



Changing the Future of Loneliness

Friends 
of the Elderly

JULY 2014

Welcome

Friends of the Elderly supports older people with a range of care and support services. For so many of our beneficiaries, loneliness is a critical issue and yet, can be overcome with relatively simple interventions. So why are over one million older people often or always lonely?

Over the next 15 years there will be more older people in the UK than ever before. Combined with the quickening pace of technology, changing demographics within the older population, and issues such as poverty, we have identified a 40% increase in the number of older people living with the devastating effects of loneliness.

How we all respond to this challenge is vitally important for the lives and futures of so many people. Despite continued cuts in public spending and limited resources in the third sector we need to think innovatively about support services, befriending initiatives and other ways in which we reduce the impact of loneliness.

We believe the future of loneliness can be changed by becoming more connected as a society. Through *Be a Friend* we want to change the way we all behave - a smile or friendly word for an older neighbour, helping with everyday tasks, or simply making it clear that support is there when needed.

It may sound simplistic, but if we can bring young and old together through these everyday acts society as a whole will benefit. We want *Be a Friend* to be a catalyst for change - raising the awareness of loneliness, making support and befriending services more accessible, and changing the future of loneliness.

We're proud of the way we tackle loneliness. If our story inspires you to want to take action join us at www.beafriendtoday.org.uk.



Steve Allen
Chief Executive,
Friends of the Elderly

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Care and respect for over 100 years

We've been helping and caring for people since 1905. In 1972 we became Friends of the Elderly to focus exclusively on the needs of the older population who form such an important part of society.

Our beliefs are simple - we believe that all older people should live full and rewarding lives and be treated with the respect they deserve. We support older people, particularly those in need due to physical or mental frailty, isolation or poverty. We make sure our services are personalised to individual's needs and integrated within their local community. Whether through our residential, domiciliary or day care services, or via our befriending services like *Phoning Friends* and *Visiting Friends*, or as a part of the community groups we run, we are committed to providing excellent care and support for all older people who need our help.

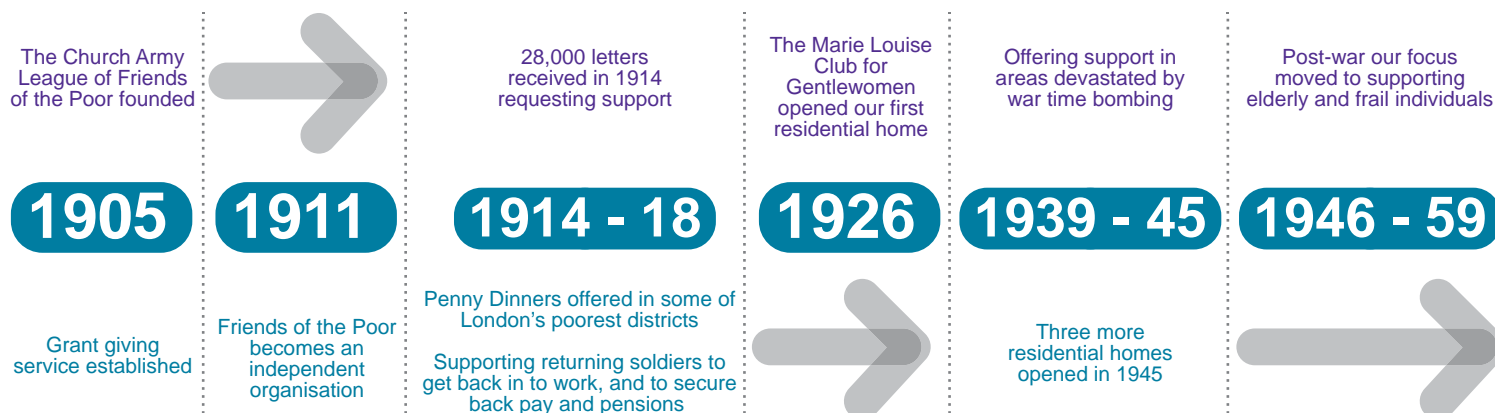
Our Values

We have clear values to guide us – we believe in:

- the unique worth of each person at all times
- the rights of each older person to the resources necessary to maintain a decent quality of life
- the importance of holistic care and support
- the value of community interaction
- a consistently professional approach
- valuing people's passion and skills.

