

Heneiddio'n Dda
yng Nghymru

Ageing Well
in Wales



Making a Difference

A pocket guide to help you
deal with loneliness

Ensuring Wales is a good place
to grow older for everyone

About Ageing Well in Wales

Ageing Well in Wales is a national Programme hosted by the Older People's Commissioner for Wales. It brings together individuals and communities with public, private and voluntary sectors to develop and promote innovative and practical ways to make Wales a good place to grow older for everyone.

For more information, contact us on:

Email: ageingwell@olderpeoplewales.com

Tel: 02920 445 036

Website: www.ageingwellinwales.com

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Introduction

Most of us experience loneliness at different times of our lives.

People can become lonely for many different reasons, including isolation, illness, moving to a new area, caring commitments or bereavement. Whatever the cause, there are things that can be done which make a positive difference.

This guide provides ideas on how to deal with loneliness, and contact details of organisations that can help.

Many of us can feel awkward discussing feelings of loneliness. The information in this guide can help you start conversations with friends, family or colleagues, and to talk about loneliness as it affects you or the people you care about.

For more information, visit:

www.ageingwellinwales.com/loneliness

Acknowledgements

The information in this guide is taken from the research project “[The Transient Nature of Loneliness and Social Isolation in Later Life](#)” by Dr. Deborah Morgan at Swansea University.

A full copy of the report can be requested from Swansea University.

Dr. Morgan can be contacted at d.j.morgan@swansea.ac.uk

Contacting old friends

As we get older, it's common to lose touch with people. This can especially be the case if you've been caring for someone, or have been unwell yourself.

Don't be afraid of picking up the phone and giving an old friend or colleague a call. Even if you haven't spoken to them for a long time, they'll probably understand, and be really glad to hear from you.

If you used to take part in a local social activity or club, but haven't been able to attend for a while, why not pop along and get back involved? It can be easier than you think to reconnect with people.

Making new connections

It can seem really difficult to make new friends, especially if you've just moved to a new area, or are suffering from the loss of a loved one. However, developing new friendships can be one of the best ways to tackle feelings of loneliness.

Make a list of the things you're interested in and enjoy doing. Joining a local club or group, taking up a new hobby, learning to do something new or volunteering are all great ways to meet people who are likely to have similar interests.

There are many clubs and groups dedicated to different interests. Why not get in touch with some of the organisations in the **Useful Contacts** section of this guide to find out more. Explore a little, and you might be surprised by what you find on your doorstep.

The smallest things can make a big difference

Even the smallest amount of social contact can make a difference to how you feel.

Make an effort to say hello to neighbours, or start a conversation with someone at the bus stop or supermarket.

Little things can make you feel more connected with the people around you, and help you overcome loneliness.

Don't keep it to yourself

Feeling lonely is nothing to feel ashamed of.

Nearly all of us experience loneliness at different stages of our lives.

If you don't tell anyone how you are feeling, they won't be able to help you.

You'll find details of organisations who will listen to you and who want to help in the **Useful Contacts** section of this guide.

You can also speak to friends and family about feeling lonely. You may be surprised by how much they understand and want to help you.

Caring for others

Caring for a friend or family member can be hugely rewarding, but is often very demanding.

Without support, many carers can find themselves stressed, exhausted, and lonely.

Carer's Trust provides support for carers in Wales. You can contact them at wales@carers.org or on **02920 090 087**.

The **Useful Contacts** section of this guide provides contact details for organisations which can provide help and support.

Get online

Technology can help you keep in touch with people, and make new friends.

Email and Skype can be great ways of keeping in touch, especially with younger people and those far away.

The internet can also be a really useful way of finding out about things going on in your area.

Websites such as Facebook and Twitter can help you make new friends, or to reconnect with old friends you've lost touch with.

The **Useful Contacts** section of this guide provides details of organisations which can help you get online.

Do the things that you enjoy

At times, feelings of loneliness can be overwhelming. Engaging in an activity you enjoy such as walking, reading, gardening, or listening to music can help alleviate feelings of loneliness.

Taking some time for yourself can be very rewarding. Take the opportunity to try something new or to do something you enjoy without distraction.

Faith

Many people find their faith to be a huge source of support in times of crisis.

Going to a place of worship or involving yourself in faith-based events can help you connect with like-minded people and find support during difficult phases of your life.

Focus on the good things in life

The way we think about loneliness and our own personal circumstances can have a big effect on how we feel.

Remember to take time to think about the good things in life. You may find yourself feeling more positive about your current situation.

Handling stress and anxiety

Feeling anxious about unfamiliar social situations and meeting new people is perfectly normal. While such feelings can seem overwhelming, they can be overcome.

Asking someone you know to come with you to a new event for the first time can help you feel more confident. This might be a neighbour, friend, family member, or one of the organisations listed in the **Useful Contacts** section of this booklet.

If your anxiety is really holding you back, speak to your GP, who may be able to help.

Useful Contacts

Help, advice and support

British Red Cross

02920 695 740

www.redcross.org.uk/Where-we-work/In-the-UK/Wales

Royal Voluntary Service

0845 608 0122

www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/get-help

Age Cymru

08000 223 444

www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/information-and-advice

Age Connects

0845 305 4134

www.ageconnectswales.org.uk

Support for carers

Carers Trust

02920 090 086

www.carers.org/country/carers-trust-wales-cymru

Making connections where you live

Your local Council will have services to help you locate groups and clubs in your area.

Public libraries are great places to find information about local services and opportunities.

Contact the Elderly

0800 716 543

www.contact-the-elderly.org.uk/about-us/locations/wales

Someone to talk to

The Silver Line

0800 4 70 80 90

www.thesilverline.org.uk

Confidential 24 hour help and support line for older people

Help getting online

Many local libraries provide access to computers for free or a very small charge

Get Online in Wales

0300 111 5050

getonline.digitalcommunities.gov.wales

A free online directory of public places in Wales where you can use a computer, go online and get support.

Digital Communities Wales

0300 111 5050

digitalcommunities.gov.wales

A Welsh Government project delivered by the Wales Co-operative Centre helping communities get online.

Finding services and activities near you

DEWIS

www.dewis.wales

A new online service which provides information on local groups and services related to wellbeing around Wales

Volunteering

Royal Voluntary Service

0845 608 0122

www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/volunteer

Volunteering Matters

02920 464 004

www.volunteeringmatters.org.uk/opportunity-search

Volunteering Wales

0800 2888 329

www.volunteering-wales.net

Learn a new skill

U3A

020 8466 6139

www.u3a.org.uk

Open University

0300 303 5303

www.open.ac.uk

Men's Sheds Cymru

01267 225 536

www.mensshedsymru.co.uk

Free online courses

FutureLearn

www.futurelearn.com

OpenLearn

www.open.edu/openlearn

Issues with anxiety / Health concerns

NHS Direct Wales

0845 46 47

www.nhsdirect.wales.uk

Five ways to wellbeing

The five ways to wellbeing is a set of actions that have been shown to promote wellbeing. They are simple things you can do in your everyday life:

Connect

Connect with people around you. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.

Be active

Discover a physical activity you enjoy and one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

Take notice

Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experience will help you appreciate what matters to you.

Keep learning

Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.

Give

Do something nice for a friend or a stranger. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. This can be incredibly rewarding and create connections with the people around you.

For more information, visit:

www.fivewaystowellbeing.org