



# The Experience of Loneliness and Isolation amongst Older People in Dudley Borough

Age Alliance in Dudley celebrating  
International Older People's Day - 1 October 2015



Some of the team who spoke to nearly 500 people during June and July 2015 across Dudley borough about experience of loneliness and isolation

*“You’re not trained for it, so when you don’t need help you don’t look for it; then when you do need help you’re in a bad place and you don’t know where to start looking”*

Response to one of our questions about the experience of loneliness and isolation amongst older people in Dudley Borough in 2015



# ***The Experience Of Loneliness And Isolation Amongst Older People In Dudley Borough***

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## INTRODUCTION

*In celebrating Older People's Day 2015, some 100 delegates - older people from Dudley Borough and professionals working in activities which support older people - gathered at Brierley Hill Civic Hall for a major conference organised by Age Alliance in Dudley, supported in particular by our partners from Dudley Council, Healthwatch Dudley, Age UK Dudley and Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group.*

*As the theme for its activities during 2015, Age Alliance in Dudley had decided that in addition to celebrating the success of our society in supporting more people to live longer and healthier lives, we needed to find out more about the direct experience of loneliness and isolation amongst local older people across Dudley Borough.*

*We know that there have always been people through the ages who have lived long lives. Thanks to better knowledge about how to look after ourselves, better housing, and better medical treatments, more people than ever now live longer. New successes bring new challenges and this is clearly so with the growing evidence base around the complex challenge of loneliness and isolation, particularly amongst older people.*

*It is clear that loneliness is not simply an emotional experience. Research has shown that it is also directly harmful to our health. It is believed that at the national level, for example, the health effects of loneliness and isolation cost the country more than the amount of money spent on treating many illnesses such as cancer.*

*Our initial investigation was conducted through a questionnaire, which we took around the Borough during June and July 2015. Analysis of the responses to this was the preparation for our Conference in which we presented initial feedback from the questionnaires alongside insights from experts and senior leaders from our local public and voluntary sector communities and from one of our regional academic research teams. At the Conference delegates discussed the issues raised and agreed on a range of issues that they felt needed to be addressed and potential barriers to that happening.*

*This Report summarises all this activity. We are going to use it to raise awareness even further in Dudley Borough with everyone working with or on behalf of older people, asking them to note the contents and to adapt their work and activity accordingly to help us minimise the experience of loneliness and isolation in Dudley Borough as far as is possible. If you feel you can be more involved in helping us with this, please do get in touch.*

*Age Alliance in Dudley is a flexible, informal partnership bringing together older people themselves and organisations drawn from across the public, voluntary and private sectors within the Borough [See Appendix 3 for the Alliance's Terms of Reference].*

*Although a wide range of Alliance members have supported the current initiative on loneliness and isolation, I would like to acknowledge in particular, the financial support of Dudley MBC, Dudley CCG and the West Midlands Later Life Forum, as well as the total commitment and practical support of individual representatives of Dudley MBC, Age UK Dudley, Healthwatch Dudley, a number of Health and Social Care students from Dudley College and local older people themselves through our Forum of Older People.*

*We commend the Report to you and invite your support, in whatever way possible, in trying to reduce the experience of loneliness and isolation amongst older people in Dudley Borough.*

**Keith Sherman**

*Chair – Age Alliance in Dudley.*

*Chair – Forum of Older People in Dudley.*



## **1.0 CELEBRATING THE LIVES OF OLDER PEOPLE**

1<sup>st</sup> October has been designated as National Older People's Day in the United Kingdom for some years.

A website promotes the Day (at: <http://olderpeoplesday.co.uk/>) The Day aims to celebrate the achievements and contributions that older people make to our society and tackle negative attitudes and outdated stereotypes.

In the UK, this has been seen as important because people are living longer. By 2035, it is expected that 23% of the UK population will be aged 65. 2008 was also the year in which the number of people aged over 65 out-numbered those aged under 16.

This is a cause for celebration. It is also a cause for reflection and action.

## **2.0 HOW MANY OLDER PEOPLE ARE THERE IN DUDLEY BOROUGH?**

About 314,000 people live in the Borough of Dudley.

In this number, a 2014 mid-year estimate states that the number of people aged 60+ in Dudley is 80,570.

3.2% of this number are from Black and Minority Ethnic groups (2.0% Asian, 0.2% mixed, 0.8% black, 0.2% other.)

18.1% (just under 15,000) of this age-band live in the most deprived areas of the Borough.<sup>1</sup>

## **3.0 CELEBRATING OLDER PEOPLE'S DAY IN DUDLEY**

Older People's Day has been celebrated in Dudley Borough for some years, generally through a programme of linked events. Most recently these events have been linked to a theme of concern to older people such as safety.

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<sup>1</sup> *All About Dudley Borough* – available at:  
<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/community/initiatives/health-wellbeing/>

In addition and linked to the theme, “Pledges” have been sought and given from public sector and voluntary agencies in Dudley Borough about actions which they commit to doing to make life better for older people in the Borough.

These activities in Dudley Borough have been sponsored by “Age Alliance in Dudley.” This is an informal partnership which brings together a number of older people’s groups in Dudley Borough with provider agencies from across all sectors to discuss issues affecting older people in Dudley Borough and agree actions collectively and individually.

#### **4.0 OLDER PEOPLE’S DAY DUDLEY 2015**

The purpose of celebrating Older People’s Day in Dudley 2015 was:

- To **celebrate**:
  - The achievement of more people living longer, healthier lives.
  - The experience and contribution of older people across all of the different groups living in Dudley regardless of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status or any other relevant identity factor.
- To **raise awareness** of:
  - Available services for older people.
  - The theme and challenge of **LONELINESS AND ISOLATION** in old age selected by Age Alliance for the two years 2014/15 and 2015/16.
- To **note the outcomes** of the **PLEDGES** made by Age Alliance members for 2014/15.

#### **5.0 WHAT WE SET OUT TO DO**

On the theme of “Loneliness and isolation,” the Age Alliance decided to do two things:

- (1) to undertake some informal research about the experience of older people of loneliness and isolation in Dudley Borough
- (2) to hold a Conference on Older People’s Day, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015.

The agreed aims of these two approaches were:

- to learn more about the experience of older people living in Dudley Borough of loneliness and isolation;
- to feedback to local citizens and agencies the outcome of that learning;
- to influence:
  - The public in Dudley Borough in their behaviour and attitude.
  - Service commissioners and providers as they shape or provide services and support in Dudley Borough.

Supported by Dudley Council, a Prospectus for the approach was established and refined through discussion led by the Alliance.

Age Alliance in Dudley then led the activity supported by agencies such as Age UK, Dudley Healthwatch, Dudley Council and Dudley NHS Clinical Commissioning Group.

As such, it is an excellent example of what is referred to as “Co-production” i.e. producing something together. This is important because it is not the Council or central government telling people how things will be. Older people themselves have led this initiative through the arrangements we have.

We understood that loneliness and isolation can be a complex problem. It was not our intention to raise unrealistic expectations about actions to address any loneliness and isolation amongst older people in Dudley Borough. Our Questionnaire is included at Appendix A.

Age Alliance was determined through this initiative to reach out to older people who may be lonely and isolated. Where appropriate, information was given to respondents about relevant local services. We planned for our Questionnaire to be completed in three ways during June, July and August, as follows:

- volunteers attending six town-centre locations across Dudley Borough (equivalent to about 36 hours time allocated)
- on-line availability using “*Survey Monkey*” (“hosted” by Healthwatch Dudley)
- use of local networks e.g. through Dudley Council’s Race Equality & Communications Team and the West Midlands Fire Service

A wide range of volunteers participated in the survey primarily from:

- Age UK Dudley
- Dudley Council – Adult Social Care and Library Services

- Dudley College (young students from Health & Social Care course)
- Healthwatch Dudley
- The Forum of Older People in Dudley

Locations and dates on which the Questionnaire was administered were as follows, and we would like to sincerely thank all of these for their support in this:

Session	Date	Location
1	25 <sup>th</sup> June	Halesowen – Cornbow Centre
2	3 <sup>rd</sup> July	Dudley – Churchill Precinct
3	10 <sup>th</sup> July	Sedgley – Cooperative Supermarket
4	16 <sup>th</sup> July	Merry Hill Centre
5	23 <sup>rd</sup> July	Stourbridge – Ryemarket
6	31 <sup>st</sup> July	Kingswinford - Cooperative Supermarket

### Limitations:

The aim of our investigation was a modest one. We wanted to get an impression of how things are for older people living in Dudley Borough. We did not aim to meet academic standards!

We have certainly ‘learned by doing.’ We would have done some things differently if we had thought of them at the start. We may have chosen, for example, different locations to ask our questions or phrased the questions slightly differently. We are certainly aware that we have much more work to do over the coming months to try to make contact with those local older people whose isolation is linked to their not using the locations that we chose.

## 6.0 THE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

There were six main questions about people’s experience of loneliness and isolation in Dudley Borough. There was also opportunity to give extra comment to the answers given.

