

Community Conference 2021

SOCIAL ISOLATION



What we will cover?

- **Introduction and context**
- **Supporting older people**
- **How leisure services are contributing?**
- **Learning Disability and Social Isolation**
- **Sensory Impairment and Social Isolation**
- **Questions**

Background

Who is affected?

It is not just older people that suffer from social isolation and loneliness.

The conditions affect people throughout the life-course and the effects are compounded as life progresses.



Life Course Triggers



PREGNANCY

20%

of expectant mothers lack a supportive social environment to support them through their pregnancy.



CHILDHOOD & ADOLESCENCE

Social isolation and loneliness in the young is generally caused by bullying due to differences in physical appearance, cultural attitudes, spoken languages and sexuality.



YOUNG ADULTS

The major life change that occurs after leaving school has been a trigger for social isolation and loneliness for many young adults.



WORKING AGE

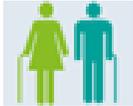
Loss of employment, parenthood and formative experiences such as addiction can trigger the onset of social isolation and loneliness.



RETIREMENT & LATER LIFE

Decreasing economic resources, declining health, mobility impairments and the death of peers all contribute to the onset of these conditions in older people.

Impact of loneliness on health



Physical health

- As harmful as smoking 15 cigarettes per day
- Increased risk of high blood pressure
- Higher risk of the onset of disability



Mental health

- Greater risk of cognitive decline
- 64% chance of developing clinical dementia
- More prone to depression
- Predictor of suicide in older age



Services and Communities

- More likely to visit GP and higher use of medication
- Early entry into residential nursing care
- Higher use of accident and emergency services
- Disconnected communities
- Costs to employers

Cost to Health & Social Care

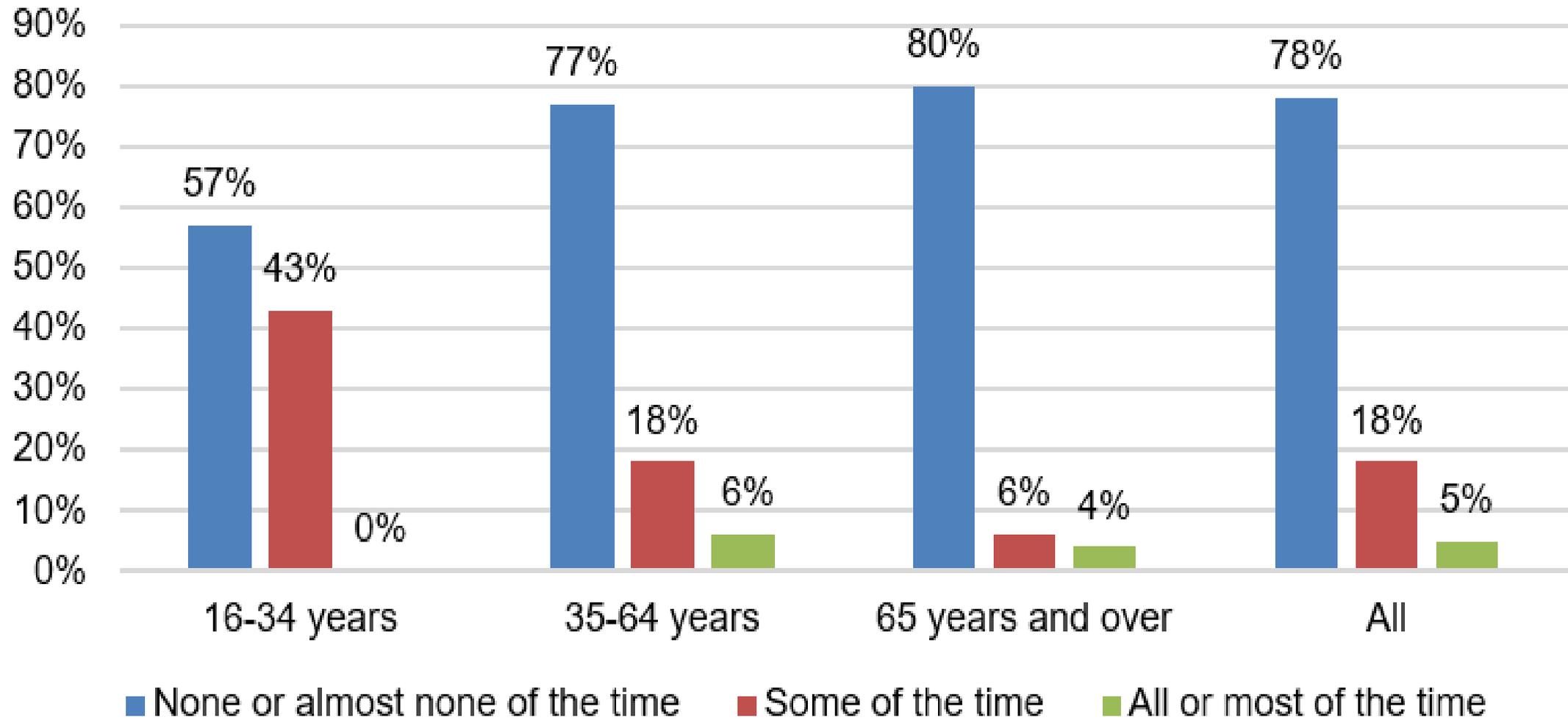
- Preventing and alleviating loneliness helps older people to remain independent
- 76% of GPs report 1-5 patients a day come to their surgery because they are lonely
- The cost of being chronically lonely to the public sector on average is around **£12,000 per person** based on costs associated with GP and A&E visits
- A third of patients admitted to A&E had very infrequent meaningful social interactions – less than once a month or never

