

# **Older People and Loneliness in Rural Areas**

IMPACT Facilitator Project 2023/24 (Scotland)

Nicola Watson, June 2024

## Project Background

IMPACT is a UK centre for implementing evidence in adult social care, with the vision that ‘good support isn’t just about ‘services’ – it’s about having a life’. In pursuit of this, the key objectives for the centre are to enable practical improvements on the ground and make a crucial contribution to longer-term cultural change. One way to achieve this is through Facilitator Projects. Topics for these twelve- month projects are proposed by the agency and a Facilitator is appointed to support bottom-up change. Based in the agency, Facilitators lead an evidence-informed Theory of Change project. Findings and outcomes are shared for replication across the sector.

The aims of this project were to explore approaches to reducing loneliness in rural areas and identify areas for the development of services in Moray for older people.

## Pre-Project Evidence

### **What did the initial evidence review tell us?**

Research to date consistently suggests that the prevalence of loneliness in older people in rural areas requires urgent attention (Hussain et al., 2023). Loneliness is a major contributor to ill health, both mental and physical (Williams et al., 2022). Social isolation, ill health and socio-economic deprivation mean that older people living in rural areas are at higher risk of experiencing loneliness (Hussain et al., 2023). At the same time there is agreement that there is no ‘one size fits all’ in relation to interventions, however the following were identified as effective in reducing loneliness:

- Having a meaningful role within the family
- Participation in neighbourhood and religious groups
- Volunteering
- Sports and exercise
- Using technology to establish and engage with social networks
- Social prescribing

- Education for social participation

The full IMPACT Evidence Review can be read on the [IMPACT website](https://impact.bham.ac.uk/our-projects/facilitators/loneliness-among-older-people-in-rural-areas/) (https://impact.bham.ac.uk/our-projects/facilitators/loneliness-among-older-people-in-rural-areas/).

## Project Engagement

### **What did we do in Moray**

Along with the host organisation, Health and Social Care Moray, and particularly their Shared Lives Service, a local Theory of Change was developed. The Theory of Change set out the local context:

- Budget pressures within Health and Social Care Moray
- Heightened eligibility criteria for services
- Ageing population in Moray
- Recruitment challenges across the social care sector

It also agreed the initial aims:

- Explore the range of services / groups / support available in Moray to reduce loneliness for older people whilst also gaining insights into what may cause and prevent loneliness in rural areas
- Co-develop, with older people and those who deliver support, recommendations for the development of services in Moray

### **Main Activities**

1. Mapping the range of services, support and groups available in Moray to prevent / reduce loneliness (see [Mapping Report](#))
2. Meeting with older people, their families and those who provide support to seek their views on:

- Factors which lead to loneliness,
- What helps people feel connected,
- What would reduce loneliness in Moray.

This was initially achieved through the use of postcards which were either used as a discussion tool or completed individually and returned to the Facilitator. Evidence was collected by:

- Discussion / postcard completion at community groups and events such as coffee mornings, community meals and social groups
- Informal chats over coffee with those who draw on the care and support of Shared Lives and their Shared Lives carers
- Postcards returned via post (often from those in the most rural areas handed out by Post Offices and [Big Blue Mobile Pantry](#))
- Use of Talking Mats and informal discussions with individuals with dementia or learning disabilities
- Online survey to capture views of those underrepresented by the above. This included men (Scottish Men’s Shed Association) and unpaid carers ([Moray Carer Support Service - Quarriers](#)) although with limited success
- Microsoft Teams and in-person meetings with those who deliver services or support working in Moray Council, NHS Grampian, Third Sector and Community Organisations

<b>Who took part</b>	<b>Number</b>
Older people and members of the community	102
Those who deliver services and/or community support	54
Total number of views gathered	156

Table 1: Number of views gathered

The focus was on two areas initially: Buckie and the Keith & Speyside localities. Both areas have higher than average percentages of older people, but the communities are very different, for example, Buckie has many coastal fishing villages in

comparison to the widely dispersed and rural farming community of Keith and Speyside. The focus widened to include Elgin due to the concentration of services and activities for specific groups of people in the town.



Figure 1: Moray, North East Scotland

3. Exploring a range of services and activities from across the UK and reviewing their effectiveness in reducing loneliness and in relation to the project's local context. Online and in person meetings were held, when possible, with those delivering these services or activities.
4. Comparing and contrasting the experiences and views of other groups of people, for example, people with learning disabilities or sensory impairment, individuals living with dementia and their carers and other minority groups such as the LGBTQ+ community.
5. Sharing findings, obtaining feedback and co-developing recommendations for service development. This was achieved in two ways. Firstly, with older people in three small 'fly cup' (<sup>1</sup>Doric for tea and cake) groups were facilitated (in Buckie, Glenrines and online) for discussion on the services and activities from other areas of the UK. Sessions ended with participants using counters to vote for those services / activities that they feel would help reduce loneliness in Moray. Feedback was also sought in a similar way at a

<sup>1</sup> Doric is a dialect spoken in the North-East of Scotland

community coffee morning of which more details can be read here:

Connecting Communities- [Keith Coffee Morning](#).

Secondly, for those who deliver services, meetings were held with Health and Social Care Teams (Shared Lives, Day Opportunities and Practice Governance group) and the Facilitator attended the Health and Wellbeing Forum organised by Third Sector Moray, culminating in IMPACT leading an event on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at the Inkwell in Elgin.