We asked some further questions about the people who kindly responded to our questionnaire such as their age, gender, ethnicity and other questions about access to information. **We are very grateful to all those who gave us their time.**

We also provided some information about services provided in Dudley Borough such as Age UK Dudley’s Befriending scheme

A total of **477** questionnaires were completed. Responses to the questions were as follows:-

## Q1 How often do you feel lonely [in the sense that you don't have the level of companionship that you would like] ?

*Why did we ask this question?*

This is a question that has been used in professional research to measure the occurrence of loneliness amongst those surveyed.<sup>2</sup> That report argued that there is a link between the experience of isolation and earlier mortality. We wanted to find out what older people's experiences in Dudley Borough are.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
hardly ever or never	57.4%	273
some of the time	30.3%	144
Often	12.4%	59
Can you tell us about that		340
<b>answered question</b>		<b>476</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>1</b>

### What does the information tell us?

Nearly 13% of respondents replied that they “often” felt lonely. If we applied this to our 80,570 figure for older people aged 60+ in Dudley Borough this would mean that over 10,000 older people often feel lonely in Dudley Borough. This is a lot of people.

Just over 30% stated that they felt lonely “some of the time.” It can be hard to interpret this kind of figure. It may be considered that some experience of loneliness is “natural” and not a cause for concern.

However, if it were a concern, we could construct an argument to claim that over 40% of older people in Dudley Borough feel lonely “often or some of the time.” This would apply to about 32,000 people which significantly increases the potential scale of the problem.

Nearly 60% of respondents did not feel lonely when they responded to the question. This is good news and we need to learn from the factors that have helped them to avoid this experience.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.pnas.org/content/110/15/5797.full> and cf.

<http://www.nhs.uk/news/2013/03march/pages/social-isolation-increases-death-risk-in-older-people.aspx>

## What more have we learned?

When asked to expand on their initial response, participants made over 300 comments. This gives more insight into their responses. Not all the responses are included here, but some common themes which emerged were:

**Being a Carer** - How living with someone who has dementia specifically can create loneliness and isolation as well as the effects of being a Carer:

- *Having a wife with **Alzheimer's** prevents any real conversations, I would like to attend more carers meetings but it's really difficult if I can't find support for my wife either at home or in a way that allows her to come with me.*
- *During the evening when my husband has gone to bed about 7.30-8.00. He has vascular **dementia** and so is not able to sensibly discuss and matters that we would have normally discussed together.*
- *My husband has **Alzheimer's** so we can't have a proper conversation any more.*
- *I am no longer a carer. My wife died 7 years ago. I looked after her for 18 years. The last 8 years she was totally disabled, Parkinson's and 2 strokes. I was tied down 24/7, completely, I was alone every night. 'Crossroads' sat with my wife during the day but evenings were a no go. From 7.00pm to 7.00am I was completely on my own, so I know what loneliness is.*

**Changed life patterns** including bereavement can have an effect on an older person's perceptions about and experience of loneliness and isolation

- *As I live alone, I often feel lack of companionship when I am alone at home. I do have two visitors - my brother visits once a week and a lady from Age UK Good Neighbour scheme once a fortnight.*
- *After 55 years of marriage it was hard having to make decisions on my own and not having someone to discuss them with. Friends and family are good but there are still times when you feel lonely.*
- *Divorced, live alone, initially don't know what I would do - through social networking groups I established a new set of friends (advertised in local newspaper).*
- *I have lost my wife, at present I have my daughter with me but she lives in Australia and is going home soon. I have another daughter and hopefully she will help.*
- *After losing Mom and Dad who I lived with all my life I feel lonely and think of them a lot.*
- *Lost partner in February, married for 66 years.*
- *I miss my husband.*

**Gender roles** – people may experience the challenge of loneliness and isolation differently depending on their gender

- *Tends to be mostly women in general, men tend not to communicate and network. The ladies don't tend to include men in their network.*

**Feeling frightened in locality** – combinations of factors can increase the likelihood of living in a way which creates loneliness and isolation

- *Dark nights, evenings.*
- *I am frightened of being alone, I have a personal alarm but I need companionship, someone to talk to. I have difficulty moving around and I am scared to go outside without help, I have lost a lot of confidence in doing everyday things.*
- *I feel lonely when I can't get out because of the weather. I feel most lonely of an evening and at the weekends when my gardener doesn't come. All my family live down south, I speak on the phone with them twice a week.*
- *When you wake up in the morning and realise that there is only you there - I also find it hard at night. I have family I see regularly, a son and a sister, my son can't work so he is able to see me every day but he isn't there all the time.*

**Perspectives from a care home/sheltered housing:** - It's a sad fact that people can continue to experience feelings of loneliness and isolation even when it looks as if their care needs are being met such as when living in a care home:

- *I live in a care home with 36 residents but when I am alone in my own room and have time to think I miss my family. It's frustrating not being able to do jobs that I used to do and not being able to go out and see the sights and family and friends.*
- *I live in a sheltered housing complex, I have large family living nearby who visit me and I have loads of friends. I run a luncheon club at the church and help at another one. I volunteer at a charity shop one day a week.*

**Subjective feelings** – being alone is not the same as feeling lonely and people respond in different ways.

- *In a room full of people that I know slightly I find it difficult to make approaches unless they approach me first.*
- *I feel lonely at nights and sometimes during the day because I am on my own and not in good health and I am unable to move about as I would like to.*
- *I feel low, depressed and compare myself with others who are not lonely.*
- *Me and my husband live in the family but we are alone.*
- *Happy in my own company.*

**Appropriate provision** – some comments drew attention to the need for the whole community to find ways of addressing people's experience better. New forms of community which mitigate against loneliness:

- *Miss company. No social clubs - own age.*
- *Weekends - all of the groups run Mon-Fri daytime. Would be nice to get out of an evening or Sat-Sun*
- *I would welcome the opportunity to meet with similarly minded people to help me do the things that I find interesting - like a motor club or music group*
- *Even when you have people/family around you, there can be times when you need help and they are all busy with their own problems. What you need is something to occupy the mind so you don't feel lonely – tea time-ish you need someone to come in so you can have a chat.*
- *I am involved with Halesowen Asian Elders which keeps me occupied. When I am not at the Centre, I do feel lonely sometimes*

**Effects of changing physical health** – change of experience of health status may affect an older person's abilities to live as they had done previously. Maintaining health and wellbeing is a key factor in supporting people to avoid experience of loneliness and isolation.

- *Loss of a driving licence due to an eye condition has meant loss of independence.*
- *You've lost all your friends at our age, children haven't got time for you and they live away.*
- *I have my wife, a big family with whom I am in frequent contact even though some of them live a very long way away, I also have good friends who share my interests and with whom I can share a good 'moan' about politics and politicians. I am lucky I still have my mobility, I can still drive and I can still garden, the light stuff anyway, go for walks, and I can still read and listen to music. We are lucky in that we live close to a good set of shops and I know some of the traders well.*
- *People say they would like to keep in touch but have other pressures and so don't.*

**New social media** - can be used to counter effects of loneliness and isolation but TV is not seen as the answer to isolation.

- *Live on my own, daughter lives away, see son occasionally - if I really needed him, he would be there. I use Facebook to keep up with my daughter. I text friends and family all the time.*
- *Once my son or daughter has gone to their families, jobs etc., there is just emptiness. Television etc. is NO help.*



**Volunteering / feeling involved** - can mitigate the effects of loneliness and isolation:

- *I volunteer for Age UK Dudley, shopmobility scheme and telephone buddy scheme.*
- *Active, involved. Was in army for 15 years. Run a football side for youngsters. Have done voluntary work, keep myself busy.*
- *I am active and have family and friends locally. I belong to a caring church and received valued support in times of need from church members and family.*
- *I belong to 3 choirs, and go to Age UK – I made new friends and feel like they care, I have got a husband and family.*
- *I meet people sometimes, there is a volunteer who visits me each week but that is all.*
- *I don't feel lonely because I can go to the Temple Community Centre.*

**Employment** – having a job can help an older person feel less isolated and lonely and there some reference to this throughout responses given. The data and projections in the 2011 DMBE Economic Assessment point to a smaller working population but with increased caring/financial responsibility for ageing population. So if companionship is provided to some in the work place this may reduce the longer term benefits for the generations coming through. However, on the positive side, there will be fewer people “At Work” so there is potential for the family unit being able to help out with caring and support for older family members if they live close by.

**Family and friends** – older people valued the support experienced through family and friends but also felt the effects of their absence through work commitments

- *Family and friends.*
- *Friends I see every day. I come to Merry Hill regularly and we meet.*
- *I am alone since my husband died, but I am so busy that I feel the opposite to loneliness - I wish people would leave me alone.*
- *Family at work.*

**Transport** - access to affordable and flexible transport is seen as a way of mitigating the effects of the experience of loneliness and isolation

- *I live on my own. I am a widow and a pensioner. When the front door is locked at night there is no one I can discuss the daily doings with. Without transport I cannot meet people in the evenings.*
- *I can drive. I get out to the garden centres and I have my daughter.*

**Time of day** -

- *At night.*
- *Mostly winter nights when I am on my own, when my son goes to work.*

## Q2 If you did feel lonely, would you have people you could turn to?

*Why did we ask this question?*

We realised that feeling lonely sometimes might be seen to be “part of life.” Therefore, what might be more important is whether or not older people in Dudley Borough had someone to turn to.