Impact on older people:

Older people who are lonely are, on average:

- 1.8 times more likely to visit their GP
- 1.6 times more likely to visit A&E
- 1.3 times more likely to have emergency admissions
- 3.5 times more likely to enter public funded residential care

Loneliness in South Ayrshire (Qualify Of Life Survey, 2019)



South Ayrshire approach...

Prevent

- Whole community approaches
- Promote self care
- Raise awareness of local activities and services
- Address inequality
- Transport
- Technology
- The built environment

Respond

- Raise awareness of triggers
- Develop pathway from identification to reconnection
- Promote peer-led support and co-design of services

Restore

- Identify those experiencing chronic loneliness
- Support reconnection
- Promote self-directed support options

Examples of activity linked to older people

AYRSHIRE HOUSING DIGITAL PARTNERSHIP

VASA managed the delivery and support of digital devices to 30 Ayrshire Housing households, of which there were approximately 50 school age children as well as many households where the participants were of working age, seeking employment or looking to attend college. On evaluating the outcomes, the programme saw 138% increased engagement in schoolwork for those households with children.

All households referred faced digital exclusion due to financial barriers. 30% of referrals were for those who were absolute beginners and who had never accessed devices before, other than via a library or a mobile phone. Once supported in hardware, broadband and tutoring, there was 100% increase for all adults in - learning something new, increased confidence and use of digital technology. Several of the households required support in hardware and tutoring to allow them to effectively engage in college courses.

DIGITAL COMMUNITY CONNECTOR PROGRAMME

Approximately 110 digital devices have been delivered to households across South Ayrshire in the 6 months April-Sept 21. A bespoke package of support was developed for each referral. The service saw referrals from agencies and partners such as AILN, Sheltered Housing, Community Links Practitioners, Social Work, GP's, VASA services and many more.

The age range was from 18-93years old. 96% of participants engaged and were supported to learn new skills which ranged from connectivity (online and with friends and family), setting up online businesses, learning new languages, downloading and accessing educational apps and general digital skills that grew confidence around using the Internet and building knowledge of the resources available.

CASE STUDY – DIGITAL HELPDESK

NS is a man in his late 70s that by his own admission is ‘technologically challenged’. He has made the decision to enrol in the local college and desired to know how to use his desktop to enable him to engage with online classes and do his coursework.

NS heard about the service through a friend who had used the Helpdesk. NS did not know how to navigate his desktop at all and became flustered easily in our first session when discussing accessing the internet or using ‘Word’. Over the course of several weeks, he has become more comfortable with the device and has been accessing the college website through it, as well as using ‘Word’ to take notes ahead of starting college regarding his chosen course.

He can now confidently join Zoom meetings, share his screen, navigate a Word document and use his browser for research – including using YouTube. All of these things are goals that when we first set them, he felt he would never be able to achieve and could certainly never do alone. He now does so regularly and is extremely excited about his upcoming college course

CASE STUDY TELEPHONE BEFRIENDING



Mr M is in his mid-50's and spent many years battling addiction to alcohol and Heroin. Around 15 years ago, Mr M turned his life around and has been sober/clean ever since. During the pandemic, Mr M became anxious and isolated and feared his demons may return. He took early action and sought support for himself in the very early stages of lockdown in 2020. He was offered Telephone Befriending and was matched up with a local gentleman who phoned him several times a week.

