

Summary of the Application of the UCLA* Loneliness Scale to Self-Management Programmes in Dudley, 2017/18

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Measuring Loneliness

Among a variety of tools for measuring loneliness, the UCLA scale was first developed in 1978 and has undergone several revisions. The version used in Dudley to evaluate commissioned self-management programmes (SMPs) is based on the following 3 questions:

- How often do you feel you lack companionship?*
- How often do you feel left out?*
- How often do you feel isolated from others?*

Respondents are invited to answer each question in one of three ways: ‘hardly ever’, ‘some of the time’, or ‘often’. The combined answers to these questions are then used to re-code responses to one of three categories: ‘lonely’, ‘not lonely’, or ‘insufficient responses’.

The Self-Management Programme Courses in Dudley

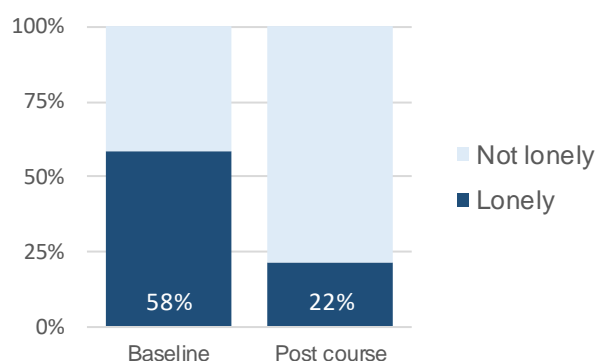
During the financial year 2017/18 a total of 334 participants completed a course as part of the self-management programmes across Dudley. Each attendee was asked to respond to the UCLA questions before the course (the Baseline results) and on its completion, and their responses form the basis of this summary. Overall, individual records were submitted for 213 completing participants. Figure 1 provides an overview of the UCLA results at each stage.

Figure 1: Changes in UCLA Loneliness Score

All 213 participants completing a course*, 2017-2018

Time Period	Lonely	Not lonely	Total
Baseline	84	60	144
Post-course	31	113	144

**This figure of 213 differs from the total of 334 completions mentioned earlier in the report because it excludes participants for which individual level data is not available. It also excludes 69 records which do have a valid result for both the baseline and post-course loneliness score.*



These assessments using the UCLA scale show a reduction in in occurrence of loneliness between the baseline and post-course assessments. The baseline assessments showed 58% of respondents were lonely, and this figure fell to 22% in the case of post-course assessments, a statistically significant improvement.



In order to assess whether this improvement is sustained beyond the immediate period after the course, it is our intention to collect a further record of each individual's UCLA score at a point six months after their participation in an SMP course.

Feedback from SMP Providers in Dudley

The 3 UCLA questions were included as part of a combined questionnaire including wellbeing questions in the form of the Warwick and Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing scale (WEMWBS). For the most part attendees were asked to complete the surveys on their own anonymously. In some instances this required more support due to language or physical disability. There were some initial concerns about asking negatively worded questions however the experience of the tutors so far has been positive.

*"The participants often say that they feel particularly lonely because of their chronic illness, because friends and sometimes family tend to fall away. I like that we can point to help that is available.
Belinda*

"As tutors, we have no problems giving out or using the UCLA questionnaire. We have experienced only one participant who queried/declined the questionnaire" Derek and Kay

Other Applications of the UCLA Loneliness Score

The version of the UCLA score used here, known as the 3-item scale, was specifically developed to be used in larger surveys and in telephone interviews. In addition to evaluating interventions (as in this case), the scale can be used to identify groups in the population at risk of being lonely.