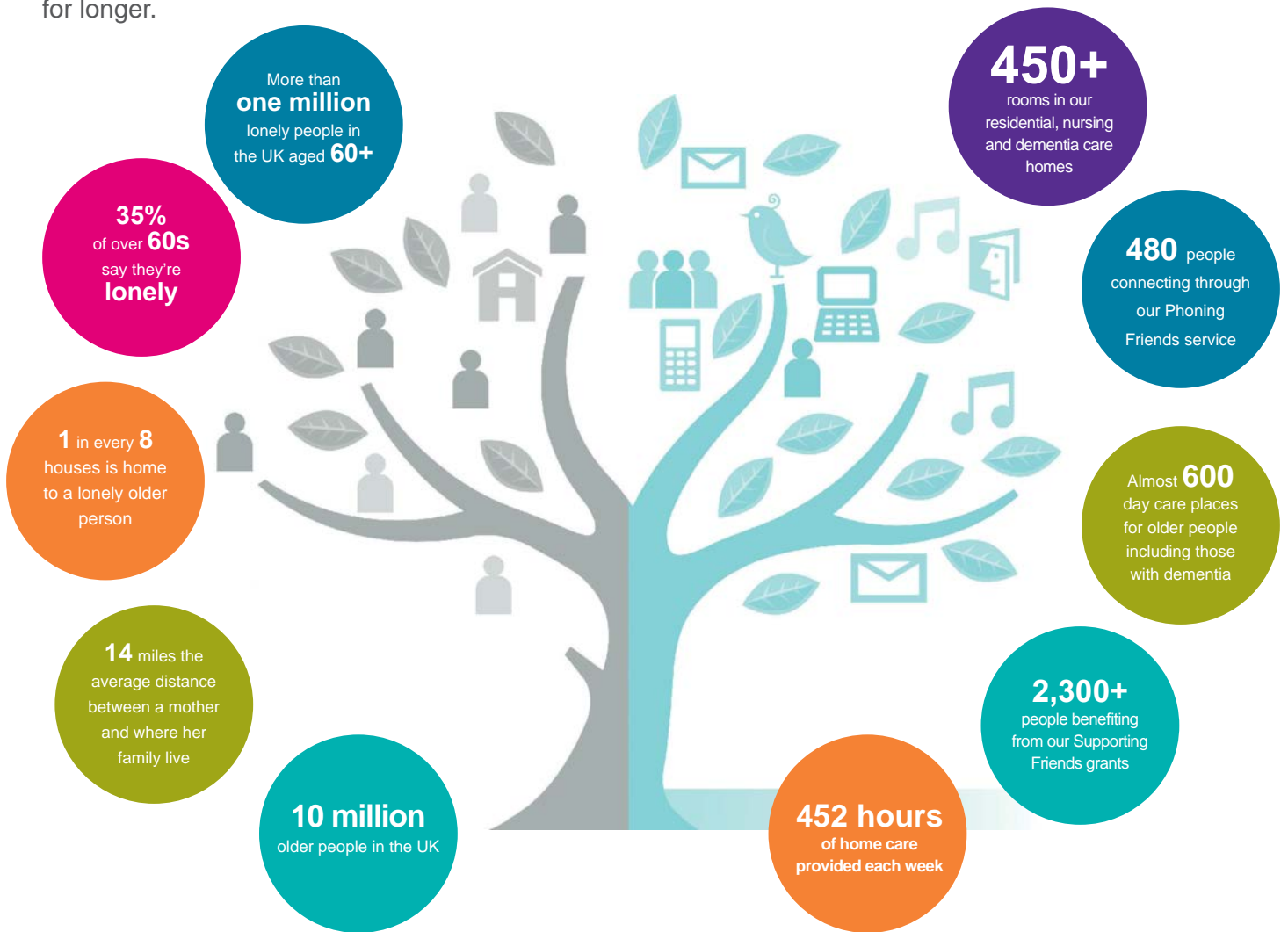
We understand the devastating impact that loneliness can have on lives, especially when we get older. Our fundraising and partnerships enable us to tackle loneliness and isolation head-on. By raising awareness of the issues and by offering the support and interaction people need, we are working to reduce the number of people living with the effects of loneliness.

Our Journey



Our Impacts

We're a national charity and support service for older people which operates from around 30 locations across the country. We understand the issues that affect us as we get older – and we work to increase awareness of those needs and the support that is required to keep people living happier, fuller lives for longer.