The phone calls made a huge difference to Mr M and he felt he had "someone to look forward to speaking to" every week.

Once restrictions began to lift, he felt he no longer needed to receive calls but instead requested to volunteer. He said "If I can give back even a little of the help that I have received, then I'll know I have helped make a difference in someone's world".

Mr M has since been supported through the application process including training and induction and is currently awaiting his first voluntary role.

CASE STUDY – OUT AND ABOUT

Mrs B is a 55-year-old, very engaging, friendly lady who pre-pandemic relied on public transport (bus) to get about visiting family, friends and activity groups. Shielding had meant that she had not left her home for over 15 months. During this time, she felt that 'everything had just gotten worse', her mobility, strength and mood. The main goal was to get 'back on the bus' as this would then 'open up her world' but was 'terrified of getting stranded'. Referral was from VASA telephone befriending.

Mrs B had concerns about crowds and 'busy places'. Our interactions have involved walking, negotiating shops and cafes and going on public transport. To help with strength and mobility referral was made to INVIGOR8 classes where we attended together for initial assessment. Mrs B now 'meets new people' at these classes finding them very beneficial. The most important step for Mrs B was using the bus, this we did travelling an hour from her home to town and back again. Whilst on the bus Mrs B was surprised at how 'calm and reassured' she felt with having the support, it made the journey seem 'easy'. As a challenge Mrs B arranged to meet her friend in town the next day, using the bus to get there. Mrs B successfully managed the journey independently and had a great day out.

Since working with Mrs B over our 5 interactions her confidence and stamina has grown, managing longer distances when walking, her whole demeanour is brighter. Negotiating the bus has improved her socialisation immensely allowing her to travel to her knitting and craft groups, she is also planning bus trip for a few days, this she had enjoyed previously.

Miss D emailed South Ayrshire Lifeline looking for activities for her mum and dad. Dad has dementia and both are very isolated. Arranged to call her and find out a bit more about what her parents might like to get involved in. Signposted to Alzheimer Scotland for activity groups, carers' group for mum and general support and advice. Also told Miss D about Give a Dog a Bone community space, the Dementia Arts Trust Hub and Dementia Friendly Prestwick. She felt her mum would sometimes appreciate the chance to socialise separately from her dad so, based on her interests, we signposted to u3a Ayr groups and referred her to South Ayrshire Lifeline's Telephone Befriending Service.

Mr E called South Ayrshire Lifeline looking for emergency food because he had no money. He said he was homeless and staying with a friend as his partner has asked him to leave their house. He had no credit in his phone, so we contacted a local church Foodbank and they agreed to drop food to him that day. We also filled in a referral form for the Information and Advice Hub for Mr E so he could get benefits assistance and contacted SeAscape on his behalf to request help with his housing situation and they confirmed they would phone him.



mPower continues to support provide bespoke one-to-one self-management support for people aged 65 and over to improve their wellbeing and live safely and independently in their own homes, which includes an assessment of their social connections. mPower is currently providing telephone support to over 65s rather than usual home visits and this is expected to continue for some time. During this unsettling period, ongoing support is provided to our older population to help them navigate the range of existing and emerging supports available. Consultation through Near Me is provided as appropriate.

mPower Community Navigators provide a single point of contact to support and facilitate access to practical help from a wide range of formal and informal services, as well as recommend a range of simple digital health tools and apps to enhance their health and wellbeing as well as their social connections.

Additionally, mPower has a Digital Navigator within the service who focuses on delivering Alzheimer Scotland ADAM (About Digital and Me) which assesses need and recommends a range of assistive technologies. mPower will provide and fund a range of tested and approved equipment, including digital devices which can support social connections.

Community Link Practitioners

We now have 8 Community Link Practitioners (+ one dedicated to Wallacetown) working from GP Practices and supporting a wide range of social issues including loneliness and isolation

They form part of wider Multi-disciplinary Teams with other workers who may refer patients to them

They support people in a variety of ways but will link people to social and other activities that are collated on South Ayrshire Lifeline

What they carry out is sometimes called Social Prescribing

Decision Days and Small Grants – examples of projects funded

Age Concern Girvan

To support the elderly community by providing food and emotional support within their homes

Mrs Smith Supports

To develop support sessions within the area for the wider population that feel lonely, isolated or vulnerable.

Voluntary Action South Ayrshire

To provide Christmas dinners to those most vulnerable and socially isolated within their homes.

Troon Rotary Club

To purchase a #Blether Bench# for those most socially isolated and vulnerable within the community to engage with other people.