### **Older People and Loneliness in Rural Areas of Moray Event – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

The event brought together 20 people from the NHS, Third Sector, Moray Council, and Community Organisations to hear the views of older people in Moray gathered throughout this project. A ‘world café’ was held with four topics discussed, leading to connections between organisations and co-development of the recommendations detailed in this report. The main learning as shared by those who attended were:

- Awareness of what is available in their local communities and other areas to reduce loneliness and how this can be shared with the older people they work with.
- How to connect people to these services.
- The importance of listening to older people in local communities about what is needed

## Project Outcomes

### **What does loneliness mean to people in Moray**

Loneliness is a complex issue which in recent years has been in danger of becoming medicalised and of having a simple ‘treatment’ or ‘solution’ however, the IMPACT evidence review suggests that loneliness is based on perceptions, evaluations and responses and is expressed through feelings, thoughts and behaviours (Hussain et al., 2023). The findings from this project reflect this with the views shared on loneliness differing from person to person as demonstrated below:

“Some people like their own company. For some it’s the reason they moved to Moray.” Community volunteer

“Loneliness is waking up in the morning and knowing I will not see or hear from anyone for the rest of the day.” Older person

“To me loneliness is not feeling included in anything - you can be in a crowd of people and still experience loneliness.” Person delivering care and support

Despite these differing views the most common responses in relation to the meaning of loneliness were lack of meaningful interactions, isolation, and no one to share time with as depicted in the word cloud below:



Figure 2: Responses to "What does loneliness mean to you?"

### What do people in Moray feel leads to loneliness?

There are many factors, both personal and societal, that can lead to loneliness throughout a person’s life. The table on the next page represents the most common responses to this question.

Personal factors and life transitions	Community and societal factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bereavement / relationship breakdown</li> <li>• Limited mobility / ill health / dementia / sensory impairment</li> <li>• Limited family support</li> <li>• Lack of confidence</li> <li>• Relocation to or within Moray</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of accessible transport</li> <li>• Shortage of social support</li> <li>• Lack of awareness of what help / groups / services are on offer</li> <li>• Reliance on technology for booked / advertising etc.</li> <li>• Closure / lack / cost of accessible meeting spaces</li> </ul>

Table 2: Most common responses to the question "What leads to loneliness in Moray?"

These views are similar to findings in academic research with a few notable exceptions:

“The dark nights (lead to loneliness) – people close their curtains when they get home, and people don’t see one another.” Community organisation

“There are some people we will not see in the winter because of the snow.” Person delivering services

“Often people are unaware of what is available.” Community volunteer

“Volunteers are getting older and there is a lot of pressure on them. Many are burnt out but there’s no one to replace them.” Community organisation

“Technology (leads to loneliness) - we don’t understand, so don’t belong in this world.” Older person



In the Keith and Speyside locality transport was a key theme - with the majority of specialistic groups being in the more populated areas of the locality or travel to Elgin being required:

“Even if activities are on, you can’t get to them which makes you feel worse.”  
Older person.

There appeared to be a lack of awareness of the services provided by the mconnect bus or Speyside Car Sharing Scheme. The dispersed nature of population in Speyside also impacted on people’s awareness of groups and services with one community worker saying:

“There isn’t a village square, ... so you really need to know the local networks or community connectors.”

In comparison, within the Buckie locality there was a mix of experiences in relation to transport, with some highlighting how the mconnect bus service keeps them connected whilst others had negative experiences to share. However, there was generally felt to be a lack of awareness of what was available to reduce loneliness.

In both Keith and Speyside and Buckie localities there was at times a feeling of disconnect between ‘incomers’ and ‘locals’ with mention made to a lack of shared history, values and dialect. A lack of accessible meeting spaces and social support was of concern to those in Elgin.

It should be noted that the presence of these factors does not necessarily always lead to loneliness and, as with the meaning of loneliness, the causes can vary from person to person.

## What groups or services do people in Moray say makes them feel connected?



Figure 3: What makes people feel connected in Moray (summary of key elements)

The most common responses about connection related to groups, services or activities that involved meeting people with common interests or experiences. In some cases, this was an interest group such as Moray Monday Club, for those with the shared experience of living with or caring for someone with dementia, or groups for those of a similar age such as Senior Citizens Association.

Individuals spoken to with learning disabilities (albeit of a younger age) agreed with many of these points. However, whilst they preferred meeting with people in person, many did see the benefit of using technology to connect with family and friends across the country and even further afield. Some regularly joined online activities and made friendships that would not have been possible otherwise, using technology to widen their social circle and connections.

In Keith and Speyside food and drink (often along with music) were felt to connect people, and in the villages around Buckie there was an emphasis on how neighbours support one another with a Cullen resident saying:

“I think it's the fishing community mentality. Other places people don't chat but here everyone looks out for one another.”

The following are examples of effective community services:

- The Hub in Buckie
  - A member of the community shared, “I didn't know anyone, but I went to the Hub. It was a lifeline.”
  - A place for signposting, advice, meeting and chat, run by community volunteers (with support from local organisations) for the community means The Hub is flexible, responsive and welcoming to all ages in the community.
  - Those who visit said they found support, community and purpose, with some going on to become volunteers.
  