Therefore, we thought it important to understand if the older people we spoke to had anyone to turn to.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Definitely	71.6%	336
Perhaps	17.7%	83
I don't think so	10.7%	50
Can you tell us about them		360
<b>answered question</b>		<b>469</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>8</b>

### What does the information tell us?

The overwhelming majority of people (nearly 90%) we spoke to for this investigation stated that they either “definitely” or “perhaps” had someone to turn to if they felt lonely or isolated.

This must be seen as very encouraging. We do not know how it compares with other areas and that might be interesting to know. This would give us a better idea about whether or not Dudley Borough has greater or less “social capital” (i.e. family, friends or neighbours who are supportive) than other areas.

Just over 10% stated that they didn’t think that they would have anyone to turn to if they experienced isolation or loneliness. This may mean that as many as about 8,000 people amongst the 80,000 people aged over 60 in Dudley Borough would not have anyone to turn to. We do not know if this figure is greater or less than previous times. Therefore, it is hard to judge if the situation has worsened or got better.

Nevertheless, 8,000 older people in Dudley Borough feeling that they would not have anyone to turn to is a significant figure. Being and feeling isolated and lonely can have a negative impact on people’s health and wellbeing in a variety of ways. For instance, they may be more likely to be admitted to hospital in circumstances which other people

are not because they have the support of family, friends or neighbours. If this view is correct, it is a reminder to us of the need to continue and extend our efforts to minimise loneliness and isolation.

### **What more have we learned?**

People who answered our questions added some reflections to the answers which they gave on whether or not they would have someone to turn to if they felt lonely or isolated.

Many said that they could turn to *relatives, family, friends or neighbours*. Some commented on the locality of these support e.g. if a son lived locally or a daughter lived far away (*"family all live away"*) then that affected what could happen.

However, one person said *"I don't have contact with family."*

***Living situation*** – one person said that she/he had *"friends in the apartments that I live in."*

***Intergenerational support*** – in addition to family support, there were examples of neighbours helping and paying attention to older people in their community:

- *I have a young neighbour who lives across the road and she is very good to me.*

Some were aware of, and actively used *local services or support networks* such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Age Concern Sedgley, Age UK volunteers, and family doctors to whom people would turn if they felt lonely or isolated

- *Age UK but they moved from Stafford Street.*
- *Clubs at the local community centre (Wordsley Green).*
- *I have carers who come in 3 times a week and a telephone buddy and visitor from Age UK and I now live in Warden controlled flat.*
- *I don't have any help except from Social Services, 12 months ago I asked for help and they have been really good, they have sorted out the shower in the bath, now I have a swivel seat and that makes things much easier, and a hand rail and grab rails by the door. I have bought a stair lift and that is really good.*
- *I have two daughters who both work so they can't be with me all the time but they do telephone me. I have a carer who visits but she only stays for a short time and its never the same person who comes so you can't become friends with them. I have an Age UK visitor for one hour each week.*
- *Care Home perspective: The people in the home have a listening ear and are always ready to help lift our spirits*

**Networks** – different kinds of networks or communities gave older people a feeling of support. For instance those formed in churches or through a pub. The effects of loss of old friends and networks was noted.

- *friends in the pub helped me through illness [that's when you need people].*
- *I have lost a lot of friends who have moved into homes or developed dementia, but I have a friend who I go to town with every week.*
- *My one friend has recently gone into a home and I have lost contact with her, I don't know anyone else.*

There were many references to church communities and chapels as well as temples and community centres

- *Church members.*
- *My faith - I turn to God when I have a problem.*
- *It helps when I can attend the Carers African Caribbean Day Centre which I can meet my friends.*
- *We talk, we laugh and eat together, we spend time together and our friendship increased in the centre.*
- *I talk with my friend when we meet at the community centre or Sikh temple.*

**Technologies** – there were numerous references to old technologies (newspapers!) and new ones such as use of the computer which could assist in turning to others for help if they felt lonely or isolated. However, not everyone agreed that technologies were always a panacea.

- *One or two friends who I can talk to on the phone.*
- *I am ...computer literate and used to finding things out for myself.*
- *I can also speak to them on the telephone.*
- *Networks found through local paper. Perhaps on line..*
- *There is also a helpline system in the apartments direct to the manager that is very helpful.*
- *Telephone calls to family do not seem to help much.*
- *My family phone from Jamaica which can be costly.*
- *I only watch TV.*

**Subjective effort** – it is acknowledged that people react in different ways to challenges in their lives. For some people, it is important to get out and meet new people

- *I have always put myself out to meet people.*
- *That's why I joined clubs to get companionship.*
- *Give a friend a ring.*
- *Looked at Age UK website/ joined library/ looked at volunteering.*

- *Mostly friends in the same position and the telephone enables you to chat. You have to go out as much as possible but everything you join costs money. You have to pay to get jobs done you can't do yourself.*
- *My faith - I turn to God when I have a problem - and friends.*
- *Fortunately, I have a woman friend now, who I met through the PDS branch so things are better now.*

**Subjective feelings** – some subjective feelings which may limit actions which might enable older people to respond to feelings of loneliness and isolation were noted –

- *Do not want to worry family.*
- *Children grown up - do come to visit but they have their own lives.*
- *Could do with own counsellor.*
- *There isn't anyone else but I mostly try to sort out things for myself.*
- *I do not like bothering people.*
- *I do have friends I could turn to but I'm not sure I would.*
- *I could occasionally pop in on a neighbour for a cup of tea but I sometimes felt I was intruding.*
- *I feel that I have no-one to for advice on any decision.*
- *People tend not to want to get involved with you, they are too busy with their own affairs and pretend that your problem isn't happening.*

**Mobility/Transport** – issues were raised as contributory factors to loneliness and isolation

- *Used buses - just travelling around and looking at things, speaking to people occasionally, just getting out of house.*
- *Regrettable having no travel means I'm house bound most of the time cannot afford taxis to see friends.*

**Positive influence of work** – was noted as an antidote to loneliness and isolation

- *..... work colleagues.*
- *I miss the companionship of work.*

**Unintended states of mind** – ie. things which people did not intend which could lead to experience of loneliness and isolation

- *I am very forgetful now so I don't really know at all.*
- *Depression sets in without a support network.*
- *You're not trained for it so when you don't need help you don't look for it, then when you do need help you're in a bad place and you don't know where to start.*

**Political factors** – were asserted

- *I guess any of the charities but they are being squeezed on budgets and are being taken in the Government's agenda instead of what local needs are. I find that depressing.*

**Effect on health**

- *When I feel lonely, I turn to cigarettes because no one is available to talk to.*

**Q3 Do you know of an older person in Dudley Borough who you think is lonely – that is they don't have the level of companionship that they would like or need?**

***Why did we ask this question?***

*We thought that not many people would not feel that they were lonely i.e. it was beyond their own experience. Also, we thought that younger people who answered our questions might need to be given the chance to explain their views.*

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Definitely	22.7%	106
Perhaps	24.0%	112
I don't think so	53.2%	248
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>466</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>11</b>

**What does the information tell us?**

Nearly 47% of respondents stated that they “definitely” or “perhaps” knew of an older person in Dudley Borough who they thought was lonely. As has been noted from other responses mentioned above, this could be a large group of people.

It reminds us of the constant challenge that we appear to have on the theme of loneliness and isolation in Dudley and the need to try and do more to address it.

Some of the statements made below echo the findings that we have established through our earlier questions

## **What more did we learn?**

People offered some reasons why they think that the person concerned was isolated or lonely as follows

### ***Family relationships***

- *Has a daughter who lives just round the corner but she doesn't seem to provide any support.*

### ***Changes in health status***

- *A friend who because of changes in health no longer mixes with others.*

### ***Insufficient service***

- *Activities are not available frequently enough, mobility is an issue and she can't get to places easily.*
- *I met him in the chemist and got chatting. He said no-one came to see him so I told him about Age UK. He contacted them but was told because he was able to get out of the house no-one would come and visit him!!!*
- *Goes to a couple of clubs but they close during holidays and they aren't there in the evenings.*

### ***Mental health***

- *Aged 94 with dementia*
- *Brother - suffers from depression and lives alone Does not socialise well*
- *Lives on her own, suffers with her nerves.*

### ***Unemployment***

- *Lonely due to depression because of illness and unemployment.*

### ***Alcoholism***

- *Cousin Alcoholic; no Vehicle; Drinks; health and mobility issues; far from bus route*

### ***Transport/mobility***

- *Elderly gentleman (89) with no family locally - still driving just, but now has macular degeneration and will have to give up driving very soon.*
- *Mother is now 92 - has never driven so after husband died had to rely on other friends who have now passed away - all those networks have gone.*

### ***Bereavement/changing family patterns***

- *A neighbour who has lost his wife has no family nearby;*

- *Cousin - widowed, Friend - divorced, Friend - ageing bachelor, neighbour - separated: in each case the breakdown of relationships they have relied on leaves them isolated and lost.*

### **Other**

- *Lady - sits on bench every day in Churchill Precinct.*
- *Homeless people - some get help from shelters, but not many.*