1960

Our number of residential homes increased to 15



1972

Changed our name to Friends of the Elderly

New services developed to support older people in their own homes

1990 - 2012



- **1999** Among Friends Wallington and Friends at Home Woking
- **2000** Visiting Friends West Elmbridge
- **2003** Friends at Home Malvern
- **2004** Among Friends Kidderminster and Friends at Home Sutton
- **2007** Phoning Friends
- **2008** Howbury Lodge Day Centre
- **2009** Friends with Dementia
- **2011** Among Friends Wichenford
- **2012** Bradbury Court at Davenham, residential dementia care annex
- **2012** Merged with TLC Care Services

Future of Loneliness research looks at the issues affecting older people through to 2030

2014

Be a Friend campaign launches to change the future of loneliness

Reducing the devastating effects of loneliness

We've been tackling loneliness among older people for many years. Our services and community initiatives bring people together through meaningful and lasting contact.

More than one million older people in the UK say they are often lonely. That means that every eighth house is home to an older person feeling lonely. In some parts of the country that rises to every fourth home.

Our research has shown that by 2030 loneliness and isolation among the over 80s will rise by 40%. At this point Britain's older population will be larger than ever. The way society functions will also be very different – our personal relationships will change, male life expectancy will increase, and the way we communicate and interact will continue evolving.

As society changes over the next 15 years or so it is more important than ever for us all to continue adapting to the changing needs of individuals and entire communities.

Key Stats

One million lonely older people in the UK

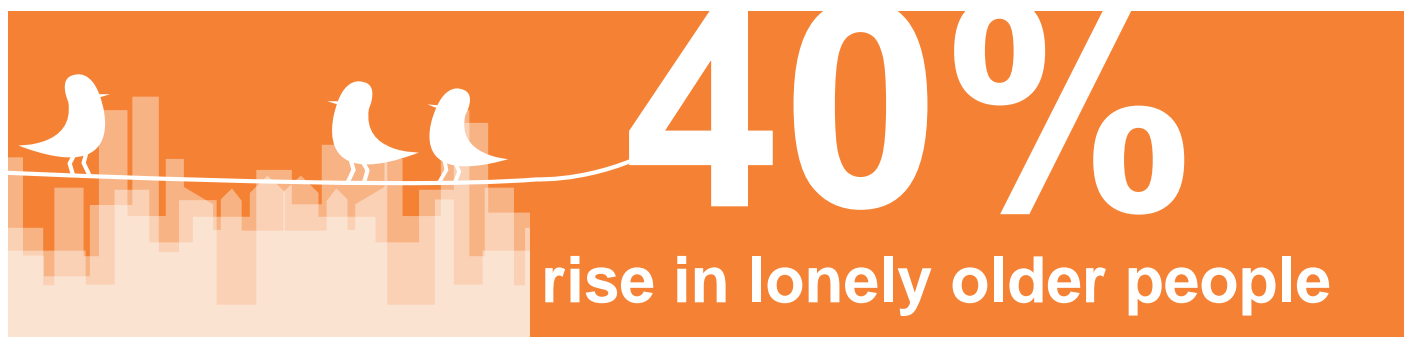
50% increase in older population forecast by 2030

One in eight houses is home to a lonely older person

In high risk areas this increases to one in four

10 million older people across the UK







Act now and change the future of loneliness

We see the impact that loneliness can have on older people every day. A lack of contact can destroy confidence, which in turn increases the risk of becoming isolated. That's why we're encouraging everyone to *Be a Friend* and become more neighbourly – simple daily interactions drastically reduce loneliness enabling people to live happier, fuller lives.

Be a Friend is about simple acts like stopping for a chat in the street, popping round for a cup of tea, or simply offering the sort of practical support that people really need but are unable to ask for. Simple interactions like putting the bins out, chatting about current affairs, or mowing the lawn are essential first steps to combating loneliness and building lasting relationships.

We know the great stories, diverse skills and experiences that are stored within our older population. Through *Be a Friend* we want to recognise that inter-generational relationships mean these are not lost – and embracing digital media means personal, local and national histories can be captured, shared and saved for future generations. Mentoring programmes in the workplace are seen as essential to personal development – we think the same relationships between old and young can help change the future of loneliness.



Loneliness – national, local and next door

Our research identified the issues facing the older population in the UK through to 2030. We also looked at what this would mean for local communities right across the country and we found that loneliness can vary greatly by location.

The predictions, based solely on demographic data*, found that approximately one in every eight houses across the country is home to a lonely older person. In some locations, this increased to almost one in every four, which could mean that these areas will also be more susceptible to increased loneliness in the future. We believe partnering with local organisations to develop initiatives and responses that bring people together will be particularly important in these areas.