- Shared Lives
  - One older person shared, “I would be lonely if my Shared Lives carer didn't come and take me out, it's the only time I go out.”
  - Shared Lives carers are self-employed, working from their own homes. They are matched with mainly older people in Moray, providing transport and the chance to explore shared common interests and support to build connections locally.
  - The Shared Lives Officer shared what makes it different from other services, saying: “It's a mutual exchange - a friendship that's built. The people we support become part of the Shared Lives carer's family.”
  
- Aberlour Community Lunch
  - This is a well-attended monthly community lunch that was mentioned numerous times by people in Speyside.

- A volunteer from the Aberlour Senior Citizens Association organises transport and a lunch at a local hotel, promoting social cohesion while sharing a meal.
- The Moray Monday Club, Elgin
  - This was described by one member as “A circle of friendship,” it offers activity and support to approximately 80 members living with dementia and their carers (with an average age of 86).
  - A warm welcome, fun and laughter, cakes, music and understanding are all on offer making it popular with men and women.
  - Run by volunteers it is the only club of its type in Moray, meaning people often travel from Forres and other areas to attend.

### What would help to reduce or prevent loneliness in Moray?

The views of people in Moray on this topic have been synthesised into four themes which form the basis of recommendations for service development.

#### 1. Signposting and Connecting: Work with individual communities to develop innovative ways of sharing and connecting people with services and resources available.

- Use local people and networks to signpost and connect to what is available. An example of this from the West of England Rural Network is [Village Agents](#). It should be noted that reliance on social media as a source of advertising was cited by many older people as leading to increased loneliness. A community volunteer shared that in her experience, “People respond well if personally invited.”
- Joining an already established group was considered a barrier for some, with one volunteer saying, “Walking in can be awkward. Some places you can’t wait to leave.” Therefore, a warm welcome is important. [The Good Practice Mentor Team Events](#) is an example of this.

- The Hub in Buckie (mentioned above) was spoken of as a successful source of signposting as well as offering a meeting place and social connection for people of all ages. This type of service could potentially provide support with accessing information available on social media (and thus reduce the barrier created by technology).
- Paper forms of signposting or information in newspapers was mentioned as useful, particularly for those who may struggle to remember verbal information.
- Signposting is sometimes not enough, there is often a need to help people connect with other people within their community, as one older person said, “I’m quite happy now but that initial step to get out and meet new friends was so hard. Maybe a service that could support older people to get out and link in if they don’t have confidence.”

This could include:

- Travel - whether it be mconnect / lift from group member
- Someone to attend with such as a ‘buddy’ / social volunteer / Shared Lives carer
- Keep costs low
- Accessibility and inclusion considerations
- ‘Checking in’ and making sure all continues to go well

Support Workers in the Day Opportunities Team (Health and Social Care Moray) would have previously provided this support to those assessed as eligible. This service is no longer available due to budget pressures. However, the responses from older people involved in this project suggest that this type of support, with a wider reach (not only those eligible for a service) is needed.

- There is ongoing work on social prescribing (GPs referring people to activities, groups and support in their local community to improve health and wellbeing) and Making Every Opportunity Count (encouraging staff to have short conversations with people and signpost to relevant services) within NHS Grampian. In rural areas this might be most effective when working alongside

community-based initiatives, going beyond signposting into the connecting mentioned above.

- Wider awareness of the various signposting opportunities in the local community and by those who deliver services and activities. Although too many signposting services can cause confusion.
- Accessible travel is a key factor to connection:
  - Awareness of travel options, including mconnect (both timetabled and on demand services) to be shared within communities and services.
  - A North East Sensory Scotland (NESS) group would welcome training for drivers (and subsequent safe door to door support) on sensory loss and supporting those with mobility issues. An example of training being used to make transport more accessible is [Age Friendly Island and Southern Vectis](#) on the Isle of Wight.
  - Inclusive and flexible booking of mconnect and travel services was also important to many (being able to phone and book was mentioned frequently).
  - Mileage reimbursement for community volunteers would help to reduce the disparity in access to transport.
- Opportunities for connecting services / groups and communities with one another to avoid overlap and to share good practice. The “Fall Ball”, organised by Moray’s Community Wellbeing and Development Team for their [Be Active Life Long \(BALL\) Groups](#) is an engaging example.

## **2. Meeting Places: Promote and support the creative use of accessible, affordable and welcoming meeting spaces in everyday community places.**

Meeting spaces are closing (Elgin Community Centre closed this year and Tomintoul Day Centre closed a few years ago) but the wish for a place to meet is still present.

Meeting place suggestions include:

- Libraries
- Allotments / community gardens

- NHS Info Buses / Mobile Pantry or similar, offering a roaming place to meet and connect
- Approaching a local business to 'donate a space'
- Chatty Benches
- Pubs or cafes

These spaces could be used to host a [Public Living Room](#) or community group.

Using people's homes as the centre of connection is also seen as positive with [Shared Lives](#) Day Support and [Re-engage](#) Tea Parties (only one tea party currently in Moray), particularly for those who may not wish to be part of a large group, but this doesn't negate the need for opportunities for people to connect flexibly (perhaps at evenings and weekends) in their community.

Some examples of this are: Forfar's [Dementia Meeting Centre](#) (open 3 days a week) which meet in a Cricket Club, and Lochgilphead's Public Living Room which is held in the local shop. Consideration of the stigma or assumptions that people may associate with a meeting space is needed i.e. 'will a group in an NHS Info Bus only talk about NHS related issues?'. Ensuring that the meeting space itself does not cause barriers to relaxed connection.

