

THE STAY CONNECTED PLEDGE

Stay Connected
Putting an end to loneliness

Tackling loneliness has always been a priority in Worcestershire, but it is now more important than ever before due to the long-lasting impacts of Covid-19. Loneliness can be experienced by people of all ages and can have a negative effect on our mental and physical health. There are several small things we can do to help people feel more connected within groups, communities, and workplaces.

The Stay Connected pledge was created by The Loneliness Partnership and was first launched in 2021 to promote and embed these small actions within as many locations, organisations, and groups across the county, to encourage inclusion and ultimately reduce loneliness and its negative effects.

By signing the pledge, you can demonstrate your commitment to tackling loneliness and its associated stigma by developing an organisational culture which supports staff and the public to stay connected.

Organisations who sign the pledge receive a Stay Connected pledge pack, which is issued together with the Stay Connected logo for use on any marketing and publications. This is a positive sign showing your organisation is committed to putting an end to loneliness.

Stay Connected Pledge Principles

By signing the Stay Connected pledge, and committing to the principles below, your organisation will **tackle loneliness by developing a supportive organisational culture, which creates a variety of opportunities for social connection, is dedicated to tackling the stigma associated with loneliness by encouraging open conversations, and ensures any activities, opportunities and/or approaches are inclusive and welcoming.**

To achieve this, your organisation will need to:

- 1 Recognise that loneliness and feelings of isolation can be an issue within communities and workplaces, and there are many small things that can be done which can have a positive impact on others.** Consider what you can do to make a difference with a particular focus on people who are most at risk of loneliness, for example those with caring responsibilities, new parents and those approaching retirement.
- 2 Identify any barriers to participation and where possible try to address these,** for example consider days, times and location for activities, transport, in person and online opportunities.
- 3 Welcome new people to ensure that everyone feels welcomed, valued, and treated with respect.** For organisations, this could include ensuring an induction process is in place for staff and volunteers. For groups, this could include distributing a 'Welcome Pack' to members with key information; adding individuals to a WhatsApp, Facebook, or email group to ensure they are kept up to date.
- 4 Ensure good communications.** For example keep others informed in a timely manner, particularly when any changes are to be made. This may include using various communication methods such as telephone, email, social media, newsletters or video calls.

5 Provide signposting to services and support. This could include sharing information on reducing loneliness such as the Staying Connected in Worcestershire Booklet, signposting to other activities or support groups in the area such as the **People Like Us Service (PLUS)**.

6 Allow opportunities for feedback, gathering views and suggestions for helping people to stay connected, and ensure these are considered and acted upon where appropriate.

7 Reach out to people you haven't seen and/or heard from in a while.

You may also choose to implement the additional principles listed below. Although these are optional, the Loneliness Partnership strongly encourage those who can do so, to embed within their organisations or with those they work with:

8 Offer a mentoring or buddy scheme where new and existing people are paired to ensure they feel welcome, supported, and included.

9 Support and enhance opportunities for volunteering.

10 Support staff and volunteers to complete relevant training. For example Making Every Contact Count, loneliness awareness training or mental health **training**.

11 Ensure that loneliness awareness is part of employee wellbeing and embedded at an organisational level within policies. Consider the following:

- Identify a champion/s who is trained on loneliness and wellbeing in the workplace and can be a source of confidential information and support.
- Review opportunities for action within the wider community such as volunteering, community activities and events, procurement, and commissioning.
- Develop a programme of activities which support improving employee wellbeing

Next Steps

You may choose to sign up as a whole organisation or as a team within an organisation. All organisations are required to consider how they will implement principles 1-7, which are a mandatory requirement for signing the pledge.

Principles 8-11 are optional principles which you may wish to consider implementing in addition to the mandatory principles depending on the nature of your organisation. Although optional, the Partnership strongly encourages those who can do so, to embed within their organisations or with those they work with.

If you are committed to adopting the pledge principles and would like to be part of this initiative, please sign and date the pledge below and return it to:

PublicHealthAdmin@worcestershire.gov.uk

Please include your organisation logo (if applicable) with your pledge submission form (below) if you would like us to add your logo to our **Stay Connected pledge webpage**.



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(Please insert organisation name/team/group and provide some brief background information e.g., what it does, how many employees etc.)

Are committed to tackling loneliness by developing a supportive organisational culture, which creates a variety of opportunities for social connection, is dedicated to tackling the stigma associated with loneliness by encouraging open conversations, and ensures any activities, opportunities and/ or approaches are inclusive and welcoming. To achieve this, we will adopt the following principles¹:

- 1** Recognise that loneliness and feelings of isolation can be an issue within communities and workplaces, and there are several things that can be done which can have a positive impact on others.
- 2** Identify any barriers to participation and where possible try to address these.
- 3** Welcome new people to ensure that everyone feels welcomed, valued, and treated with respect.
- 4** Ensure good communications.
- 5** Provide signposting to services and support.
- 6** Allow opportunities for feedback.
- 7** Reach out to people you haven't seen and/or heard from in a while.

Please select the additional optional principles you plan to implement:

- 8** Offer a mentoring or buddy scheme.
- 9** Support and enhance opportunities for volunteering.
- 10** Support staff and volunteers to complete relevant training.
- 11** Ensure that loneliness awareness is part of employee wellbeing and embedded at an organisational level within policies.

Please expand on how you plan to implement the pledge principles

¹ Summarised principles- full details are found on pages 1 & 2

I agree to the pledge being reviewed on an annual basis to ensure these measures are still being implemented and as an organisation/ group/ team/ we are still committed to supporting people to stay connected. As part of this annual review, I agree to complete a follow-up evaluation form.

I am happy for WCC public health to keep hold of my information, including my contact details.

I agree that my organisation will be listed as a partner on the [Stay Connected pledge webpage](https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/stayconnected) which is accessible to the public (please see the link below).

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/stayconnected

Signed by:

Job Title:

Date: