



# Press Release

9<sup>th</sup> June 2021

## **Churches urged to address rising tide of loneliness & social isolation**

**Loneliness Awareness Week launches at a time when concern continues to rise about the issue and its' impact on many people in our communities.**

**For release on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

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**Despite the easing of lockdown measures over recent weeks, there remains significant concern about the future health and wellbeing of many individuals of all ages for whom loneliness and social isolation is a daily reality. This week (14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> June) has been identified as Loneliness Awareness Week and there are various opportunities to get involved.**

Although the last 14 months have led to a significant rise in awareness of the effects of social isolation and loneliness, many experts within national and local government and specialist charities believe that there is no room for complacency. A report published by Church Urban Fund in April 2021 highlights this though the findings from a survey of over 1,000 Anglican clergy. The report 'Church In Action 2020-21'<sup>1</sup> found that loneliness and social isolation is the biggest issue, with 79% reporting that the pandemic had greatly increased the degree to which people are experiencing loneliness. This was found to be further exaggerated in areas of high deprivation.

A coalition of national Christian charities which has been in operation for six years is encouraging churches and individual Christians to engage in Loneliness Awareness Week as one way to help address the issue. Tina English – Chair of Christians Together Against Loneliness explains 'As a group of charities we are working together to raise awareness of the problem of loneliness in the UK. Many churches are already at the forefront (either explicitly or not) through many of the activities and events being run on a local level across the country. We are aware that, in many cases, these efforts have been adapted in the past year and often stepped up in response to Covid-19.'

It is widely considered, however, that the situation could be about to get worse particularly for those unable to leave their home at this time. Tina continues 'we recognise that many people have developed a fear of venturing outside despite the rising levels of vaccinations being carried out. There is therefore a real need for

organisations and individuals, including members of churches, to be particularly aware of those around us who may be struggling at this time.

Loneliness Awareness Week was initially started by the Marmalade Trust and is now supported by the UK government (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) and many national and local charities across the UK. Many organisations are running special events, social media campaigns and other innovative initiatives to support those most at risk whilst also raising awareness.

Further information about the initiative and activities taking place across the UK can be found on the Christians Together Against Loneliness website:

**[www.ctal.uk](http://www.ctal.uk)**

<sup>1</sup> 'Church in Action 2020-21: A Survey of Churches' Community Responses to the Pandemic', Church Urban Fund April 2021

### **Notes for Editors**

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**#LetsTalkLoneliness**

**#LonelinessAwarenessWeek**

### **Christians Together Against Loneliness**

Christians Together Against Loneliness is a coalition of Christian organisations active in alleviating loneliness in society. We are working together to inspire, inform and challenge churches, Christian organisations and individual Christians around the issues of loneliness and isolation. Current members are:

BRF Anna Chaplaincy for Older People

The Arthur Rank Centre

Care Home Friends

FaithAction

Faith in Later Life

Linking Lives

Parish Nursing

Sanctuary