There was a recognition that a meeting space without a clear initial purpose may struggle to attract people, but one example of this working is Cullen Community Centre who invited the community to watch Wimbledon with them and enjoy a strawberry tart. The hope is that this will evolve into an afternoon meeting space.

It should be noted that one of the most popular examples of support from other areas which older people in Moray felt would reduce loneliness (in the counter voting activity) was Dementia Meeting Centres, with one person saying, "Our friend was struggling to cope caring for his wife. This would have helped."

However, there was a recognition that careful consideration of setting and accessibility (both travel and mobility considerations) would be needed.

### 3. Activities: Empower communities to develop varied, inclusive and regular opportunities for connection and shared purpose.

- “Make use of the skills and experience locally... and encourage and make people part of the community solution.” Person delivering support
- Listening to the views of the local community about what is needed / works well in one community, recognising that this may be different from another, even those geographically nearby. In Moray this is highlighted by the difference in experiences and values in the fishing and farming communities.
- Consideration is needed in the naming, wording and best organiser of any activity. Assumptions of what a group do or who it is for (e.g. some people may not wish to attend a group for older people as they themselves don’t identify as ‘older’) and stigma associated with attending can have an impact on the effectiveness of activities. The neutral name could be one possible reason for the popularity of the Moray Monday Club in reducing loneliness for those with dementia and their carers.
- Common interests were seen as an important starting point for connection, for example, Retired Farming Social Group, Dumfries and Galloway as were men’s groups (ROME: Retired Older Men Eating Out, Men’s Shed) or activities for specific groups of people who, in rural areas may find it difficult to connect otherwise. This included Moray Monday Club (for those living with dementia and their carers) or those in the LGBTQ+ community.
- Support and training for community groups and volunteers whilst retaining ownership for the group within the community. Topics which may be beneficial include:
  - accessibility and inclusion (dementia, sensory loss, autism and physical disability were mentioned)
  - reaching those older people in the community often missed by groups and services (one effective example of this is from [Ageing Better Camden](#) with learning being shared by [The Good Practice Mentor Team](#))
  - administration, policies and insurance



The BALL Group model, with initial set up and ongoing support, is an effective and responsive example of this.

- Having support or activities at evenings and weekends was a popular approach to reducing loneliness in the counter voting activity with a common sentiment amongst older people being, “Evenings are the worst”, “Saturday and Sunday are long days.”

#### **4. Support the development of community relationships and trusted support:**

Time to get to know someone brings trust, leading to confidence to connect with the community whether this be between neighbours, an individual, community volunteer or paid supporter. One older person shared: “I wouldn’t have gone out before as I had no confidence. I have confidence with my Shared Lives carer - I know she will help me. I’ve come along with my husband today.”

- Shared Lives [Social Volunteers](#) as well as Shared Lives, including where a friendship can also be developed between two people supported by the same carer, are effective individualised and localised examples of this.
- People with a learning disability spoke of social support being crucial, as expressed by one person: “I need carers or my family, or I would find things difficult. People don’t understand and I get frustrated.” However, compromise or considering the needs of others was needed as their support was often shared with those they lived with. Living with others of a similar age was seen as a source of friendship.
- Eligibility criteria, waiting times and availability of support make it difficult for people to access formal services. [The Silver Circle, Strathdon, Aberdeenshire](#) demonstrates how a community can support one another by providing day support, lunch club and community transport to between 20 and 40 people.
- Meaningful and reciprocal intergenerational activities were seen as a very positive way to reduce loneliness in rural communities. One community member shared, “Intergenerational activities benefit everyone - the young person learns from the older person (who then) has a sense of purpose.” This

happens already and thought is already being given as to how this could be developed:

- [Active Schools](#) are interested in connecting with other services and groups to make an impact in local communities
- [Lossiemouth Men's Shed](#) are keen to encourage members from age 18 to join with the aim of mutual learning. This may involve linking with secondary schools and Duke of Edinburgh / Scouts
- Archiestown BALL Group are considering ways to link with children in the village on a more regular basis

[Homeshare](#) is another example of generations supporting one another, with an older person offering affordable accommodation to someone in exchange for companionship and help around the house. However, this model had mixed responses from both those delivering services and those in the community. The positives were felt to be peace of mind for families, accommodation for NHS workers and students, support in own home for older people, and reduced worry of living alone. The challenges were thought to be a wish for own space and privacy, and the need for careful matching and risk assessment.

### **What worked well on the Facilitator Project?**

Opportunities for discussion with those who deliver and draw on care and support as well as members of the community. In particular, meeting people face to face in their local communities worked well and enabled a wide range of voices to be heard. The smaller feedback groups, whilst not attracting many participants, did allow for some rich discussion. These also led to reflections on what they themselves could do to reduce loneliness in their communities.

### **What did not work so well?**

Pressure on services meant that often those who worked or volunteered directly with people were not readily available to share their experiences. However, the IMPACT Facilitator made use of online surveys to obtain the views of those working in the Independent Living Service and met in person with a number of Shared Lives carers.

Over engagement was cited by those supporting unpaid carers for the lack of responses from carers. An exception was the Moray Monday Club members who shared their own experiences of loneliness and caring for someone with dementia.

