

Friends Open Doors

Friends of the Elderly

There are

1

million

people over 65 living lonely and isolated lives in the UK

Behind Closed Doors

DEC 25

Over half a million older people will spend Christmas Day alone



Loneliness has been found to increase the risk of Alzheimer's disease by 50%



60 older people a week die alone

The effects of isolation include loneliness - depression - feelings of low self-worth - poor health and poor diet, with isolated individuals being less likely to obtain the services they need or seek help



Isolation can take several forms

Living alone; rural isolation; emotional isolation (having no-one to interact with or confide in); isolation due to disability; isolation due to poverty

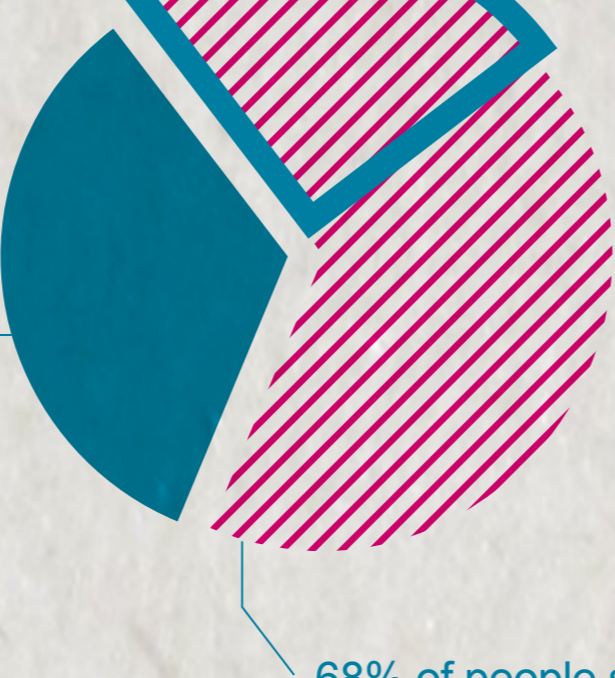
Friendship

Half of all older people say that TV is their main form of company

FIVE million

More than a quarter of people over 65 do not have a best friend

1/3 of people over 65 see their local supermarket as somewhere to socialise and get out of the house



Health

Loneliness and isolation are also associated with depression (either as a cause or a consequence) and higher rates of mortality

Being lonely has a significant and lasting effect on blood pressure, with lonely individuals having higher blood pressure than their less lonely peers



The influence of social relationships on the risk of death are comparable with well-established risk factors for mortality such as smoking and alcohol consumption and exceed the influence of physical activity and obesity