By working at a local level we can provide help where it is needed most. *Be a Friend* will act as the catalyst to address loneliness in a collaborative and sustainable way. By working together we can raise awareness of the dangers of loneliness, ensuring that individuals, communities, businesses and other organisations can spot the signs of loneliness, signpost what support is available locally, and understand the role that we all have to play if we are to tackle the devastating effects of loneliness.



Areas of greatest potential need:

1. Christchurch
2. West Somerset
3. Rother
4. North Norfolk
5. East Devon
6. East Dorset
7. Tendring
8. West Dorset
9. Arun
10. East Lindsey

*It's important that we understand this model is only based on demographic data and does not take into account factors such as affluence, local community spirit and services. The purpose of the model is simply to predict where the areas of greatest potential need are likely to be.

Making a difference

Being a Friend is easy; it's simply getting to know the people that live around you and looking out for each other where you can. From having a chat at the bus stop or over the garden fence, there are so many simple ways you can stay connected. Just knowing a friend is nearby can make all the difference to someone who is lonely.



Here's **10** ways you can connect:

1. Collect a prescription
2. Pick up the shopping
3. Take out the bins
4. Pop in for a chat
5. Keep a spare key
6. Go out for a coffee
7. Check the smoke alarm
8. Take the dog for a walk
9. Offer a lift
10. Do the gardening

The power of 10

We want 30,000 people across the country to take up our challenge and pledge to *Be a Friend*. That means just 10 people in every UK town offering the simple human interactions that can combat loneliness.



***Partner With Us* to change the future of loneliness**

The role that businesses can play in creating empowered and connected communities is stronger than ever. Loneliness is a devastating issue, but through *Be a Friend* we are partnering with companies and organisations to identify simple, creative and impactful solutions that bring people and communities together.

By promising to *Be a Friend* you can help change the future of loneliness. We'll offer you all the support you need and help you create a *Be a Friend* campaign for your organisation that demonstrates your social responsibility, supports your business and enables you to provide a better future for the people that matter most – your employees, customers and communities closest to you.

Here's how to get involved

- Step 1:** **Get in touch** – together we'll plan the perfect partnership
- Step 2:** **Access our *Be a Friend* resource** – information packs, press releases, badges, banners, posters, and templates will give you all you need to get your workplace on board
- Step 3:** **Promise to *Be a Friend***. Through employee or customer engagement, volunteering, skill sharing or something specific to your organisation make a commitment to help us tackle loneliness

Six ways to tackle loneliness

- 1** Show your staff and customers how to spot the signs of loneliness and how they can help
- 2** Adopt *Be a Friend* and help raise the funds that allow us all to tackle loneliness
- 3** Appoint an 'older persons champion' and make sure your customer offer reflects their needs
- 4** Be a venue for a reminiscence event that brings people of all ages together through shared passions and interests
- 5** Give a little time and visit a local care home – a few minutes of conversation is all it takes to combat loneliness
- 6** Volunteer from behind your desk by becoming one of our telephone befrienders

Be a Partner – Be a Friend.

Better Connected

Reducing loneliness through meaningful connections

We build the relationships and offer the support that directly reduces loneliness and prevents isolation. Through befriending services like *Phoning Friends*, *Visiting Friends* or *Among Friends*, or through community groups and services through our care homes, we offer the human interaction and connection that combats loneliness.

As a charity much of the support we offer relies on the generosity of our supporters and the goodwill of our volunteers. Over the next few pages you'll find more information about each service, the impact they have on the people that use them, and how you can get involved.



“ something as simple as a conversation once or twice a week can significantly reduce loneliness ”

Day Care

Placing our services at the heart of the community

Our *Among Friends* service offers a day care service to local people over the age of 60.

The half and full-day sessions are great for socialising or learning new skills – and our personal approach makes sure each person gets the most from their visit. Together with our friendly staff and welcoming teams of volunteers we offer support with respect and dignity.

We help older people stay at home for longer by providing the accessible support that means individual needs are catered for, giving carers and family members the reassurance and confidence to take respite breaks once in a while. Our *Among Friends* service operates from four locations – find out more about our service at Wallington below.

Among Friends Wallington

Every day at Wallington we offer a range of activities, freshly prepared meals, and personal and health support services to around 30 local people.

