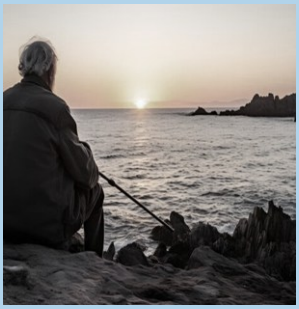
Integrated Care Matters

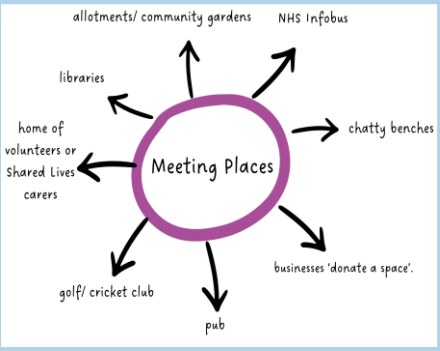
Enhancing Wellbeing and Preventing Loneliness

FLASH REPORT

257 People from 26 Countries Registered for the Webinar

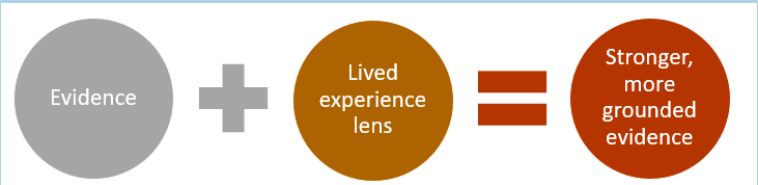


Professor Rodrigo Cardoso Bonicenha, School of Public Health, University of São Paulo spoke about his research on the experience of older adults living alone in a large metropolitan setting in Brazil. He highlighted the importance of respecting choice and autonomy, and described loss, grief and a decline in health as powerful triggers for loneliness. Policy solutions require integration of healthcare, social and psychological support alongside community planning and support for digital skills to enable older people to maintain connections.



Similar themes were highlighted by **Dr Kathryn MacKay,** Co- Delivery Lead for IMPACT Facilitator Projects, University of Stirling. She outlined a project that explored loneliness in Moray, a rural area in Scotland. Signposting to accessible, affordable meeting places and spaces is helpful but a warm handover by a trusted friend or community connector builds confidence to make that vital first step. Delegates discussed intergenerational connections, particularly in evenings and weekends which may present the greatest challenge for people who are lonely.

Rhiann McLean, Senior Strategic Improvement Coach, IMPACT, University of Stirling shared findings from an IMPACT national demonstrator project to improve the wellbeing of Personal Assistants, directly employed by disabled people and their families through a Direct Payment (Self Directed Support Option 1). The project aimed to generate grounded evidence on how to strengthen mutual relationships between Personal Assistants and their employers who may be struggling with their own wellbeing. Recommendations include establishing a peer network to help reduce isolation for Personal Assistants, provide a range of tailored emotional supports, and a pathway to pursue formal qualifications. Some of the other recommendations reflect the wider ambitions for valuing and investing in social care.



TAKE HOME MESSAGES

Good support isn't just about services – it's about having a life.

Informal networks of neighbours, friends, and pets play a crucial role.

Widowhood, separation, and "empty nest" are frequent triggers.

- Loneliness in later life can affect mental and physical health as well as quality of life
- Living alone doesn't mean being lonely. I maintain connections and don't feel weighed down by loneliness.
- There's always a neighbor, like Marisa – she lives just opposite and helps me when needed.
- Culture change is required. It would be fantastic to change our norms regarding our 'elders'
- This reflects an Asset Based Community Development approach - using the gifts of the locality
- Policies should include support for grief and rebuilding bonds.

You will find the webinar recording here

Presentation slides and Flash Report here

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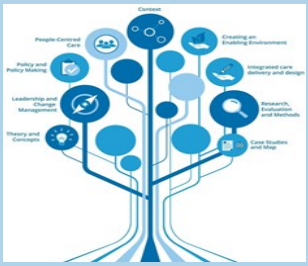
@IFICInfo #IFICScotland #ICMatters

Topic Resource



Improving Adult Care Together (IMPACT) UK centre funded by the ESRC and the Health Foundation
Mission, Vision and Work - IMPACT

PA wellbeing project
https://impact.bham.ac.uk/our-projects/demonstrators/pa-health-wellbeing/

Moray Project report:
https://impact.bham.ac.uk/delivery-models/facilitators/loneliness-among-older-people-in-rural-areas/

Befriending Networks
https://befriending.co.uk/new-international-project-to-study-active-and-healthy-ageing-in-rural-areas/

The association between loneliness and frailty among community-dwelling older adults in five European countries: a longitudinal study *Age and Ageing* 2024; **53:** afae210 https://doi.org/10.1093/ageing/afae210

Interventions associated with reduced loneliness and social isolation in older adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis. JAMA Netw Open.2022;5:e2236676–6.

The longitudinal relationship between loneliness, social isolation, and frailty in older adults in England: a prospective analysis. The Lancet Healthy Longevity. 2021; 2:(2)E70-E77 https://doi.org/10.1016/S2666-7568(20)30038-6

The Place of Kindness: Combating Loneliness and Building Stronger Communities. Ferguson, Z (2017). Carnegie UK Trust. Accessed from https://bit.ly/2tFUjiw

Local Government Association. A glass half-full: 10 years on review
https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/glass-half-full-10-years-review

Self Directed Support Scotland
https://www.sdsscotland.org.uk/