overwhelming.

Call Samaritans on **116 123** at any time of the day or night if you need someone to talk to.

Sometimes, you might feel so overwhelmed with your feelings that you think you might harm yourself in some way. If so, it's important to seek help. If you've harmed yourself or you think you might do, call **999** or go to A&E.

If someone you know is feeling lonely

It can be really worrying when we think a friend or family member is struggling with something. But when we think they might be feeling lonely, it can be particularly hard to know how to bring it up – or whether we even should.

You might be reading this guide because you're worried about someone you know. Perhaps they don't seem their usual self, whether that's something you've noticed recently or more gradually over time. Or perhaps there's been a big change in their life lately, such as the death of their partner.

Supporting someone experiencing feelings of loneliness can be tricky. There might be lots of reasons why they haven't said anything to you or anyone else. They might not even recognise that they're feeling lonely – or if they do, they might not want to admit it.

While it's natural to want to help our loved ones, it's important to remember that it might not be something you can fix. Sometimes, the person themselves needs to decide to make a change – and that'll only happen when they're ready.

Often, it might seem to you like they're not doing enough to help themselves, which can feel frustrating. But at times like this, it's important to remind yourself that it isn't your responsibility to find the solution – it's enough for you to be there to provide support and a listening ear.

A bereavement group helped Janette's dad find his feet again.

After Janette's stepmum died, she worried about how her dad was coping. She found a local bereavement support group that provided the space he needed.

'Dad's never been a big talker, so after Joyce died it could be hard to tell how he was feeling. We'd chat about her, of course – but I felt like there was still a lot going on beneath the surface.

'I looked online and found a bereavement support group. Dad wasn't sure about going – and I was a bit worried about him going by himself – so I offered to drop him off and collect him.

'I didn't need to worry about it. People coming for the first time get met at the door and looked after – and they even get a little welcome pack to help them settle in.

'He hasn't missed a single meeting since. The best thing is there's no expectation to talk about anything you don't want to. Everyone there has lost someone they love, so there's a level of understanding you just don't find anywhere else.

'It's made the world of difference to him – I'm so glad he has the support he needed.'

“There's a level of understanding you just don't find anywhere else.”



Starting a conversation

The best thing you can do to help your friend or family member is encourage them to talk about how they're feeling. This can be easier said than done – after all, lots of us can feel a bit awkward talking about our emotions.

There isn't a 'right' way to start this kind of conversation. As their friend or family member, you might have an idea of what the person would respond well to – but even then, it might take a couple of tries to find a way into the conversation.

They might also prefer to talk another time. It might be that no one's asked them how they're feeling for some time, and it's something they want to give more thought to as they don't really know how they're feeling.

They might just not be ready to talk about how they're feeling – and that's OK. It's not your job to make them talk or take action. Trying to push a difficult conversation can even make future conversations trickier. But you can let them know that you're there if and when they want to talk or find help, which might be all the support they need right now. It could be helpful to give them this guide to read when they feel ready.

“It's a hard conversation to have, but it's important to have it.”

Julian, 48





If someone isn't comfortable talking

Talking about our emotions can be difficult. And if the person you're worried about doesn't want to talk, or if starting a conversation about it feels forced within the dynamic of your relationship, you might prefer to support them in different way.

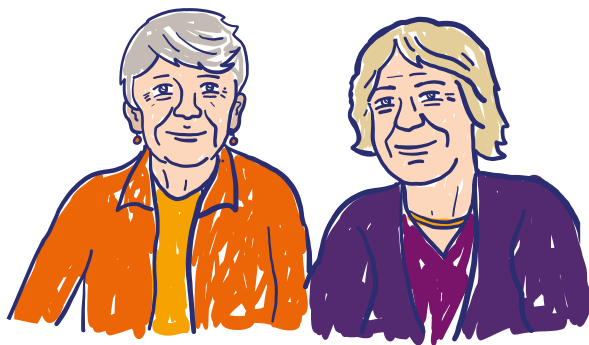
Why not make plans with them? You could ask them if there's anything they fancy doing together or suggest meeting for lunch, going for a walk, or trying out a new club or activity.

Every person and relationship is different. It might take a bit of trial and error before you find something that suits you both. What matters is that you're there to support them in whatever way works for you.

Good to know



Being upfront about your own feelings can encourage others to talk about theirs. While you don't have to share anything that makes you feel uncomfortable, talking frankly could help your friend or family member open up.



Taking that next step

Whether you're feeling lonely or you're concerned about someone who might be, we hope this guide has given you some useful things to think about.