### **Attitude**

- *I have met people who say that they are lonely but they are not prepared to go to a club as they don't know anybody there.*
- *If they don't come to me, I go to them. I sit on my doorstep and chat - we help one another in that way.*
- *Lives alone, but has family but lacks will to get out, so although has children who visit, spends a lot of time alone.*
- *Meets other people in community events who talk about themselves - need to find an 'inner calm'.*
- *My father...due to ill health his social contacts have decreased enormously but he won't allow us to help - he likes what he likes and is stubborn, he almost shuts people out.*
- *People are afraid to start the conversation, they are afraid that it will turn into a commitment.*
- *She doesn't make it easy, she is reluctant to have people into her house so doesn't get to know about the help that might be available.*

### **Gender**

- *Men sometimes struggle to make or ask for help.*

### **Coping with change**

- *My friend's husband died and they did everything together. She cannot drive and does not know how to pay bills and had difficulty answering the phone and frightened to answer the door if anyone comes.*



#### **Q4 If you do know someone who you think is lonely, is that person a:**

*Why did we ask this question?*

*We wanted to ascertain the closeness of the relationship to the person answering our questions. Generally, we thought that we could assume that if the person was a relative, for instance, then there may be more likelihood that they go some attention. We knew this would not always be the case, however. In addition, we thought that people are often more observant than we might think.*

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Relative	8.1%	36
Friend	11.1%	49
Neighbour	16.5%	73
Other	11.7%	52
Not Applicable	52.6%	233
Are you able to tell us about them (please do not use their name):		175
<b>answered question</b>		<b>443</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>34</b>

#### **What does the information tell us?**

There may be some missing data on this question which will tell us more. We will check on that.

But about 35% of the people who answered our questions stated that the person they thought was isolated or lonely was a “relative, friend or neighbour.”

These are all different types of relationships and can be hard to clearly state what the implications are. There may be many factors at play such as personality, family disagreements, degree of closeness to the respondent, etc.

It may be that this area is one where we could conduct further investigations so that we understand the contact between people in Dudley Borough better.

#### **Comments included:**

- I know there are organisations that can help, but I do not know how to get in touch. It seems the only way to do anything is ‘on line’ and I am not computer literate.*
- Asian ladies and men.*

## **Q5 If another older person told you they were often lonely, would you know of anyone ,or any organisation, that might be able to help or advise them?**

*Why did we ask this question?*

*We know that there are a number of activities and services in Dudley Borough in which older people may choose to engage. Some of them are advertised and well known but some may not be well known. Learning about people's responses would help understand the effectiveness of a variety of services and organisations.*

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Definitely	34.5%	152
Perhaps	33.1%	146
I don't think so	32.4%	143
Can you tell us about that person or organisation:		315
<b>answered question</b>		<b>441</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>36</b>

### **What does the information tell us?**

Over 67% of people knew of someone or an organisation which might be able to help or advise an older person who said that they were lonely.

This means that a majority of respondents could think of how a lonely or isolated older person might be assisted further.

The fact that just under a third at 33% weren't sure of how to help encourages us to make sure that we advertise the services and support which are available as much as possible.

### **What more did we learn?**

Over 100 respondents identified Age UK Dudley, Age Concern Stourbridge and Halesowen and Age Concern Sedgley and their services.

Other sources of support included:

- British Legion
- CAB
- Bangladeshi Development Group
- Brett Young Day Centre
- WRVS
- Church denominations including the Chinese Church
- Crossroads

- Dudley Chinese Community Association
- Fa Yue Buddhist Monastery
- Forum for Older People
- Halesowen Asian Elders Centre
- Samaritans
- Social Services
- Sons of Rest
- SSAFA
- Stroke Association
- University of the Third Age
- Community Centres, temples and mosques

There was one comment which made a link between experience of loneliness and hospital admission:

- *“If someone keeps going to the hospital or the doctors they may not be ill – just lonely and they should refer to other agencies for them to visit.”*

## **Q6 Can you think of ways in which everyone could do things better in the Borough to help prevent loneliness and isolation?**

*Why did we ask this question?*

*We thought that people might have new ideas about how new approaches to counter the effects of loneliness and isolation.*

Answer Options	Response Count
	405
<i>answered question</i>	<b>405</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>72</b>

### **What does the information tell us?**

There were many suggestions. Some asked for more of activities which are already going on such as clubs, day activities and the like. Other responses focused on attitude.

The response of one person was perhaps a challenge to our thinking on the issue of loneliness and isolation when it was stated: *“... I can’t help thinking that we have a responsibility to make the best of our life circumstances and to try to stay interested in the world about us and to enjoy small things. There seems to be plenty of “drop in*

*centres", clubs and such like if that's what people want. WE DO NOT HAVE THE RIGHT NOT TO BE LONELY (sic)."*

Another person described loneliness as *"a big killer"* and said that *"the council should look into their isolation, they are suffering inside."*

Other comments provided included:

### ***Information and marketing–***

- *More communication - more information available through libraries. I use the computers in the library but what about those people who don't/can't use a computer, there is a notice board but aren't enough up to date notices about what's going on.*
- *Are the services that are available sufficiently advertised not just on line, is there perhaps a phone service where people can talk to someone.*
- *Advertise - make sure doctors surgeries advertise events/places to go. Schemes to co-ordinate neighbourhood friendliness e.g. adopt a granny - getting young people involved in meeting and helping older, isolated, people - living alone, housebound etc.*
- *Door to door call or post or call in Wordsley Community to have a look around and maybe ask what is there for me and see what is going on.*
- *Ask for volunteers.*
- *I haven't had to use many services yet so I don't really know - I have used the traders directory from Age UK and that was very helpful.*
- *I know there are churches but I don't know about anything else. There should be more information and not just on the computer.*

### ***Be a good neighbour***

- *Be more neighbourly.*
- *Be aware of people around and help where each of us can.*

### ***Fear & safety***

- *Fear of crime - address shootings.*
- *Improve house safety of people living on their own. Neighbourhood watch.*

### ***Looking after yourself / attitude***

- *Everyone should look after themselves with health and money.*
- *For someone like me with prostate problems the lack of decent public toilets is a nightmare. For my wife who has bad arthritis there are never public seats where she can rest when she needs to, so for other older people who have to rely on public transport it must be really difficult.*
- *I am healthy and mobile and keep myself busy so I have never had to find out what's out there.*

- *People have to be proactive, if you are housebound that is more difficult I know so we need volunteer drivers who can take people to places they would need to get to. Make more use of local libraries - what about free cookery classes, and the parks - exercise, walks all free. Churches need to do more and be more inclusive.*
- *It depends on the level of loneliness but most people want someone to come to them to talk or maybe do a bit of shopping, someone to show that they care, but it has to be someone with a friendly demeanour and voice. I think that in care homes they can be lonely - in your 80s and 90s living with others after being in your own home must be difficult.*
- *People have to get out of the house - have something to look forward to, weekly or monthly activities be creative hard to motivate yourself on your own Wary of things online - everything now online - much better to get to meet people face to face Most therapeutic thing can be to help other people. People could help each other more. Learning something new.*

## **Services**

- *Befriending Service; Telephone Listening Service; encouraging good neighbourship/community.*
- *Better provision of day centres, exercise classes, day trips, home visitors*
- *Central help, somewhere to go. Age UK moved too far.*
- *Coffee mornings.*
- *Cut the grass.*
- *Get people together for a reason.*
- *If people are visited by officials check on them at the same time.*
- *More provision for disabled, more clean public toilets, more seats in shopping areas, more affordable Ring and Ride.*
- *The mobile library service used to come with a big van and you could look through the books and find new things - but now you have to guarantee 15 people to use the van which is difficult so now we have to give them a list of books and they bring them to us but it just isn't the same.*
- *More community centres and activities; help to break the barriers like cultural differences, language.*
- *People who can work with them, they can understand their feeling, can speak their language.*

## **Technologies**

- *I know that I should really try to make some use of a computer but I don't know where to start, I'm not even sure what it would cost me and I would need help to set it up and to use it - I don't want to do a course I want somebody to help me at home.*

- *Find a way of stopping nuisance telephone calls. I have a modern mobile phone but I don't really know how to use it, are there any courses for that sort of thing.*
- *Have a way of offering regular phone calls to older people.*
- *I have a computer but I don't use it - I don't really know how to but I don't really know what I would use it for, I've managed perfectly well so far without it. People tell me that there is all sorts of stuff I could do but I would need somebody to show me how and I don't want to go on a course to find out, maybe someone could come to my house.*

## **Gender**

- *Its harder for men to find things to do, if you go to day clubs and classes its mostly women and they want to talk about women things, its probably too late for me now but it might have been good if there was a group that met in a pub for example - you could play darts or dominoes or crib and then you'd have someone to talk to. We need more seats so I can have a rest when I go out to do some shopping.*
- *Men in sheds - why not one in Dudley? Support for exercise programmes and activity programmes.*
- *Not a great deal about for men - there are social groups & exercise groups, but it tends to be women who go to those.*
- *Somewhere for men to go, I tried a social group but it was all women and I felt really out of place so I didn't go again, I need to be able to talk about football and things like that with people who have the same interests.*

## **Transport**

- *Better bus services.*
- *Better transport links, I have appointments at the Corbett Treatment Centre but getting there by public transport is complicated and time consuming.*
- *Better transport, particularly related to health matters, lack of services in the Halesowen area particularly for screening, the professionals just presume you can get to Brierley Hill, for example.*
- *Get more information - someone from the clubs going out. Transport to and from. Frightened to go out at night-time.*

## **Other ideas**

- *Encourage people to have pets.*
- *I can't cope with work groups, I need one to one. I need someone who I can trust. Need to get out of the house to go to clubs but I don't know where they are - I'd be willing to show other people the things I can do like knitting.*
- *Make access more local, everything is in Wolverhampton or Dudley not local.*

- *Get together, meet and talk and find solution to help break loneliness and isolation.*
- *Join groups, mix with people.*

### **Satisfied!**

- *Can't really think of anything - Kingswinford is a great place to live.*
- *Dudley Borough is good. I believe housing areas with a mixed age range are helpful.*

## **WHO ANSWERED OUR QUESTIONS?**

We asked some questions about the people who responded so that we would understand something about their background.