We have developed close ties across the south London community. Local businesses support our ongoing fundraising activities as well as providing volunteers. We work with local schools to look at how visits can become part of the learning process, with musical performances or placement programmes offering everyone involved a great experience.

Christmas is always a special time at Wallington. The generosity of our partners is always incredibly moving – last year our local Iceland store donated a great New Year's dinner, while Rosebury School brought hampers and Christmas cards for everyone as part of their Christmas carol event.

Among Friends Wallington - Key Stats

12,600 lunches prepared every year

120 local people using our services

More than 800 raffle prizes given away each year

Over 250 volunteer hours provided each month

252 musical movement classes each year

100 hot drinks served every day

Home Care

Our specialist carers provide the support that helps people stay at home

Since 1999 *Friends at Home* has been offering care to local people in their own homes. For more than 12 hours a day, seven days a week, we provide care and support that responds to the needs of the individual. Every client receives the same high standard and consistency of care irrespective of how their needs may change while with us.

Our commitment to offering the care that people need has given us a strong local reputation. This means that while some of our clients are referred to us by social or health services, others will have come to us directly. Many of our services now have waiting lists so we want to grow *Friends at Home* and enable more older people to remain in their homes.

In 2012 we merged with the charity TLC who provide specialist home care support, community stroke support, and end-of-life care to people who wish to remain living in their own homes in East London and across Essex. TLC offer a range of services that aim to relieve poverty, disadvantage, illness and disability to all ages across the community. They specialise in services for people affected by dementia, strokes, or other forms of physical and mental disability, and also offer support to carers.

Friends at Home Woking

Across Woking our team looks after more than 70 clients. Playing such an integral and personal role in so many people's lives means we see the importance of local networks in tackling loneliness. Friends and family, health and medical practitioners, community support, carers; we all need to play a role in identifying and reducing the feelings of loneliness that, if left unchecked, can lead to isolation.

The visits are designed around the needs of the individual and include both practical and emotional support. Healthcare needs, help with paperwork, attending appointments or simply getting out and about – our trained carers offer the day-to-day support that maintains independence.

Friends at Home Woking - Key Stats

12 staff caring for 70+ people locally

Providing 300 hours of care each week

Offering home support up to 3 times a day

Our carers cover more than 35,000 miles every year

Visiting Friends

Volunteer services that build trust, confidence and stimulate social interaction

Our *Visiting Friends* programme acts as a way of rebuilding confidence that enables people to live a more active life in their community. Deep friendships often develop between client and volunteer – this close bond provides the trusting relationship that combats loneliness giving isolated individuals a route back into society.

Many of our clients are referred to us by health services or by family members. We understand the importance of small steps so our home visits, day trips and other events are designed to build confidence, stimulate social interaction and provide an introduction to the community services that are available.

Our volunteers can step in when family or friends are not around. Shared interests, likes, dislikes and beliefs are used to match our clients with volunteers, and regular checks monitor how the friendship is developing.

Building Communities

Even when surrounded by people, loneliness can still be an issue. In sheltered accommodation the loss or reduction of warden services can have a substantial impact. In these instances we try to restore the lost sense of community through monthly coffee mornings. As simple as it sounds, these regular events become an important date that the residents then manage themselves. More people attend, the conversation starts and other events soon follow.

Simple steps to increase inclusion

Every month we arrange simple trips for five of our clients to a local garden centre. The floral displays and aromas offer a stimulating environment that stimulates conversation and interaction. We then bring everyone back to a local centre in Woking for afternoon tea which offers an introduction to the centre, its staff and the types of activities they offer.

Bridging the age gap

We build relationships with local schools that provide real benefit to our clients. A local primary school came first for a visit, but now they're regular visitors with the children writing letters for our clients and painting pictures while they're here. The school now supports our fundraising activities and is a great advocate for all that we do.

Phoning Friends

Starting the conversations that bring people closer

A simple phone conversation every fortnight is all that it can take to reduce loneliness. We match our callers through their shared interests – putting people in touch who will find plenty to talk about.

With more than 120 volunteers regularly talking with 370 clients, getting to know each other while chatting about the weather, current affairs or anything else, *Phoning Friends* really does help bring people together.

Over 95% of our clients tell us that they've made a friend and the calls give them something to look forward to. We know *Phoning Friends* reduces loneliness and the confidence that the contact provides often helps people to become active in the community again. Our volunteers are integral to the service and come to us as individuals or through corporate partnerships.