Kirkmichael Village Renaissance

To provide an extended 'take away' catering service for the elderly most isolated within the rural villages.

SAC Leisure During Lockdown

 Phoning over 700 class participants either weekly, fortnightly, monthly and some people have asked that we contact them when classes re-start;

 Delivering Live Zoom exercise classes with the Health Team;

 Delivering South Ayrshire Council Leisure Zoom classes;

 Posting information on the private Facebook pages for Invigor8, HARP and Weigh to go class members

 Distributing Health Team exercise videos via email to participants, or by posting them on a private Facebook page;

 Super 6 balance exercises distributed to attendees;

 Developing exercise booklets;

 Providing information on available online exercises from YouTube, NHS Inform, British Heart Foundation, Later Life Training, MSK Physiotherapists

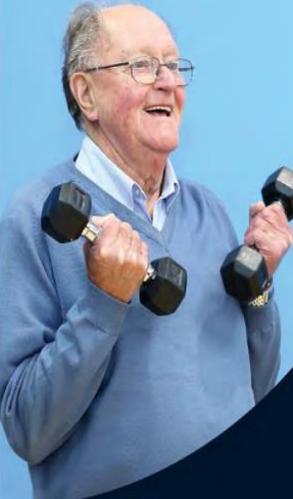
 Providing information on fun activities, virtual walks, quizzes, how to access South Ayrshire Council Library services for free online books, magazines and newspapers; and

 Signposting to other organisations including Voluntary Action South Ayrshire, Alzheimer's Scotland and local Community Groups.

SAC Leisure – Activities Available

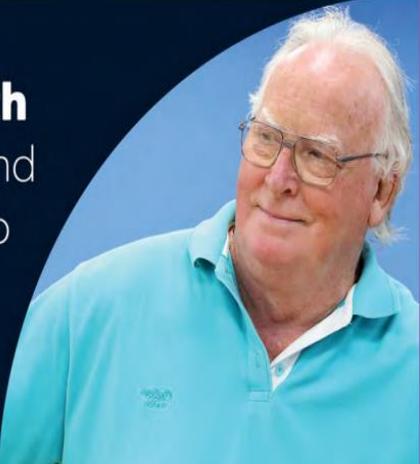


Invigor8
Falls prevention and balance programme



HARP
Activities for people with health conditions

Activity for Health
Exercise and activities to improve health



Weigh to Go
Healthy weight programme



LINE DANCING
Citadel
Every Wednesday
2.45-3.45pm

*Line Dancing is also included in the Activity for Health Membership for £20 per month, please ask for details

£3

No need to book

☎ : 01292 612 624 / 01292 269 793
✉ : ActivityForHealth@south-ayrshire.gov.uk



Like 2 Walk?

Citadel Leisure Centre- Monday- 10am
Prestwick Sailing Club- Monday- 11am
Girvan Quay Zone- Wednesday- 10.30am
Troon Walker Hall- Thursday- 10am

Contact
☎ : 01292 612 624
✉ : ActivityForHealth@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

SAC Leisure – Edith and George



- Edith has attended the health classes for many years and her husband has been diagnosed with dementia. George is very fit and has always participated in exercise. He is finding it more difficult to attend activities on his own and so he has joined the **health class** with his wife and now is an integral part of the class. As George has a good fitness level he is motivating the class to improve or maintain their fitness. Edith knows that he is exercising in a safe environment and doing what he does best, keeping active. The friendly, happy and fun environment not only supports the couple but the couple support the rest of the class. Edith and George also attend the **gym** and as George now knows the layout of equipment and the staff Edith and George can exercise separately. They also attend a **swim session** as this is George's favourite activity. The poolside staff know the couple well and at the end of the session Edith leaves 5 mins early to get dressed while the staff chat to George and make sure he is safe.
- **Edith said**, "We really enjoy the activities. It gets us out the house and George always enjoys coming to the classes and activities. It lets me out to meet people. You can feel isolated when you are at home."

Supporting People with Learning Disabilities in South Ayrshire to combat Social Isolation and Loneliness



Walking Groups



Curry Club



Girvan Opportunities



Window Visits



SENSORY TEAM



How the Sensory Team has helped implement some of the points on the Action Plan in relation to Ayrshire Social Isolation Strategy.

- Annual post registration telephone review calls
- Drop in clinics
- Hearing Loss Health Walk
- Mobility training
- Equipment for people with hearing and/or sight loss
- SISG/VASA
- Technology
- Sensory Loss Awareness Sessions



QUESTIONS