### **Q7 GENDER How would you describe your gender?**

*Why did we ask this question?*

People's experience can be affected by their gender. This can be positive or negative.

We wanted to try and get a balance of responses which reflected the gender make-up of the 50,000 older people in Dudley which is about 49% men and about 51% women.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Female	60.6%	282
Male	36.1%	168
Trans	0.0%	0
Prefer not to say	3.2%	15
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>465</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>12</b>

*What is the information telling us?* More women than men answered.

This means that our impression may not be as full as we would have wanted. Sometimes, people say that men are more reluctant to talk about their feelings than women. This means they may not say if they feel lonely.

## Q8 AGE

**Why did we ask this question?** Although our main focus was older people, the thoughts of everyone else in Dudley Borough matter. Younger people may be supporting an older relative, for instance. They will also want things to be better for themselves when they are older.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Under 55	7.8%	37
55 - 64	11.6%	55
65 - 74	30.9%	146
75 - 84	37.0%	175
85 +	12.1%	57
Prefer not to say	0.6%	3
<b>answered question</b>		<b>473</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>4</b>

## Q9 POST CODE

### Why did we ask this question?

18.1% (just under 12,000) of the 80,000 people aged over 60 live in the most deprived areas of Dudley Borough.<sup>3</sup> We visited locations across the Borough to get as wide a sample as possible.

The start of the Post Codes of people who responded to our questions were as set out below.

This information requires further analysis to check the extent to which we were able to talk to people from a cross-section of our communities.

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<sup>3</sup> *All About Dudley Borough* – available at:  
<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/community/initiatives/health-wellbeing/>



B62	15	3.52%
B63	42	9.86%
DY	1	0.23%
DY1	17	3.99%
DY2	28	6.57%
DY3	67	15.73%
DY4	9	2.11%
DY5	41	9.62%
DY6	63	14.79%
DY7	5	1.17%
DY8	72	16.90%
DY9	30	7.04%
DY10	2	0.47%
WV14	8	1.88%
Post Code Outside Borough - Birmingham	18	4.14%
Post Code Outside Borough - Telford	1	0.23%
Post Code Outside Borough - Wolverhampton	7	1.61%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### Q10 Number of People in Household

#### Why did we ask this question?

Arguably by definition, if there is more than one person in the household of a respondent then the less likelihood there is of them being lonely or isolated.

No in household	No responding	%age
1	191	44.63%
2	181	42.29%
3	35	8.18%
4	14	3.27%
5	5	1.17%
9	1	0.23%
36	1	0.23%
<b>Total</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

#### What is the information telling us?

Nearly 45% of the people who answered our questions lived alone. This may not be surprising. Older people are more likely to live alone than other age groups of the population.<sup>4</sup> Factors such as widowhood and divorce may account for this.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census-analysis/do-the-demographic-and-socio-economic-characteristics-of-those-living-alone-in-england-and-wales-differ-from-the-general-population-/sty-living-alone-in-the-uk.html>

A similar figure of just over 42% were in households occupied by two people. As only about 13% of the people we spoke to lived in households of more than two people, this must reflect the changing pattern of living in households for older people where access to support under the same roof is perhaps lower than it was.

## **Q11 Are you the principle carer for someone in your household?**

### ***Why did we ask this question?***

*We know that there are about 35,000 informal carers living in Dudley Borough. It is said that the contribution of informal care to the economy is worth billions. Sometimes the caring responsibilities of people in older age is overlooked. Caring responsibilities can cause loneliness and isolation if the carer does not have anyone to support them.*

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	13.5%	61
No	86.5%	390
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>451</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>26</b>

### ***What is the information telling us?***

Just over 13% of our respondents responded “Yes” to this question. This is roughly consistent with the number of carers overall in the Borough. This increases our confidence in the responses we got. However, it may be that the people we met with caring responsibilities were those who had support. People unable to leave their home due to caring responsibilities may have been missed. However, the Council surveys Carers as part of a national Survey every year and reports on this its “Local Account.” <sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/care-health/dudley-social-services/whats-new/adult-social-care-local-account/>

## Q12 Which of the following best describes your ethnic group or background:

**Why did we ask this question?** 11.5% of people in Dudley Borough describe themselves as from Ethnic Backgrounds other than “white British.”<sup>6</sup> Old Age can be isolating due to factors such as impaired physical ability. Other factors such as difficulty with the English language may affect a person’s experience of ageing in Dudley Borough and this may have a negative impact e.g. being unable to understand written information.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
White English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/Irish	90.5%	418
Eastern European	0.2%	1
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.2%	1
Any other White background, please describe below	0.2%	1
White and Black Caribbean	0.2%	1
White and Black African	0.0%	0
White and Asian	0.0%	0
Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background, please describe below	0.0%	0
Indian	1.5%	7
Pakistani	1.5%	7
Bangladeshi	1.5%	7
Chinese	1.5%	7
Any other Asian background, please describe below	0.0%	0
African	0.2%	1
Caribbean	1.5%	7
Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, please describe below	0.9%	4
Yemeni	0.0%	0
Any other ethnic group, please describe below	0.0%	0
Prefer not to say	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)		5
<b>answered question</b>		<b>462</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>15</b>

**What is this information telling us?** We used available networks as well as the town centre locations to gain access to people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds through the Council’s Race Equality and Communication Team. This allowed us to ensure that the overall representation of black and minority ethnic groups was more akin to the Borough figure of 11.5% Further research needed in this area.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.dudley.gov.uk/community/census/2011-census/>

### Q13 Do you have access to any of the following electronic devices?

#### *Why did we ask this question?*

Many things in life now require people to have access to a computer/internet to pay bills or make appointments. Not everyone has a computer. More and more older people are using computers but many still do not. This may affect the way they find out about things which might counter any experience of loneliness and isolation.

Answer Options	Yes	%age	No	%age	Response Count
A computer	231	50.11%	230	49.89%	461
A tablet [such as an iPad etc]	142	31.42%	310	68.58%	452
A smart phone	137	30.44%	313	69.56%	450
<b>answered question</b>					<b>465</b>
<b>skipped question</b>					<b>12</b>

#### *What is the information telling us?*

50% of respondents have access to a computer and an increasing percentage have access to a “smart” phone or “tablet” e.g. iPad. This suggests two things: firstly that we will still need to continue to provide information in traditional printed forms for a significant period yet, and secondly that designers of web pages need to be sensitive to the need to design them in such a way that they will run properly on all platforms, and to the needs of older people in particular in being able to read the material available clearly on the smaller screens as eye-sight generally deteriorates with ageing.

Those older people with access to electronic media will inevitably find it easier to find out about what’s going on in Dudley Borough to help them address any feeling of loneliness and isolation.

## Q14 Have you heard of or used any of the following :

### *Why did we ask this question?*

Much information is now only provided on the internet. Many organisations are increasingly using the internet to let the public know information which is important. The four websites referred to are important sources of information to older people living in Dudley Borough.

Sometimes people think that older people do not use the internet or other new technologies. However, the phrase “the silver surfer” gives acknowledgement to the reality that increasing numbers are using the new technologies.

If older people do not do so, they may be, or will inevitably become, what is described as “digitally excluded” i.e. they do not have access to information provided over the computer or other new technology devices.

Answer Options	Heard of	%age	Used	%age	Neither	%age	Response Count
The Dudley Council website	158	35.27%	101	22.54%	209	46.65%	448
The Dudley Community Information Directory	93	21.04%	29	6.56%	325	73.53%	442
The Age UK Dudley website	166	37.14%	54	12.08%	240	53.69%	447
Dudley Healthwatch Community Information Point	72	16.55%	13	2.99%	353	81.15%	435
<b>answered question</b>							<b>461</b>
<b>skipped question</b>							<b>16</b>

### *What is the information telling us?*

Age UK Dudley's website followed by the Dudley Council website had been used by most respondents. This is encouraging.

The results suggest that there need to be continued efforts to make the Dudley Community Information Directory and the Dudley Healthwatch Community Information Point Network better known.

## Q15 Have you heard of or attended a meeting of the following:

### *Why did we ask this question?*

We always need people to make the voice of older people in Dudley Borough heard even more effectively. The Council and the NHS have various ways of consulting with us and two Meetings were mentioned as significant.