Key Stats

Volunteers call two clients once every fortnight

The majority of calls last 30 minutes

Some conversations last for more than 90 minutes

All volunteers are security checked, referenced and given training

A volunteers perspective

Many of our volunteers offer their support due to personal circumstance – an older relative may have benefitted from our service, they may be recently retired or they may just want to help others. Many of our volunteers are students within the health services. They see the calls and conversations as a way of understanding the needs of older people while developing their bedside manner.

The corporate story

We work closely with businesses to align our *Phoning Friends* service with their own corporate responsibility programmes. In this way we help organisations show their commitment to a better society by creating volunteer programmes that see employees offering their time every fortnight to chat to two or three lonely older people. Staff from the Bank of England made calls lasting almost 260 hours in 2013 as part of their commitment to *Phoning Friends*.

Supporting Friends **Providing financial support when it's needed most**

We offer grants that help people stay independent for longer.

This includes help towards utility bills, buying white goods and furniture, or help with property maintenance or adaptation to meet specific needs. Recently, we've seen the demand for our grants increasing steadily.

Our support often goes much further than a grant. As part of our governance process we provide information to applicants about state benefits of which they might not be aware, or about other charities that can offer support. The grants we provide often act as the catalyst for individuals securing greater funds from other sources. We also welcome applications from community groups and other organisations to help fund trips and events.

Key Stats

£300,000 provided in grants each year

£259 average grant given to 660+ people

1,500 people benefitted from a social occasion or group holiday

66% of grants are for white goods, beds and carpets

There's more about our grants and the people we've helped later in this booklet.

Many of our services only exist because of the kindness of volunteers or the generosity of our supporters. We need this to continue if we are to keep connecting people – we welcome support in many forms and from many different people.

Anyone can get involved as a volunteer, fundraiser or donor. We welcome support from everyone – individuals, community groups, schools and colleges, and small or large businesses.

Our fundraising team can work with you to develop campaigns, employee volunteering schemes, skill swaps, or product and service donations that help you demonstrate your commitment and support to the people and communities around you.



Offering care with dignity and respect

We manage 14 care homes offering a professional and personal service to over 450 people.

Our homes employ more than 900 people and offer excellent support and accommodation for those requiring residential, nursing or dementia care. Ranging from modern purpose-built facilities to converted, elegant, Victorian homes, our properties are designed to offer care that meets our clients' physical, emotional and personal needs.

Central within the community

In total we manage 30 sites offering either residential, domiciliary or community-based support. We build relationships with the local community at each location. It is important to us that local people understand what services are available and how they can access the support that they, their family and friends, or neighbours may need. Our unique position means we can see the opportunity to change the future of loneliness by making people more aware of the services and support that are already available within their community.

Building strong local relationships means we are able to welcome volunteers into our homes and services in a way that strengthens communities. Local relations with schools offer work experience opportunities, while for students from the performing arts their first public performance is often in one of our homes. Local businesses help us offer valuable experiences to our residents that otherwise would be missed – fish and chips wrapped in newspaper, or just simply talking a resident through how tablets and smart-phones can bring photos or music to their fingertips. These are the sort of experiences and support that really make a difference.



A diverse heritage

Our properties are as diverse and as interesting as the people we care for.

We have 14 care homes across the country and all are very different – some are converted historic properties, while others are new, purpose-built facilities. We can look after more than 450 older people – all of whom have very different needs, so our properties must be able to cater for these needs now and into the future.

For our older buildings this means a programme of refreshing and modernising where it is required. Three of our properties are listed so all improvements must be sensitive to retaining the building's historical integrity. Our built heritage creates an unusual environment for our residents – being cared for in the old family home of the Perrins, of Lea and Perrins fame, offers a unique experience for our residents.

Many of our properties are set in substantial grounds. To reflect the diverse habitats these present four of our sites have tree preservation orders, and we make sure that any development work we undertake considers the impact on local flora and fauna. We are responsible for the woodland areas around our properties and at Woodcote Grove and Orford House in Coulsdon we are developing a new wildlife management plan as part of our development programme.



**GREENER,
CLEANER
TECHNOLOGY**

At Bradbury Court we've installed solar panels to heat our hot water supply, and within future developments we seek compliance with BREEAM regulations and look to install energy and water efficient systems and processes wherever we can.