### What impact have we made?

- At local community level
  - People who deliver services are now more aware of what is available in communities across Moray. Additionally, people living in different communities are more aware of the services available to them. For example, people in Tomintoul are more aware of the mconnect service. Additionally, a Shared Lives carer has linked with a local community group for the person she supports.
  - Community organisations have reflected on their own activities / influence and have introduced community events, examples include Glenlivet - 'Let's Get Together' events and Portknockie Community Association are considering starting a Men's Shed and / or allotment with one member making the comment "you've given us a lot to think about for Portknockie."
  
- At local authority level
  - Health and Social Care Moray are equipped with the views of older people in Moray and of those who deliver support or community activities. It is hoped that this will enable informed decisions about approaches to reduce loneliness with older people.
  - Further exploration on the four themes in specific communities across Moray has been proposed. Alongside consideration of how social care can link to NHS signposting, the empowerment of communities to provide peer to peer support in connection and examples from elsewhere in the UK including Dementia Meeting Centres and Homeshare and their effectiveness in rural areas to be further researched.

- In the people who attended the June event there was enthusiasm to coproduce community activities or groups. 83% agreed with the statement – “I would consider working alongside people who draw on care and support to develop services / groups in the future.” 61% agreed that “I can see real opportunity for reducing loneliness within rural areas that I can act upon.” However, only one person felt that they had the time, knowledge and financial resources available to pursue this, suggesting this is a key barrier to change at a local authority level.
- Connections have been made between services, with one example being that of mconnect and the BALL Groups proposing to work together in awareness raising of transport opportunities for members either as individuals or as a group.

### **What opportunities are there for wider impact on policy and practice?**

The following key points have emerged from the project with implications for the wider UK social care sector:

- Loneliness is a community issue that requires a whole community response
- The use of technology for signposting and advertising is causing a barrier to connection for some older people
- Awareness of the impact of loneliness on wellbeing and cognition should be more widely recognised
- Signposting and personal support with connection are vitally important
- Listen to the voices of local communities about what is needed. Different areas need different approaches
- The BALL Group model provides a positive example of a supportive, responsive, community and strengths-based approach to reducing loneliness in rural areas
- The comparison is noted between social prescribing, [IMPACTAgewell](#) and the localised and flexible approach to signposting and connection which appears to be desired by the people of Moray

- The importance of intergenerational connections and reciprocity in reducing loneliness
- Effective and accessible transport has a vital impact on connections in rural communities

## Summary

This project has highlighted the diversity of resources and formally arranged services that are available across Moray. They are inevitably clustered around larger populations and many of these services are not necessarily for older people alone. This suggests that a focus on building community strengths and making smaller contributions to existing services to expand their remit a little, rather than creating a new service should be considered. Where populations are more diverse and people interact less naturally with other community members, these areas might need more effort and a co-produced approach to explore what might be wanted there, how it might be set up and how it can be supported to become self-sustaining in the longer term.

Such community-based development takes time and effort so Health and Social Care Moray might wish to target an area where there is little existing support or provision. There are a number of NHS, Moray Council and community approaches to signposting which perhaps could work together with localised connecting support to reducing loneliness.

Interestingly, some of the evidence that came from the IMPACT project and the subsequent recommendations are not all directly linked to loneliness but demonstrate a real desire for wider community connection across all ages in Moray in turn enriching the lives of everyone, including those experience loneliness.

## Appendix 1: Views Gathered

Older people and members of the community						Health and Social Care Moray	Third Sector
Buckie Locality	Keith and Speyside Locality	Elgin Locality	Forres Locality	Moray wide	Other rural areas of Scotland		
Alzheimer's Scotland Pop Up Café, Cullen  Buckie Community Lunch  Buckie Library  Buckie Salvation Army  Cullen Community Centre  Inspire  North East Sensory Scotland (NESS)	Aberlour BALL Group  Aberlour Senior Citizens Association  Alzheimer's Scotland Pop Up Café, Aberlour  Archiestown Post Office  Dufftown Community Trust  Glenlivet Coffee and Chat  Glenrinnes Coffee Morning  Keith Coffee Morning	Artiquins  Dance for Parkinsons  Elgin Football Club Coffee Morning  Joan and Darby- Royal Voluntary Service  Moray Monday Club  Retired Older Men Eating Out (ROMEIO)	Lossiemouth Men's Shed	Quarriers Moray Carer Support Service  Shared Lives  Big Blue Mobile Pantry- Moray Food Plus	Aberdeenshire Chatty Daisy Group (Shared Lives)  Highland Pride  LGBTQ+ Scottish Older People's Network	Access Team  Community Care Team Managers  Community Wellbeing Development Team  Day Opportunities Team  Health Improvement  Independent Living Services  mconnect drivers	Age Scotland  Alzheimer's Scotland  Caring Community Circle  Distress Brief Intervention Moray  Forres Area Community Trust (FACT)  Health and Wellbeing Forum  Moray Food Plus  Moray Wellbeing Hub

<p>Portknockie Cuppa and Company</p> <p>The Hub, Buckie</p>	<p>Kirkmichael and Tomintoul Community Association</p> <p>Roths Day Service</p> <p>Royal British Legion, Dufftown</p> <p>Tomintoul Coffee Morning</p> <p>Tomintoul Library</p> <p>Tomintoul Shop</p> <p>Tomnavoulin Post Office</p>					<p>Mental Health and Wellbeing Practitioner</p> <p>Moray Day Services</p> <p>North East Alliance for Population Health</p> <p>Practice Governance Group</p> <p>Public Transport Officer</p> <p>Realistic Medicine</p> <p>Shared Lives</p>	<p>NESS Quarriers</p> <p>Re-engage</p> <p>Shared Lives Plus</p> <p>Three Kings Cullen Association</p>
---	---	--	--	--	--	---	---