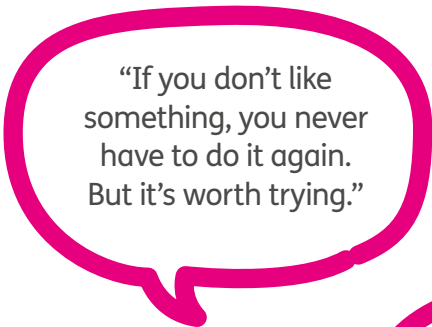
We understand that some of the suggestions in this guide – such as having that first conversation about how you're feeling – might feel daunting. But one of the things we heard again and again in our conversations with people feeling lonely was how much better they felt after taking that next step – whatever that step was for them.

Remember you're not alone in feeling lonely, even if it seems like it sometimes – there's support out there when you're ready. And nothing needs to change overnight. The important thing is to find what works for you, and to take it at your own pace.

Good to know



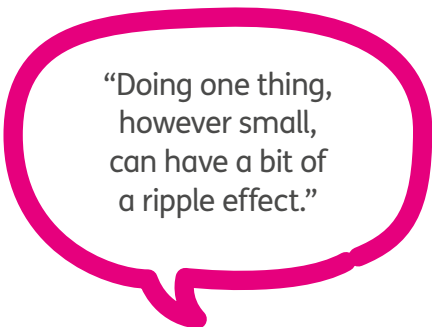
There's more information on pages 32-33 about how Age UK can support you, locally and nationally.



"If you don't like something, you never have to do it again. But it's worth trying."



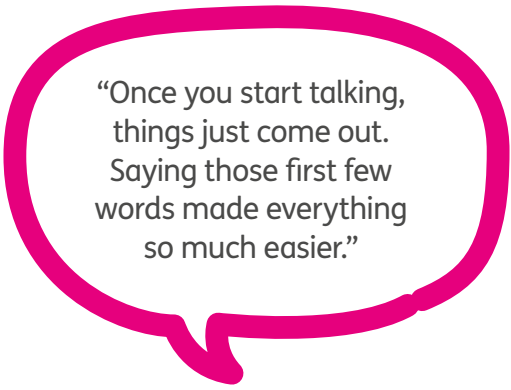
"Planning things really helps. It makes you feel like there's something important in your life again."



"Doing one thing, however small, can have a bit of a ripple effect."



"One conversation can have such a big impact."



"Once you start talking, things just come out. Saying those first few words made everything so much easier."



How Age UK can help

When you're ready, Age UK can help you – or someone you know – feel more connected.

The following options can offer an opportunity to connect with other people in a way that hopefully feels meaningful – as well as helping to build a sense of purpose and routine.

Telephone Friendship Service

Age UK runs a telephone befriending service which matches you with a volunteer with similar interests for a free weekly chat on the phone. The same volunteer will call you each week to chat about anything and everything. It can be nice to know that there's a friendly conversation to look forward to, whatever else happens in the week. Search 'telephone friendship' on the Age UK website to find out more, or call **0800 434 6105**.

The Silver Line

Age UK's Silver Line Helpline is a free, confidential telephone service for people aged 55 and over. Whether you're feeling lonely, you need help accessing support, or you just fancy a chat, call **0800 4 70 80 90** to speak to a friendly team member – 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Befriending

Many local Age UKs run befriending schemes. These normally involve a friendly chat over the phone or a volunteer popping in to see you at home or going out with you to an appointment.

Clubs and activities

There's a variety of clubs and activities on offer at local Age UKs, which can offer plenty of opportunity to meet new people in your area. What's on at each local Age UK will vary – you can check on their website or call **0800 169 65 65** to get the relevant contact details to find out more.

Volunteering

Whether it's getting involved at your local Age UK or helping out in one of our charity shops, there are lots of ways to volunteer with us. As well as making an incredible difference, it can be a great way to meet new people and feel more engaged in your local community.

“Calling the Silver Line was one of the best things I ever did. One conversation really can make a huge difference.”

Philip, 85



Next steps



Visit **www.ageuk.org.uk** to find out more about the ways we can support you and how you might be able to volunteer with us. In Wales, get in touch with your local Age Cymru or call Age Cymru Advice.

Notes

We've included space here for you to jot down things that you might like to do – such as arranging a catch-up over a coffee or trying out a local group.

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Useful organisations

Age UK

We provide information and advice for people in later life through our Age UK Advice Line, publications and website.

Age UK Advice: 0800 169 65 65

Lines are open seven days a week from 8am to 7pm.

www.ageuk.org.uk

In Wales, contact Age Cymru Advice: **0300 303 44 98**

www.agecymru.org.uk

In Northern Ireland, contact Age NI: **0808 808 7575**

www.ageni.org

In Scotland, contact Age Scotland: **0800 124 4222**

www.agescotland.org.uk

Anxiety UK

Provides information and support to people who have been diagnosed with, or think they may have, an anxiety condition.