Answer Options	Heard of	%age	Attended	%age	Neither	%age	Response Count
Dudley Health Care Forum	69	15.30%	18	3.99%	364	80.71%	451
Dudley People's Network	41	9.15%	10	2.23%	399	89.06%	448
<i>answered question</i>							<b>457</b>
<i>skipped question</i>							<b>20</b>

### *What is the information telling us?*

Just over 15% of respondents had heard of the CCG's Dudley Health Care Forum and fewer still had attended. Likewise, just over 9% of respondents had heard of the Dudley People's Network and fewer still had attended.

We want as many older people as possible to be involved in our forums. We need to continue our efforts to make them known and available to people so that they can make their voice heard.

**Q16 Where else do you get your information about health and social care from – what is changing, what is available, who to go to for information and advice on these issues etc.?**

***Why did we ask this question?***

*It seems information about health and social care is always changing. Keeping up-to date isn't easy and it can be a challenge for the organisation concerned such as the Council and the NHS to keep everyone informed at all times. In our questions, we asked about people's use of computers and the internet because it has become such a big part of daily life for many people. We then realised that people might be able to help us understand the other methods they used themselves to keep up to date on issues relating to health and social care.*

*We had 404 responses.*

***What is the information telling us?***

People responded with more than one source in many instances:

- Over 100 people said they would refer to the “doctor”, “GP”, “NHS” or “the Hospital”
- Some said that they would “find out for themselves” through “gossip”, “word of mouth”, asking someone or looking it up in the internet
- About 25 replied that they would ask “family, a “daughter or son”. (Fewer sons than daughters.)
- Over 35 referred to Age UK Dudley, Age Concern Stourbridge and Halesowen, and Age Concern Sedgley
- Over 30 would find out from the Council or one of its services such as libraries or social services
- 15 replied the internet

Other sources mentioned included local papers (free and bought), TV, radio, magazines such as Trusted Trader, or publications by the British Legion or suchlike.

## 7.0 THE CONFERENCE – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015

### OUTCOMES

The Programme for the Conference is included as Appendix 2.

Colleagues from a number of services attended the event and a “market-place” provided information and advice about these services. Keith Sherman, Chair of the Age Alliance in Dudley introduced the day and outlined the programme.

The first presentation by Brendan Clifford, Chief Social Worker in Dudley Council, presented the outcome of the investigation which the Age Alliance and its partners had undertaken.

Tony Oakman, Executive Director of the People Directorate in Dudley Council spoke about his own experience of life. Based on that experience, he spoke about people sometimes thinking that communities were stronger some years ago and that people ‘looked out’ for one another more. Tony asked attendees to raise their hands if they thought that the state had responsibility for the challenge of loneliness and isolation amongst people. Less than five hands were raised out of the one hundred or so present. Tony also spoke about the resources available for the Council to meet all its obligations and asked how many people would pay more council tax to support more services. Again, less than five hands were raised. These points provided interesting context for discussion.

Jim Cameron, Chief Executive of Age UK Dudley, gave a voluntary sector perspective on the experience of loneliness and isolation amongst older people. Through a reflective exercise, Jim asked attendees to stop and think about what it must be like to be lonely and isolated. Jim then outlined some of the current activity which Age UK Dudley provide in our locality to try and minimise the experience of loneliness and isolation amongst older people. He concluded with an account of “Doris’s Story,” showing how things could work for someone to help improve their life in old age.

Following a movement break, participants were then asked to consider “*What needs to change*” in response to the Report, and specifically to identify questions for the Panel who would respond later in the afternoon. Discussions around the tables ranged widely and from the notes taken the following common themes can be identified:

- *Better communication:*

- *Better promotion of preventative services.*
- *Better promotion of support for bereavement.*
- *Better awareness of what services are currently available particularly to support older people with a disability.*
- *Better understanding of how to manage direct payments.*



- *Increased support for the use of modern communication technology while ensuring that those who will never be comfortable using such technology still have information available to them in accessible forms.*
- *Better involvement with and support of the Voluntary and Community Sector, particularly the smaller volunteer run organisations:*
  - *More help with tendering.*
  - *Research in relation to gaps in services that are developing as statutory funding is reduced.*
  - *Initial support in setting up local community based services across the Borough, not just in the more deprived areas – finding local venues within walking distance of peoples homes, initial publicity etc.*
  - *Support for confidence building services to get individual older people out of their homes and involved [buddy schemes etc.].*
  - *Support for ‘someone to turn to’ services [telephone help lines etc.].*
  - *Increased support for activities and organisations aimed at or inclusive of men; increased effort to recruit men as volunteers.*
- *Better, more responsive transport/travel arrangements:*
  - *More support to increase the availability and accessibility of community based transport options OR more support for locality based services which reduce the reliance on transport availability.*
  - *More sympathetic timetabling of public transport in line with older peoples needs*
  - *More flexibility in the use of bus passes where attendance is required at early appointments for example*
  - *Improved provision of accessible public toilets so that older people have greater confidence in moving around*
- *Better data integration between statutory services:*
  - *Agencies avoiding multiple interrogations.*
  - *Improved identification by front line agencies of those at risk of isolation [GP surgeries need to have an increased role here signposting people to non medical support].*
  - *Increased support for and involvement of Locality Workers.*
  - *Better use of voluntary organisations as ‘first contactors’ with volunteers trained to use simple risk assessment tools the results of which are then referred on.*
  - *More systematic follow up of those identified as at risk and particularly of those who do not then respond to attempts to contact.*

- *Better support for Carers – particularly ‘housebound carers’:*
  - *Short term respite so they can remain engaged with their communities.*
  - *Dual provision so that carers and their cared for persons can attend the same venue for different purposes.*
  - *Access to crisis help when they feel they can no longer cope [befriending and ‘someone to call’ services aimed specifically at carers.*
  - *Support for long distance carers.*
- *Better intergenerational understanding – in both directions:*
  - *Improved perception of what ‘older’ means.*
  - *Better retirement planning including awareness of opportunities to volunteer across the generations.*
- *Finding even better ways of rebuilding trust and giving older people a reason to use their voice:*
  - *Encouraging, facilitating and involving self help groups – Neighbourhood Watch etc.*
  - *Maintain and supporting and improving the profile of Police Community Support Officers.*
  - *Increased encouragement of self help/self care management and of training in this.*

Based on these themes, the specific questions to which the Panel of Speakers were later asked to respond were as follows:

- *How do we protect vital but threatened preventative services such as the Falls Service [Conference Table 1]*
- *How can we improve continuity of care and co-ordination between services avoiding for example extra meetings in different areas, sharing of data etc. [Conference Table 2]*
- *How do we better incorporate into the education of children the importance of community and improve that communities attitude and behaviour towards older people [Conference Tables 3 & 7]*
- *How can we improve identification of those older people who are socially isolated but, for whatever reason, not engaged with health services as an indicator of their need [Conference Table 4]*
- *What can be done to improve support for older people after bereavement [Conference Table 5]*

- *How do we better identify the gaps in provision and then set about encouraging the establishment and support of local groups to fill those gaps [Conference Tables 6 & 8]*
- *Can hospital car parks ever go back to hospital control so that people who have to go regularly can get assistance with the cost [Conference Table 9]*
- *How can we improve communication so that isolated older people have the information they need when they need it [Conference Tables 10 & 11]*
- *How do we ensure that either transport is available so older people can access the services that are there or that those services are made available in accessible locations [Conference Table 12]*

A networking break was followed by a presentation by Dr. Anna Phillips, Reader in Behavioural Medicine, School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences at the University of Birmingham entitled *“Loneliness and stress in ageing, effects on immunity - a Research Perspective.”*

Dr. Phillips explained how research shows that stress can be caused by the experience of loneliness and isolation alongside other connected experiences such as bereavement. The experience of stress, in turn, sends messages to the body which can cause change in organs and body functions. This can have effects, she explained, such as reducing the otherwise expected power of the body in the immunity that it can give to illness and disease. Practical effects of such occurrence can include hospital admission or longer stays where immunity is reduced. For instance, the effects of a hip fracture may be compounded by experience of loneliness and isolation. Better social support, therefore, is associated with a better antibody response to things like influenza. In conclusion, Dr. Phillips outlined how exercise can have a positive effect for people in boosting their physique and bodily systems.

Paul Maubach, Chief Accountable Officer at Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG,) supplemented Anna’s presentation by presenting a local health service perspective on the issues. He explained how changing the way the whole system of health and social care works together through more integrated working in one team organised around the person can help improve people’s experience and work to minimise the effects of loneliness and isolation. He also outlined the work of a specific initiative funded by the CCG through the local voluntary sector called “social prescribing” where a worker can get closer to a person referred by a GP or other member of team to address social issues and help the person be more connected to their locality. Paul explained the benefits which this has for a person’s overall health and well-being.