## Appendix 2: Examples from across the UK

Name	Area	Description
<a href="#">Age- friendly Communities</a>	Across Scotland and the UK. Perth and Kinross is one example.	The Age-friendly Communities approach was developed by the World Health Organisation. It ensures that older people are at the heart of decision making and involves local groups, councils, businesses and residents working together to make changes in their communities.
<a href="#">Age Friendly Island and Southern Vectis</a>	Isle of Wight	Age UK Isle of Wight developed training to enable service providers to become more age friendly. The training has been delivered to over 30 organisations across the island including police, fire service, Tesco, HMP Isle of Wight, library service and Isle of Wight Council. The main bus operator has incorporated this into their compulsory training programme.
<a href="#">Black Isle Cares</a>	Black Isle, Highlands	As well as providing befriending and meals at home, Black Isle Cares organise board game afternoons and community lunches hosted and served by school pupils for older people. Some pupils also help deliver meals to older people in their homes. <a href="#">Black Isle Cares Case Study- Generations Working Together</a>
<a href="#">Dementia Meeting Centres</a>	Across the UK  Angus has a Dementia Meeting Centre in every town	Meeting Centres are social clubs run from ordinary community buildings (Forfar's meeting centre is in a Cricket Club) and offer ongoing expert support and activities to people and families living with dementia. Meeting Centres are open at least one day a week for 5 hours.



<a href="#">Creative Befrienders</a>	Westminster	Creative Befrienders match volunteers with an interest in art with people living with dementia. They might create art, talk about their shared interests or plan a crafty day trip together.
<a href="#">Homeshare</a>	England and Wales	Homeshare involves, an older person living in their own home with a room to spare, is matched with a younger person who provides support in exchange for good quality, affordable accommodation. Homeshare organisations play a key role, undertaking all the key safety checks, making appropriate introductions, and providing ongoing support.
Intergenerational Activities: <a href="http://generationsworkingtogether.org">generationsworkingtogether.org</a>	Across Scotland	<p><i>“Intergenerational practice aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and contributes to building more cohesive communities. Intergenerational practice is inclusive, building on the positive resources that the younger and older have to offer each other and those around them”.</i> (Beth Johnson Foundation, 2009)</p> <p>See Black Isle Carers for an example.</p>
<a href="#">The Good Practice Mentor Team</a>	South Yorkshire Housing Association, Age UK Camden, Leeds Older People Forum, Torbay Communities	Good Practice Mentors offer free training for organisations that want to increase their engagement with, and support of, older people in the community. Topics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ageism</li> <li>• Co-production</li> <li>• Warm Welcome</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finding and engaging harder to reach older people</li> </ul>
<p>Public Living Rooms: <a href="http://camerados.org">camerados.org</a></p>	Across the UK	<p>Public living rooms are open to everyone. They are places for people to connect with one another, have a chat and drink tea. It is up to everyone what time a public living room is open and what it does. Examples of spaces used for a public living room include local shop, community centre or garden.</p>
Retired Farmers Social Group	Dumfries and Galloway	<p>The group was started by Alzheimer’s Scotland in response to observations that retired farmers in their area were socially isolated. The group now runs independently, by their own choice, and is open to those with an interest in agriculture. They charge a membership fee of £20 a year and organise speakers, trips to local farms etc. or just have a coffee, cake and chat. You can read more about them here: <a href="http://country-guide.ca">Retired farmers show they have a lifetime to share - Country Guide (country-guide.ca)</a></p>
<a href="#">The Silver Circle</a>	Strathdon, Aberdeenshire	<p>Using a Grant in Aid Model the Silver Circle provide day support, lunch club and community transport to their local community.</p> <p>They are seen as a trusted option for employment and volunteering opportunities as well as support for their small community, enabling those who may not consider pursuing a career in social care to ‘help their local community’. Some start as volunteers, and as they become less able, naturally progress to drawing on the support of the day service.</p>

<p><a href="#">Sporting Memories</a></p>	<p>Across the UK</p> <p>One example is The Snowdrop/ Multiple Sclerosis Centre, Mid Argyll</p>	<p>Sporting Memories Groups offer regular sessions to people aged 50 plus. They help people, including those living with dementia or impacted by loneliness, to improve their mental and physical wellbeing.</p> <p>MS Argyll's Sporting Memories Group offers outreach in people's homes, including with those living on remote islands.</p>
<p><a href="#">Street and Doorstep Outreach- Ageing Better Camden</a></p>	<p>Camden</p>	<p>Ageing Better Camden trialled street and doorstep outreach with the aim of finding and engaging with socially isolated and lonely older people who don't normally attend community activities.</p> <p>Street Outreach: Information flyers on activities and support, alongside an informal chat are offered to people in an area.</p> <p>Doorstep Outreach: Flyers are posted through the door and then people return to talk to the residents in a particular area. With the team offering to support people to attend a pop-up event.</p> <p><i>"We successfully found and engaged with 1000s of older people via street outreach, door-knocking and hosting informal pop-up events. 23% of those engaged through outreach activity went on to attend an outreach stepping-stone event and over 10% to embed in ongoing activities. This outreach approach also helped to find and connect individuals to their local communities and help older people to establish their own informal social networks."</i> (Ageing Better Camden)</p>