Tel: **03444 775 774**

www.anxietyuk.org.uk

C.A.L.L. Helpline – Community Advice & Listening Line

Confidential mental health support and listening service for people in Wales.

Tel: **0800 132 737** (or text **help** to **81066**)

www.callhelpline.org.uk

Carers UK

Offers advice, information and support for carers, as well as an online community.

Tel: **0808 808 7777**

www.carersuk.org

Cruse Bereavement Care

Provides support to bereaved people across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Tel: **0808 808 1677**

www.cruse.org.uk

Drinkaware

Offers help and support with responsible drinking.

Tel: **0300 123 1110**

www.drinkaware.co.uk

LGBT Foundation

Empowers LGBTQ+ people to realise their full potential, providing services and activities that offer support and hope.

Tel: **0345 3 30 30 30**

lgbt.foundation

Lifeline

Helpline service for people in distress and despair in Northern Ireland. It can also provide follow-up support, including counselling and complementary therapy.

Tel: **0808 808 8000**

www.lifelinehelpline.info

Macmillan Cancer Support

Provides practical, medical and financial support for people with cancer and their carers and loved ones.

Tel: **0808 808 00 00**

www.macmillan.org.uk

Mind

Offers advice and support for anyone experiencing a mental health issue.

Tel: **0300 123 3393**

www.mind.org.uk

National Council for Voluntary Organisations

Provides details of local volunteer opportunities across England.

Tel: **020 7520 2552**

www.ncvo.org.uk

In Wales, contact **Volunteering Wales**

www.volunteering-wales.net

In Northern Ireland, contact **Volunteer Now**

www.volunteernow.co.uk

NHS

Gives information about local NHS services in England and advice on mental wellbeing.

www.nhs.uk

In Wales, contact **NHS 111 Wales**

www.111.wales.nhs.uk

In Northern Ireland, contact **NI Direct**

www.nidirect.gov.uk

Ramblers

Runs a network of walking groups across the UK. Visit their website and enter your postcode to find your local group.

Tel: **020 3961 3300**

www.ramblers.org.uk

Re-engage

Provides older people with social connections. It runs activities such as tea parties and exercise groups.

Tel: **0800 716543**

www.reengage.org.uk

Relate

Offers support with personal relationships online, over the phone, or via its network of Relate centres.

www.relate.org.uk

Samaritans

Helpline offering confidential support to people in distress, 24 hours a day.

Tel: **116 123**

Email: **jo@samaritans.org**

www.samaritans.org

Thrive

Uses gardening to positively impact the lives of people who are isolated, disadvantaged, or have a disability or illness.

Tel: **0118 988 5688**

Email: **info@thrive.org.uk**

www.thrive.org.uk

University of the Third Age

UK-wide network of groups for older people who learn together informally.

Tel: **020 8466 6139**

www.u3a.org.uk

Help us be there for someone else

We hope you found this guide helpful. When times are tough, it's so important to get some support. Did you know you could help us reach someone else who needs a little help? Here's how:

1

Give your views on guides like this

Our Readers' Panel helps make sure the information we produce is right for older people and their families. We'd love you to join. Go to www.ageuk.org.uk/readers-panel.

2

Donate to us

Every donation we receive helps us be there for someone when they need us. To make a donation, call us on **0800 169 8787** or go to www.ageuk.org.uk/donate.

3

Volunteer with us

Our volunteers make an incredible difference to people's lives. Get involved by contacting your local Age UK or at www.ageuk.org.uk/volunteer.

4

Campaign with us

We campaign to make life better for older people, and rely on the help of our strong network of campaigners. Add your voice to our latest campaigns at www.ageuk.org.uk/campaigns.

5

Remember us in your will

A gift to Age UK in your will is a very special way of helping older people get expert support in the years to come. Find out more by calling **020 3033 1421** or visit www.ageuk.org.uk/legacy.

What should I do now?

You may want to read some of our relevant information guides and factsheets, such as:

- **Your mind matters**
- **Healthy living**
- **Bereavement**

You can order any of our guides or factsheets by giving our Advice Line a ring for free on **0800 169 65 65** (8am-7pm, 365 days a year).

Our friendly advisers are there to help answer any questions.

All of our publications are available in large print and audio formats.

There's plenty of really useful information on our website, too. Visit **www.ageuk.org.uk/loneliness** to get started.

If contact details for your local Age UK are not in the below box, call Age UK Advice free on **0800 169 65 65**.



0800 169 65 65
www.ageuk.org.uk



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