A second discussion period invited participants to again respond to the Report by thinking about potential barriers to change that might impact on the issues which they had identified as needing to be addressed. Once more discussion ranged wide but from the notes taken the following common themes emerged:

- *Lack of awareness amongst professionals and older people of what support is available and among older people of opportunities to volunteer their support to others; lack of focus on the recruitment and retention of volunteers, balancing issues around red tape, liabilities etc. with essential safeguarding.*
- *Over-reliance amongst professionals on communication technology; impenetrable terminology; ineffective use of and involvement with local media.*
- *Lack of honesty; reluctance to complain, notions of privacy and self sufficiency, non ownership of problems, reluctance to accept offers of help, fear of unknown, reluctance to change, overreliance on immediate partners in relationships, unrealistic perceptions of the actual cost of services.*
- *Still incomplete integration of services and information sharing between Health, Public Health and Social Care; inconsistent non-holistic assessments; tendency to view older people as a homogeneous group rather than recognising individuality and differences across a 30+ year age range.*
- *Lack of systematic ways of attempting to reach the 'hard to reach' – and of ways of sharing information gained; better sharing of information about individual older people gathered by first responding services; inadequate use of volunteers to identify and refer on those at risk - volunteers who go into peoples homes have access to information which needs to be collated and used but there is no systematic way of doing that.*
- *Poor infrastructure – patchy availability and accessibility of services across the whole Borough; tendency to centralisation of services; car parking charges; availability of toilets and public seating; cost of venues for voluntary groups; poor co-ordination of voluntary and community transport resources and arrangements.*
- *Lack of activities specifically aimed at men and their preferred social organisation.*
- *Inadequate short term respite for carers; inadequate befriending services for carers.*

Finally the Panel of Speakers responded to the questions which the Table Discussions had raised, and committed to following through with partners the work which is being done to highlight the challenge of loneliness and isolation amongst older people in the Borough.

In closing the Conference, Keith Sherman, Chair of Age Alliance in Dudley, having thanked all of those who had given so freely of their time to make the day possible, invited support from all attendees, in whatever way was possible, in working together during the coming year in a concentrated effort on trying to actively reduce the experience of loneliness and isolation amongst older people in Dudley.

## APPENDIX 1 - The Questionnaire



### **EXPERIENCE OF LONELINESS QUESTIONNAIRE**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

You are being asked to complete this questionnaire on behalf of Age Alliance in Dudley, the local partnership of statutory, voluntary and community organisations working together to try to improve later life for older people in the Borough.

*Through this questionnaire the members of the Alliance are trying to -*

- *raise awareness about **loneliness and isolation** amongst some older people in Dudley Borough*
- *find out if there are things we could do to better help older people who are experiencing loneliness*

*To do this we would like to ask you a few short questions about*

- *your experience of loneliness*
- *your ideas on what we could all do across Dudley Borough to reduce loneliness*

*Thank you, completing this questionnaire will only take a few minutes – when you are answering remember that there are no right or wrong answers, we just want to know how you honestly feel. Once we are finished if you are not happy for us to share your answers – anonymously – with the members of the Alliance please let us know.*

The results of this survey will be presented at a public conference at Brierley Hill Civic Hall on Thursday October 1st [International Older People's Day]. If you would like to register to attend please look out for details later in the year.

**Finally – On the reverse of this sheet you will find details of some of the services that might be able to offer help to you or another local older person, please pass them on to anyone who you think may need a bit of help.**

## FURTHER INFORMATION

*If you want to talk to someone about loneliness and isolation – please contact:*

- *The 'Good Neighbour' Befriending Scheme at AGE UK Dudley*

*Telephone: 01384 354 512*

*Email: [goodneighbour@ageukdudley.org.uk](mailto:goodneighbour@ageukdudley.org.uk)*

*Web: [www.ageuk.org.uk/dudley](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/dudley)*

- *Your G.P.*

*You can find information on many aspects of support and care, by visiting the following websites – if you do not have access to a computer, tablet or smart phone yourself you can ask for assistance at your local library:*

- *For the Dudley Community Information Directory go to .....*

*[www.dudleyci.co.uk/kb5/dudley/asch/home.page](http://www.dudleyci.co.uk/kb5/dudley/asch/home.page)*

- *For the Dudley Community Information Point Network go to ...*

*<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/community/community-advice/community-information-points>*

*If you would like to share your thoughts and experience with like minded older people and get your views across to those in a position to influence and make changes for the benefit of older people in the Borough, then why not consider joining the bimonthly meetings of the Forum of Older People in Dudley. For information on meeting dates and venue please contact Age UK Dudley [who provide secretariat support for the Forum] on 01384 354508.*

*If you would like to know more about, and to help to influence the development of policy and services in the areas of health and social care then why not consider attending the meetings of either the Dudley Health Care Forum or the Dudley People's Network.*

*Information on the meetings of the Health Care Forums can be had from Clare Hamilton [clare.hamilton@dudleyccg.nhs.uk](mailto:clare.hamilton@dudleyccg.nhs.uk)*

*Details of the meetings of the People's Network which is jointly organised by Healthwatch Dudley and 'Making it Real Dudley' [Dudley MBC] can be had from [hello@healthwatchdudley.co.uk](mailto:hello@healthwatchdudley.co.uk)*

## ***EXPERIENCE OF LONELINESS QUESTIONNAIRE***

### **ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE**

1. How often do you feel lonely [in the sense that you don't have the level of companionship that you would like] ?

☐ hardly ever or never      ☐ some of the time      ☐ often

Can you tell us about that - \_\_\_\_\_

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2. If you did feel lonely, would you have people you could turn to?

☐ Definitely      ☐ Perhaps      ☐ I don't think so

Can you tell us about them - \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Do you know of an older person in Dudley Borough who you think is lonely – that is they don't have the level of companionship that they would like or need?

☐ Definitely      ☐ Perhaps      ☐ I don't think so

4. If you do know someone who you think is lonely, is that person a:

☐ Relative   ☐ Friend   ☐ Neighbour   ☐ Other   ☐ Not Applicable

Are you able to tell us about that person (please do not use their name): \_\_\_\_\_

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5. If another older person told you they were often lonely, would you know of anyone ,or any organisation, that might be able to help or advise them?

☐ Definitely   ☐ Perhaps   ☐ I don't think so

Can you tell us about that person or organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Can you think of ways in which everyone could do things better in the Borough to help prevent loneliness and isolation?

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## **ABOUT YOU**

7. How would you describe your gender? \_\_\_\_\_

8. How would you describe your age?	Under 55	<input type="checkbox"/>
	55 - 64	<input type="checkbox"/>
	65 - 74	<input type="checkbox"/>
	75 - 84	<input type="checkbox"/>
	85 +	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Rather not say	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. What is the first part of your Post Code (e.g. DY1, WV14 etc )? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Including you how many people are there in your household? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Are you the principle carer for someone in your household? Yes ☐ No ☐

12. Which of the following best describes your ethnic group or background:

### **White**

English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/Irish ☐

Eastern European ☐

Gypsy or Traveller ☐

Any other White background, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups**

White and Black Caribbean ☐

White and Black African ☐

White and Asian ☐

Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background, please describe \_\_\_\_\_

### **Asian/Asian British**

Indian ☐

Pakistani ☐

Bangladeshi ☐

Chinese ☐

Any other Asian background, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

**Black/African/Caribbean/Black British**

African

☐

Caribbean

☐

Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

**Other ethnic group**

Yemeni

☐

Any other ethnic group, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

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13. Do you have access to any of the following electronic devices:

	Yes	No
○ a computer,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ a tablet [such as an iPad etc.]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ a smart phone?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. Have you heard of or used any of the following:

	Heard of	Used	Neither
○ The Dudley Council website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ The Dudley Community Information Directory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ The Age UK Dudley website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ A Dudley Healthwatch Community Information Point	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. Have you heard of or attended a meeting of the following:

	Heard of	Used	Neither
○ Dudley Health Care Forum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Dudley People's Network	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. Where else do you get your information about health and social care from – what is changing, what is available, who to go to for information and advice on these issues etc?

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## APPENDIX 2 – The Conference Programme



### Older People's Experience of Loneliness and Isolation Conference Programme 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015

09:30	Arrival, registration, & refreshments
10:00	Introduction & welcome: Keith Sherman - Chair, Age Alliance in Dudley, Forum of Older People in Dudley
10:15	Older People's Experience of Loneliness and isolation – a draft report on what older people in Dudley have said through the Questionnaire: Brendan Clifford, Chief Social Worker (Adults & Children) Dudley MBC
10:40	Combating loneliness and isolation in Dudley – a Social Service and Public Health perspective: Tony Oakman, Executive Director, People Directorate, Dudley MBC
11:00	Combating loneliness and isolation in Dudley – a Voluntary Sector perspective: Jim Cameron, Chief Executive Age UK Dudley
11:20	Refreshment Break
11:35	Table discussion I: Responding to the Report – what needs to change ?
12:20	Feedback: Discussion notes and one question for the panel per table
12:30	Lunch & Networking
13:15	Loneliness and stress in ageing, effects on immunity - a Research Perspective: Dr Anna Phillips, Reader in Behavioural Medicine, School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences, Birmingham University
13:45	Combating loneliness and isolation in Dudley – a Health Service perspective: Paul Maubach, Chief Officer, Dudley CCG
14:05	Table discussion II: Responding to the Report – Overcoming the Barriers
14:50	Feedback: Discussion notes and one question for the panel per table
15:00	Panel: Keith Sherman (Dudley Forum of Older People, Chair); Tony Oakman (Dudley MBC); Jim Cameron (Age UK Dudley); Paul Maubach (Dudley CCG); Pam Bradbury (Healthwatch Dudley); Brendan Clifford (Dudley MBC, Questions and roving mike)
15:25	Summary and Close Keith Sherman - Chair, Age Alliance in Dudley, Forum of Older People in Dudley

## **APPENDIX 3: Age Alliance in Dudley**



### **Terms of Reference**

#### **About the Alliance**

Age Alliance in Dudley is a flexible, informal partnership bringing together older people themselves and organisations working with or on behalf of older people, drawn from across the public, voluntary and private sectors within the Borough.