We want to change the future of loneliness – here's how;

Be a Friend

Our commitment to changing the future of loneliness

- We want 30,000 people across the country to *Be a Friend*
- We will champion the needs of older people as society changes over the next 15 years
- We will work with national organisations to ensure the needs of older people are understood
- We will engage local partners across the country to establish the projects that help change the future of loneliness
- We will monitor and measure the impact our efforts have on lonely older people

Better connected

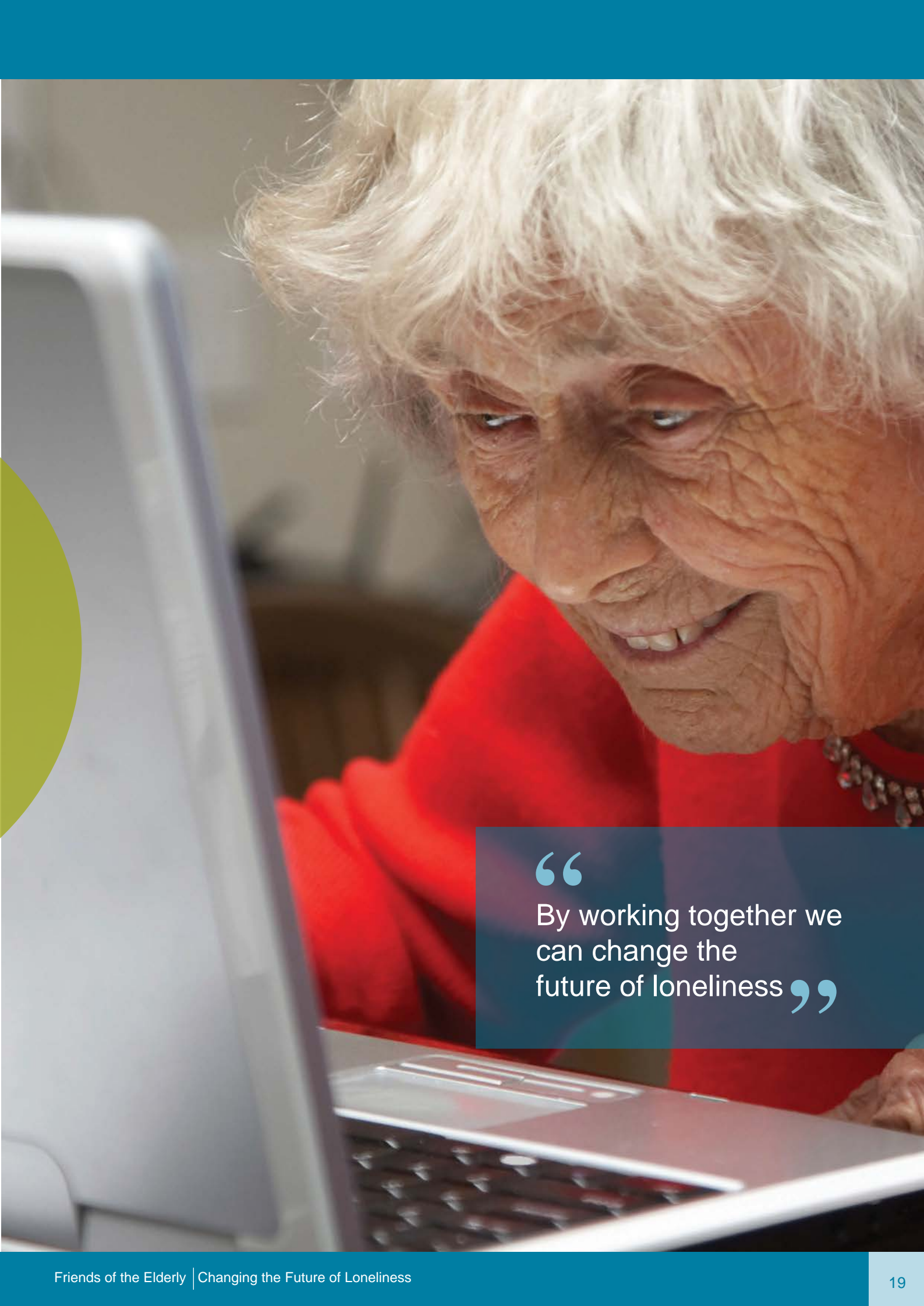
We will continue growing our befriending services to meet the increasing needs of a growing older population

- *Among Friends*
- *Friends at Home*
- *Visiting Friends*
- *Phoning Friends*
- *Supporting Friends*

We will look at how quantifying our impacts in different ways will help us tell our story better, engaging new partners in our work and developing the innovative solutions that directly reduce loneliness.

Our caring services

We will continue offering front line support services that allow older people to live happier, more fulfilled lives.