<p><a href="#">Village Agents- West of England Rural Network</a></p>	<p>Bath &amp; Somerset and South Gloucestershire</p>	<p>Village Agents are trusted local people who offer a face-to-face chat and help bridge the gap between isolated and lonely individuals and statutory and/or voluntary organisations.</p>
--	--	--

## Appendix 5: Services, Activities and Groups in Moray

Name	Where in Moray	Description of Approach	Why it works in Moray.
Aberlour Community Lunch	Aberlour	A well-attended monthly community lunch organised by a volunteer from the Aberlour Senior Citizens Association. Transport and lunch at a local hotel are arranged, promoting social cohesion while sharing a meal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing of food and drink</li> <li>• Regular connection</li> <li>• Transport provided</li> <li>• By a local person for local people.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Be Active Life Long (BALL) Groups</a>	19 groups across Moray. Approx 600 members.	<p>Communities are initially provided with support with set up and management skills and given initial funds by the Community Wellbeing Development Team (CWDT) within Health and Social Care Moray. Ownership of the group is then handed over to the now established local BALL Group Committee.</p> <p>BALL Groups all run in a similar way- fun physical activity followed by a social cup of tea and are encouraged to set a small membership fee to encourage long-term sustainability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community ownership.</li> <li>• Utilises community strengths.</li> <li>• Makes use of community connections.</li> <li>• Responsive to individual needs and changes.</li> <li>• Provides sense of purpose.</li> <li>• Volunteers receive support and ‘safety net’ of CWDT when needed.</li> <li>• Encourages community cohesion out with the group.</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Iriss- BALL Group Case Study</a></p>

		<p>Some BALL Groups have linked with <a href="#">Wild Things</a> (an environmental education charity) to give the opportunity for adventures in nature.</p> <p>Ongoing support is provided as required and CWDT can also refer onto other services for member as required.</p> <p>Additionally SET (Singing, Exercise and Tea) Groups, in some areas, provide activities for those who require more support.</p>	
<p><a href="#">Cullen Community and Residential Centre</a></p>	<p>Cullen - Village in the Buckie Locality</p>	<p>Cullen Community Centre is run by a local organisation - The Three Kings Cullen Association.</p> <p>The centre hosts a variety of groups and activities, including knitting, art, badminton, yoga, BALL Group, Men's Shed, cinema etc. Volunteers also provide a community lunch and twice monthly afternoon teas with entertainment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committed volunteers</li> <li>• Run by local organisation</li> <li>• Seeks the views of local people</li> <li>• Recognises travel can be a barrier and utilises volunteers or mconnect to support attendance.</li> <li>• Open to all ages</li> <li>• Variety of groups.</li> <li>• Welcoming</li> <li>• Responsive and creative in bringing people together.</li> </ul>

<p>Day Opportunities Team, Health and Social Care Moray</p>	<p>Across Moray</p>	<p>The Day Opportunities Team receive all the referrals from the Social Work Teams in Moray. After someone has had a Social Work Assessment, and if they meet the eligibility criteria for an SDS budget, the Enablers in the team speak with families and the person wishing to draw on support and signpost to community approaches or refer onto the appropriate service. This is a relatively new team (having been established in January 2022) but the aim is more effective referrals to services and to help people in making community connections. In the first 4 months the Day Opportunities Team reported approximately 87% were supported to engage in their own local community either independently or with support. Examples include: volunteering in community, short term support to use electric wheelchair, bingo with a befriender.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time is taken by the Enablers to get to know someone and have meaningful discussions.</li> <li>• Focus is on community-based support or activities where possible, rather than traditional building-based services.</li> <li>• Personalised, building on individual's interests and strengths.</li> <li>• Enabled to make choices.</li> </ul>
<p>Making Every Opportunity Count (NHS Grampian)</p>	<p>Across Moray by the Health Improvement Team</p>	<p>Making Every Opportunity Count is an NHS initiative, currently being trialled for use with older people in Grampian. Once rolled out across the area, training will be available to all those working with older people to enable them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signposting provided by trusted professionals.</li> <li>• Makes signposting everyone's responsibility.</li> </ul>

		to signpost to services for various issues including linking to the Community Wellbeing Development Team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raises awareness of support available.</li> </ul>
Moray Monday Club	Elgin	Described by one member as “ <i>A circle of friendship</i> ”, the Moray Monday Club offers activity and support to approx. 80 members (with an average age of 86) living with Dementia and their carers. A warm welcome, fun and laughter, cakes, music and understanding are all on offer making it popular with men and women. Run by volunteers, it is the only club of its type in Moray, meaning people often travel from Forres and other areas to attend.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcoming</li> <li>• Sharing of food and drink</li> <li>• Inclusive and accessible</li> <li>• Committed and knowledgeable volunteer committee</li> <li>• Shared experiences and understanding of living with or support someone with Dementia.</li> <li>• Varied activities</li> </ul>
<a href="#">mconnect</a>	Across Moray	m.connect offers an on-demand and timetabled bus service. Booking is available by app or phone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides transport options to rural areas.</li> <li>• Newly introduce group booking options will widen opportunities.</li> <li>• Aberlour Lunch Club are one successful example of utilising mconnect to promote connection.</li> </ul> <p>Raising awareness and improvements to the service are ongoing.</p>