Age Alliance in Dudley seeks both to celebrate the lives of older people and their contribution to society, and to find practical ways to improve services and support to older people. Through the Alliance member organisations bring their distinctive skills together, aiming to achieve more in partnership than as individual organisations or sectors.

#### **Our vision**

An on going improvement in the quality of later life within the Metropolitan Borough of Dudley achieved through the creation of communities where older people feel supported, valued and enabled to continue to contribute to the society in which they live.

#### **Our Purpose**

Working together, the members of Age Alliance in Dudley seek to ensure that, as far as is possible, local older people are better enabled to:

- be visible and valued, with their needs and aspirations fairly articulated and represented to the Dudley Health and Well Being Board
- access the information and services they need, at the times when they need them
- make informed choices about health and wellbeing and to be supported in those choices
- live in age friendly neighbourhoods with access to social networks and community support appropriate to their circumstances, mixing with, sharing skills with, and where possible and appropriate, supporting others like themselves.

## **Our Commitment**

To this end, the members of Age Alliance in Dudley commit to:

- Engaging with local older people, finding out what is important to them, and then acting on it
- Focusing on problem solving and solutions in partnership working collaboratively wherever it adds value to do so
- Building on what works well and learning from each other

Each year the members of Age Alliance in Dudley will establish a working theme relevant to the ageing agenda and in the context of that theme, organisational members will:

- Through attendance at the Alliances quarterly meetings, share information on current and planned service delivery with one another and with the older people members, consulting with them where appropriate, using and building on their experience.
- Make a 'Pledge to an Action' on behalf of their organisation for the delivery of a 'small change' in their procedures and practices that will make life better for local older people either individually or collectively
- Contribute to collaborative working, in particular in seeking and sharing the views, experience and aspirations of the wider older population of the Borough, and in celebrating, not least in the context of International Older People's Day each 1<sup>st</sup> October, both the contribution of older people to society and the results of their collaborative working and organisational 'pledges to action'.

## **Members, Officers and Accountable Bodies**

Age Alliance in Dudley is committed to being a wholly non-discriminatory partnership inclusive of, and led by, older people rather than merely for older people. In order to fulfil this commitment, but without being bound in absolute terms by numbers at any time, it is intended that the aim should therefore be that:

- 50% of members should themselves be older people and/or representatives of organisations of older people
- 50% of members should be service users as opposed to service providers

To this end, in addition to any other older people's representatives, the 'Forum of Older People in Dudley' will ensure that they nominate annually six representatives to the Alliance.

The representatives of organisational members of the Alliance will inevitably vary but at the time of writing includes those of:

- Age UK Dudley
- Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group
- Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust
- Dudley Interfaith Forum
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council Peoples Directorate
- Dudley & Walsall Mental Health Trust
- Healthwatch Dudley
- West Midlands Fire & Rescue Service

The Elected Officers of the Alliance [Chair and Vice Chair] will themselves be older persons from among the Alliance membership. Such Officers will be elected annually by a simple majority vote with no limit on the number of times that an individual may stand for election nor the cumulative length of time that an individual may serve as an Officer.

A secretariat, responsible for maintain the databases of members contact details and annual 'pledges of Action', and providing, in collaboration with the Officers, agendas for and minutes of the Alliance's quarterly meetings will be provided by one of the organisational members as will accommodation for those meetings – at the time of writing the Alliance Secretariat is provided by Age UK Dudley.

While the Alliance will have no regular income it may seek funds to facilitate collaborative activities, and in particular an event associated with the annual National Older People's Day. Any such funds will be held and accounted for by the 'Forum of Older People in Dudley', itself a formally constituted body with an independent bank account.

## APPENDIX 4 - Resources

### 1. The Campaign to end Loneliness -

<http://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org>

*The Campaign to End Loneliness is a network of national, regional and local organisations and people working together through community action, good practice, research and policy to ensure that loneliness is acted upon as a public health priority at national and local levels. The Campaign gathers together and offers to policy makers and practitioners the latest evidence on loneliness and isolation.*

### 2. Age Action Alliance Working Group on Loneliness and Isolation

<http://ageactionalliance.org/theme/loneliness-isolation/>

*The Group aims to:*

- Identify, develop and test models of collaboration to reduce loneliness and isolation amongst older people.*
- Raise awareness of loneliness and isolation amongst policy makers, practitioners and commissioners.*
- Increase understanding about what works at reducing loneliness and isolation in local areas and support practical action.*
- Improve knowledge exchange between alliance members so as to share learning to inform policy and practice.*

### 3. Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) -

<http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/atagance/atagance60.asp>

- Older people are particularly vulnerable to social loneliness and isolation owing to loss of friends and family, mobility or income.*
- Social loneliness and isolation have a detrimental effect on health and wellbeing. Studies show that being lonely or isolated can impact on blood pressure, and is closely linked to depression.*
- The impact of loneliness and social isolation on an individual's health and wellbeing has cost implications for health and social care services. Investment is needed to ensure that voluntary organisations can continue to help alleviate loneliness and improve the quality of life of older people, reducing dependence on more costly services.*
- The range of interventions for alleviating loneliness and social isolation can be grouped into one-to-one interventions, group services and wider community engagement. Those that look most effective include befriending, social group schemes and Community Navigators.*

4. Think Local, Act Personal

[http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/library/BCC/Building\\_Community\\_Capacity\\_-\\_Evidence\\_efficiency\\_and\\_cost-effectiveness.pdf](http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/library/BCC/Building_Community_Capacity_-_Evidence_efficiency_and_cost-effectiveness.pdf)

*This Report shows how social connection is better for people's health*

5. NHS news - <http://www.nhs.uk/news/2013/03march/pages/social-isolation-increases-death-risk-in-older-people.aspx>

*Reporting on research from University College London. The English Longitudinal Study of Ageing, from which the study participants were taken, was funded by the National Institute on Aging and a consortium of UK government departments co-ordinated by the Office for National Statistics.*

6. New Economics Foundation – 5 ways to wellbeing

<http://www.neweconomics.org/projects/entry/five-ways-to-well-being>

*The Five Ways to Wellbeing are a set of evidence-based actions which promote people's wellbeing. These are: Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give. These activities are simple things individuals can do in their everyday lives.*

7. Royal Voluntary service Report

<http://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/get-help/advice-and-support/feeling-well-and-overcoming-loneliness?gclid=CPvylfDgu8MCFQHmwgodMLIA6Q>

*This guide provides some general advice for feeling well and overcoming loneliness later in life.*

8. <http://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/777430/Loneliness-Report.PDF>

9. <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/spru/research/pdf/lonely.pdf>

10. [http://www.ageuk.org.uk/documents/en-gb/for-professionals/evidence\\_review\\_loneliness\\_and\\_isolation.pdf?dtrk=true](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/documents/en-gb/for-professionals/evidence_review_loneliness_and_isolation.pdf?dtrk=true)

11. [http://www.bristol.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/health\\_and\\_adult\\_care/health/Public-Health-Approaches-to-Social-Isolation-and-Loneliness-Part-1\\_0.pdf](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/health_and_adult_care/health/Public-Health-Approaches-to-Social-Isolation-and-Loneliness-Part-1_0.pdf)

12. <http://www.theguardian.com/science/2014/feb/16/loneliness-twice-as-unhealthy-as-obesity-older-people>



## THANKS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### Particular thanks are due to:

Steering Group members: Keith Sherman, Jim Cameron, Chris Barron, Brendan Clifford

Age Alliance in Dudley Members and members of associated groups

Age UK Dudley

Age Concern Sedgley

Students from Dudley College Health and Social Care courses [particularly Eleanor, Renita and Tina]

Dudley CVS and the staff at Brierley Hill Civic Hall

Dudley MBC staff from Libraries, Race Equality Unit, Adult Social Care and Chief Social Worker Unit.

### And especially to:

Dudley MBC and Dudley CCG for funding the initiative.

Chris Barron from Healthwatch Dudley for organising the use of Survey Monkey and running the initial analysis; Michelle Raan and Jim Cameron from Age UK Dudley for managing all the conference arrangements; and Brendan Clifford from Dudley MBC for drafting this Report.

**If you have comments on this Report or ideas on how we can help minimise loneliness and isolation across Dudley Borough then please contact:**

Keith Sherman	Chair, Dudley Age Alliance Tel No: 07980 576272 Email: <a href="mailto:kcpsherman@tiscali.co.uk">kcpsherman@tiscali.co.uk</a>
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Chris Barron	Healthwatch Dudley Tel No: 03000 111 001 Email: <a href="mailto:chris@healthwatchdudley.co.uk">chris@healthwatchdudley.co.uk</a>



Some images of older people from Dudley Borough and speakers at our Conference on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 held at Brierley Hill Civic Centre about  
*The Experience Of Loneliness and Isolation amongst Older People in Dudley Borough*