

Norfolk Loneliness and Social Isolation Needs Assessment

Around **188,000** or **22%** of adults experience loneliness some of the time, often or always in Norfolk. This is projected to increase to **206,000** by **2040**.

Definition

- **Loneliness** is a perceived/subjective condition in which an individual is dissatisfied with the quality and/or quantity of their social relationships
- **Social Isolation** is an objective condition characterised by a lack of contact with other people and being disengaged from groups and social activities
- Loneliness and social isolation can often overlap, but they are not the same. While loneliness is an emotional experience, social isolation is a lack of social contact. Loneliness is a subjective feeling, whereas isolation is an objective state

Inequalities

- **1 in 3** in the most deprived areas and **1 in 5** in the least experience loneliness
- **21%** men, **28%** women and **50%** of those who do not identify as male or female experience loneliness
- **29%** of **older adults** aged **85+** report feeling lonely. While **39%** of **young adults** aged **16-24** report feeling lonely.
- **23%** of **White British** adult's report feeling lonely compared to **31%** from **other ethnic groups**

Health impacts

- **Increased** risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, poor sleep quality, chronic pain, poorer mental health
- **More likely** to access GP or hospital services
- **26%** increase likelihood of premature mortality

Risk factors

- Young people and people aged 85+ from the older age groups
- Those with poor mental wellbeing
- People with a disability or long-standing health problem
- People living alone
- Gay, lesbian, or bisexual people and people who chose 'other' when asked about their sexual orientation
- People living in more deprived areas
- People who were out of work
- Those who have recently moved to their current address
- Women, who were more likely to report feelings of loneliness than men

- People facing bereavement
- People caring for a partner
- People who are digitally excluded
- People with reduced mobility and loss of access to affordable, reliable, and/or suitable modes of transport

How much more likely are you to feel lonely?

- **5.5x** more likely to be often lonely if they don't have someone to open up to when they need to talk
- **5.2x** more likely to be often lonely if they are widowed
- **3.7x** more likely to be often lonely if they are in poor health
- **3x** more likely to be often lonely if they don't feel they belong in their neighbourhood
- **3x** more likely to be often lonely if they feel they are never able to do the things they want
- **2.6x** more likely to be often lonely if they have family circumstances that prevent them from doing the things they want to do
- **2.3x** more likely to be often lonely if they have money issues that prevent them doing the things they want to do
- **1.6x** more likely to be often lonely if they live alone

Economic impacts

- Severe loneliness costs an estimated **£9,900** per person per year
- **48%** of adults who have never worked or are in long-term unemployment experience loneliness
- Estimated to cost UK employers **£2.5 billion** per year

Produced **October 2024** by Insight & Analytics. For full details and sources, see the full needs assessment document