Men's shed	8 Men's Shed across Moray linked to <a href="#">Scottish Men's Shed Association</a> (SMSA)	<i>"A Men's Shed is a permanent meeting place for men where lots of good community and healthy 'self and group determined' experiences take place. They take place by 'everyday' men with 'time on their hands' willing to act with the skills they already have within their local community."</i> (SMSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcoming</li> <li>• Purposeful activities</li> <li>• By the community for the community</li> <li>• Draws on strengths and interests of the members</li> <li>• For men who are often underrepresented in community groups.</li> <li>• For all ages and backgrounds.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">North East Sensory Scotland</a>	Elgin, Forres, Buckie and Keith	The 'Connect Include Support' service provides accessible travel and support for people with sensory loss to attend NESS social and craft groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel provided- door to door.</li> <li>• Committed volunteers, supported by a member of staff.</li> <li>• Group ownership</li> <li>• Accessible and inclusive</li> <li>• Supportive community created</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Re-engage Tea Parties</a>	Across the UK. In Moray - one tea party in Elgin	Tea parties are free monthly social groups open to people aged 75 and over who are lonely or isolated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport provided (although volunteers are not reimbursed for this)</li> <li>• Sharing of food and drink</li> <li>• Regular connection</li> </ul>

		Volunteer drivers take older guests to a tea party at a volunteer's home. Guests and volunteers share tea, cake and chat.	Across the UK ( <a href="#">Our impact on older people (reengage.org.uk)</a> ):  <i>"Eight out of ten guests feel happier and seven out of ten have made friends through the tea parties."</i>
Retired Older Men Eating Out (ROME0)	Elgin	After hearing of the group when in the US, a member of the Elgin community started a group for retired older men who perhaps don't have any particular hobbies but want to get out and socialise. 10- 15 men come together monthly for a meal and a chat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group for men</li> <li>• No skills or particular interests required.</li> <li>• Sharing of food.</li> <li>• Linked with Mental Health and Wellbeing Practitioner to promote awareness.</li> </ul>
Shared Lives, Moray Health and Social Care	Across Moray. Currently no Shared Lives carers in Speyside.	In Moray 89 people draw on 589 hours of day support by 24 self-employed Shared Lives carers from the carer's home and community. The service also provides short breaks and a long-term place to live. Shared Lives match people with Shared Lives carers based on mutual interests and choice.  Shared Lives carers support people to continue/become part of their local community and enables friendships to develop between	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport provided</li> <li>• Time to develop trusting friendships</li> <li>• Develop confidence</li> <li>• Common interests</li> <li>• Often intergenerational with two families building a relationship.</li> <li>• Localised and personalised</li> </ul>

		<p>carers and those they support. Two people can be supported by one carer at any one time.</p> <p>Examples include: One partnership are now a member of an art class that neither would have joined on their own. Both making connections in their local community. Someone else was supported to attend her son’s wedding and, with support from her Shared Lives carer, makes sure to purchase Christmas presents for all the family, something she said she wouldn’t have done on her own. (Figures from May 2024)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared Lives carers are trained and supported by Health and Social Care Moray.</li> </ul>
<p><a href="#">Social Volunteers</a>, Health and Social Care Moray</p>	<p>Across Moray. Volunteers are limited across Speyside.</p>	<p>In September 2023, 102 people drew on support from 159 volunteers.</p> <p>The purpose of the service is “to ensure that no one is left behind in our community. We are committed to reducing social isolation and re-connecting people back into their communities.”</p> <p>Social volunteers are matched with people in their local communities with the aim of equal exchange, helping people to do things for themselves and to engage with the community. It can be intergenerational, for example one older</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevention and self-management promoted.</li> <li>• Could be home or community based.</li> <li>• Moray Calls (a telephone befriending service) is also an option.</li> <li>• Intergenerational</li> <li>• Supported by Health and Social Care Moray</li> <li>• Volunteer has expenses paid</li> </ul>

		gentleman helps a young person learn the skills needed for food shopping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some who originally received support have gone on to become volunteers.</li> </ul>
The Hub	Buckie	The Hub is a place for signposting, advice, and chat, run by community volunteers (with support from local organisations) for the community. Often used as a meeting place for groups and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On a bus route and near the town centre</li> <li>• Welcoming</li> <li>• Provides information and services</li> <li>• Run by the community for the community</li> <li>• Committed volunteers, many of whom initially received advice from The Hub.</li> <li>• Flexible and responsive</li> <li>• Available to all ages.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 6: Counter voting activity- What would help reduce loneliness in Moray?

Suggestions for reducing loneliness	Street and Doorstep Outreach	Village Agents	Public Living Room	Dementia Meeting Centre	Homeshare	Intergenerational Activities	Retired Farming Social Group	Support at evenings / weekends	Activities in own homes (Creative Befrienders or Sporting Memories)
Buckie	2	3	3	5	2	7	6	5	3
Online	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Keith	2	4	4	11	3	10	6	9	2
Health and Wellbeing Forum	1	5	0	1	0	4	2	4	4
Glenrinnes	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0
Total number	7	13	8	19	7	24	15	19	10

Detailed descriptions of services or groups can be found in [Appendix 4](#)