



*Maria Caulfield MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department of Health & Social Care*

*Rt Hon Stuart Andrew MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport*

To All MPs in England

23 December 2022

Dear Colleague,

Mental Health Announcement, Loneliness Toolkit and wider mental health support

Today (Friday 23 December), we have made an announcement on providing the National Academy of Social Prescribing with £3.6million of funding, which will include prescribing wellbeing activities to tackle loneliness. Further detail on the announcement is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/36-million-social-prescribing-funding-to-bolster-mental-health-support-and-ease-pressure-on-gps>

Please find here a [social media asset](#) and a [tweet](#) to share the announcement through your channels.

Tackling loneliness remains a priority for this government and we are committed to continuing our work to help people build stronger social relationships.

At this time of year, we wanted to take the opportunity to highlight the importance of focusing on loneliness, mental health and wellbeing.

There is growing evidence indicating that loneliness is a predictor of poor mental health across all stages of life, and that having a mental health problem can increase the risk of feeling lonely.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how crucial it is to feel connected with others, but we know that many people felt lonely and isolated in this country long before the pandemic. That is why, in 2018, the government published the first strategy in the world to tackle loneliness and build a more connected society.

We know that the government cannot do this alone, and that everyone across society has an important role to play in tackling loneliness and supporting everyone's mental health and wellbeing. As an MP, you and your staff are in a unique position to bring together the services and activities that can help people connect in their area, so that they can work together to tackle loneliness and reach the people who need their help.

Below therefore, is a loneliness toolkit, which includes some simple actions that you can take to tackle loneliness in your constituency, along with some additional steps to support everyone's mental health and wellbeing at this time of year:

- Signpost people who are feeling lonely or worried about someone else to the [Better Health: Every Mind Matters campaign website](#) which provides practical advice on loneliness and suggested support routes, with NHS-endorsed tips to help yourself and those around you.
- Encourage people to take simple steps to help 'Lift Someone Out of Loneliness', such as inviting someone for a walk, or sending them a text.
- Share our 'Lift Someone Out of Loneliness' campaign assets to promote this message, particularly to young people aged between 16-34 who are the most likely to feel lonely but the least likely to take action to support themselves. These assets are available to download via the [Every Mind Matters website](#)
- Find out more about local services, activities and groups in your area that you can recommend to constituents who may be feeling lonely. Services and interventions for tackling loneliness can differ from place to place, but your local council website may be a good place to start. You could also find out more about the [social prescribing](#) offer from your local Primary Care Network, which can help people to connect in their community by referring them to activities that meet their needs and align with their interests.
- Bring together local organisations who play a role in tackling loneliness to talk about how they can work together in your area. This could include local GPs, health and social care providers, local authority leads, employers and charities.
- Signpost local organisations to join the [Tackling Loneliness Hub](#), a government funded digital platform with over 350 professionals working to reduce loneliness.
- Share Health Education England's [Tackling Loneliness and Social Isolation e-module](#) with local health services and volunteer organisations and ask them to encourage their staff to complete this free training on tackling loneliness.

Here are some additional steps to support everyone's mental health and wellbeing.

- On the [Every Mind Matters Website](#) there is an option to create a personalised and free NHS-approved Mind Plan. By answering 5 simple questions, adults will get an action plan with steps to help them manage stress and anxiety, boost their mood, improve their sleep and feel more in control.
- Anyone can refer themselves directly to an [NHS psychological therapies service](#), or a GP can refer. Help is available in person, by video, over the phone or as an online course.
- This [web tool](#) can also help identify mental health support, including local help.
- The [local NHS urgent mental health helplines](#) are available in England for 24-hour advice and support.
- The [Hub of Hope](#) is the UK's leading mental health support database which signposts support and lists thousands of regional and national support groups and services in the local area.
- There is also a [Mental Health First Aid training course](#) which teaches people how to identify, understand and help someone who may be experiencing a mental health issue. In order to better understand your own mental health and

that of the constituents you support, you may wish to consider training as a Mental Health First Aider.

We hope this information is helpful for you, your staff and constituents and that you can join us in taking action to tackle loneliness and improve mental health and wellbeing outcomes across the country.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Maria'.

**Maria Caulfield MP, Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State (Minister for
Mental Health and Women's Health
Strategy) at the Department of Health
and Social Care**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Andrew'.

**Rt Hon Stuart Andrew MP,
Parliamentary Under Secretary of
State (Minister for Loneliness) at the
Department for Digital, Culture,
Media and Sport**