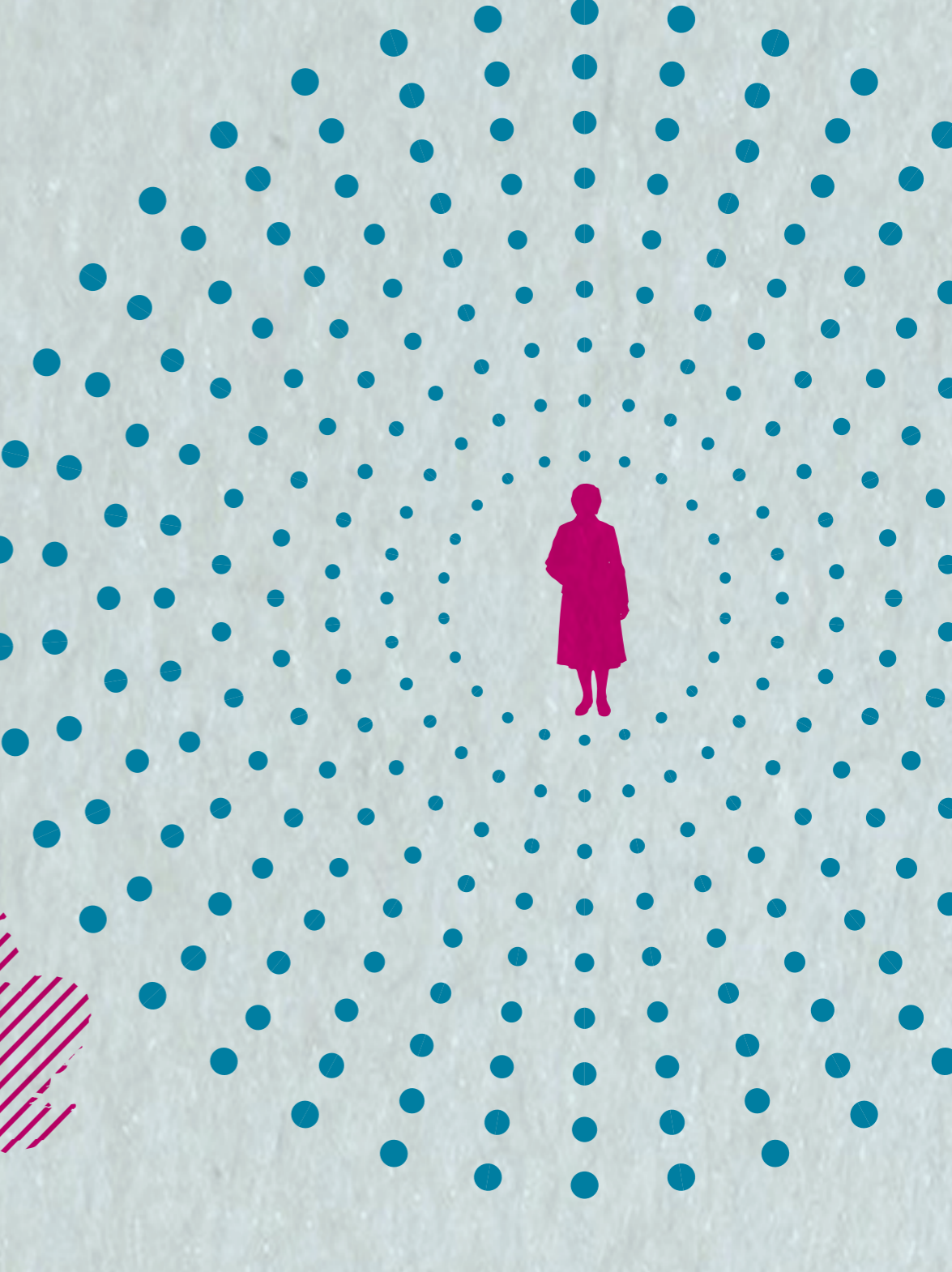
On The Other Side Of The Door

About 370,000 over 75's spend 'zero hours' with other people on a typical day

13% of people say they would consider having a lonely older person to stay over Christmas

Over 1/2

of people in the UK would like to help reduce the isolation of older people in their community, but almost a third do not have the confidence to do so (see below for what you can do to help)



Risk

There are risk and resilience factors for social isolation later in life. How do you measure up?

Resilience

- ✓ Aged 75 plus
- ✓ Poverty or having a limited education
- ✓ Being single, divorced or never married
- ✓ Living alone, or not having any surviving children
- ✓ Becoming a carer or spouse going into care
- ✓ Poor health – immobility, cognitive and sensory impairment
- ✓ Bereavement
- ✓ Retirement
- ✓ High levels of material deprivation
- ✓ Living in an area in which crime is an issue

- ✓ Having children who live nearby
- ✓ Marriage or remarriage or a long-term partner
- ✓ Living with a partner or family
- ✓ Having a large or diverse circle of friends
- ✓ Regular exercise and physical activity
- ✓ Having an active social life
- ✓ Having a healthy diet
- ✓ Volunteering in your local community
- ✓ Being part of a local social group or society

Isolation is a hidden problem but there are signs you can look out for

Spotting the signs that can lead to isolation



- ✓ You have been recently ill and going out less
- ✓ A recent bereavement and you are experiencing grief
- ✓ You have moved to a new area and are having problems settling in and making new friends
- ✓ Your hearing and/or sight has become worse
- ✓ You are taking less care of yourself and you are not concerned about your appearance

Open The Door

We can all play a part in helping prevent isolation in vulnerable older people by opening the door on isolation

Taking Control



Get active - Do some light exercise, whether it's tending your garden, using the stairs more regularly or joining a walking club



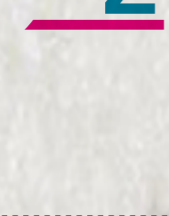
Get involved - Take steps to become more engaged in your local community by visiting a lunch club or volunteering at a local scheme



Stay connected - Talking to people is one of the best ways to feel good and avoid loneliness. See friends and family regularly, or if you can't get out but would like some company try using the internet to keep in touch with people wherever they are. Contact Friends of the Elderly (www.fote.org.uk) about befriending or WRVS about its transport services so you have the practical support you need



Eat well - A healthy and balanced diet will help you feel your best. It's important to stay hydrated too



Sleep well - You may find that your sleep patterns change as you get older and you need less sleep than you used to. It might make you feel lethargic each night and improve your sleep by reducing day-time naps, going to bed at the same time each night and reducing the amount of caffeine you drink

What Others Can Do To Help

If you see an older person struggling, for example in the supermarket, ask them if you can help – and then stop to have a chat if they want

Don't forget your own older relatives and friends – try to call or visit them. Stay in touch

Remember older people's birthdays – send them a card (www.smartsenda.com)

Regularly check on older neighbours or friends – drop by for a chat

Become a volunteer – either with FoTE (www.fote.org.uk) or find other volunteering opportunities at (www.do-it.org)

Support Friends of the Elderly to provide more services – donate at (www.fote.org.uk/support-us/donate)

"When one thousand adults were surveyed in the UK about who is responsible for tackling isolation amongst older people, 64% of them said that families were most responsible, with only 10% believing this was down to the government or any other organisation."

Are You Feeling Lonely Or Isolated?

Phoning Friends is a telephone befriending service for people over 60 years old living in England and Wales. It is ideal for older people who live alone with little contact from family or friends. This amazing service helps prevent feelings of loneliness and isolation by providing a regular phone call from a friendly volunteer

To find out more contact us on 020 7881 1148 or email info@phoningfriends.fote.org.uk

www.fote.org.uk/resources/infographic
To see sources click link

Help us to reach more lonely older people this Christmas. To donate £3 text FRIENDS to 70007. www.fote.org.uk



Texts to FRIENDS will be charged at £3.00 plus one message at your standard network rate; the charge will show on your bill and the sender will show as a five digit number 70007. Full terms and conditions of text giving are available on our website www.fote.org.uk