“
By working together we
can change the
future of loneliness”

There are so many wonderful stories that highlight just how diverse our organisation is. We think they highlight the value and opportunity Be a Friend offers and we've brought a few of them together here:

JUST THE TICKET

Mary, one of our residents at Orford House, was Croydon's first female traffic warden. After WW2, with her husband working on the railways, Mary started working for Croydon Council, before she successfully applied for a role as a traffic warden. Little did she know that she would be the first of many women to follow in her footsteps walking the beat around Croydon.

She said her favourite saying was 'see you in court' when faced with a driver that didn't agree with her issuing a ticket!



AROUND THE WORLD

Frank, a resident at Woodcote Grove, has worked all around the world. Working for what is now the Foreign Office he visited many different countries across Africa and South America. This included being the Deputy High Commissioner for Guyana.

Now 90, Frank has four children and many grandchildren. The walls of his room at Woodcote Grove are covered with photos and calendars of his family.

STODY LODGE AND GARDENS, NORFOLK

The Norwich Door to Door service applied to Supporting Friends for a grant of £550 to take 25 of their clients for a day out at Stody Lodge and Gardens. After visiting the gardens the group enjoyed tea and cake supplied by another local charity. 90% of the group said they only get to go on trips like that once or twice a year, and 72% of passengers said their feelings of loneliness and isolation improved a lot as a result of the outing.

THE LUNCH BREAK

A number of local businesses from the south coast, led by Travel Places, work together to put on an annual Christmas lunch. Hosted at Sussex County Cricket Club's ground in Hove the dinner brings over a hundred local older people together.



EKTA SANGAT LADIES GROUP CHRISTMAS LUNCH

A grant from *Supporting Friends of* £455 helped fund a Christmas lunch for 80 ladies from this group. At this time of year feelings of loneliness can intensify so it was great to hear just what a difference our support made.

As part of the feedback we received from the group we heard that for one of the ladies this was the first time she had been out that year, while another lady, who had lost her husband several years earlier around Christmas, said that because of the lunch this was her first Christmas since then without fear.



A LEARNING CULTURE

We are very proud of the way we develop our staff and volunteers right the way across our organisation. Sam joined our Wallington Day service initially on work experience, after which she applied to become a volunteer within the day care service. She then took on the role of a bank worker and when a vacancy came up she applied for the position of day care assistant. Sam has now been employed with us for five years and she is now a day care assistant and minibus escort and is now working towards a Level 3 diploma in Health and Social care.

MORE THAN JUST BRICKS AND MORTAR

It's not just our residents that have interesting stories. Our Davenham care home in Gloucestershire was the home of the Perrins family, famous for producing the Lea and Perrins sauces we all know.



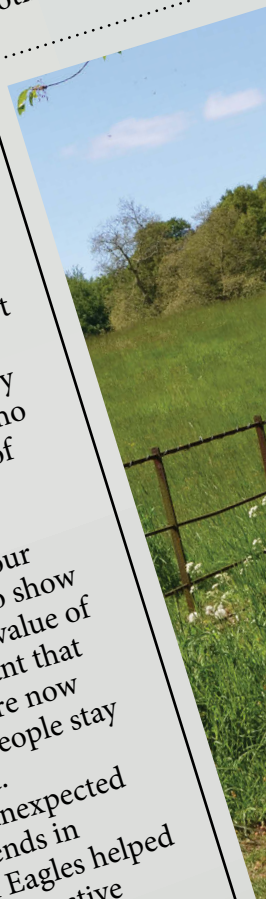
DIGITALLY CONNECTED

We've been working closely with Barclay's Digital Eagles team. As part of the bank's commitment to make their services accessible to all, every branch now has a Digital Eagle who helps customers make the most of their online banking services.

With us they've been visiting our care homes and day centres to show our carers and residents the value of getting online. This has meant that photos, songs and videos are now more accessible, helping people stay connected with their past. It's also provided some unexpected benefits. At *Among Friends* in Wallington, the Digital Eagles helped develop a new and interactive menu that helped all our residents and visitors choose the meals that they wanted. It saved a lot of time for our employees while also making the process a lot simpler and more enjoyable for our diners.

LITERARY CONNECTIONS

The Lawn, one of our care homes in Hampshire, was once home to the novelist Elizabeth Gaskell. Her books provided an accurate depiction of life in Victorian England. Working with Charles Dickens she also published a series of gothic ghost stories.





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