

What is isolation?

Social isolation is to do with the number of people you come into contact with. It is about the quantity and not the quality of relationships. If we feel socially isolated, we may be able to overcome this by increasing the number of people we are in contact with.

What is loneliness?

Loneliness is how we feel about the gap between the levels of social contact we would like to have, and what we actually have. It relates to how we see the quality of our relationships. Everyone can feel lonely from time to time, and this is part of being human. But when people feel lonely most, or all of the time, research shows it can be harmful.

We know that loneliness is a bigger problem than simply an emotional experience. Research shows it can be harmful to our health.

Isolation, loneliness and epilepsy

Some people find that epilepsy doesn't affect their life much, especially if their seizures are controlled with treatment that suits them. For other people, epilepsy may affect different areas of life, such as work or home life, lifestyle, leisure, or social life.

Some people may feel isolated due to the fear of having a seizure when they are with others, and fear of the reactions of others.

This social isolation can lead to loneliness for some, which can also lead to social isolation. Although isolation and loneliness are different, they can be linked.

According to research, lots of people of all ages and backgrounds feel lonely. Millions of people in the UK say they are often or always lonely. You are not alone.

If you're feeling lonely

Think about what works for you but here are some ideas, which you may find helpful:

- Taking time to think about what is causing you to feel lonely may help find what could help you to feel differently in the future.

- Your local library, or GP's surgery, may have information or leaflets about local events: exercise classes, book clubs, or coffee mornings, to help you connect with other people and your community.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help. Try talking to someone who you feel comfortable with, such as a family member, a friend, your carer, or GP.
- Accept help when offered. It might be a friend or neighbour suggesting you visit for a coffee.
- There may be support and free services which may help. See the list on page 2.
- If you can't leave the house, try joining an online community who share similar interests to you.
- Volunteer. It can be a great way to meet new people and make new connections. You could help at a local charity shop, or use your skills to support others.
- Trying out a new hobby could help you to meet new people in your local area.



Visit [nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/feeling-lonely](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/feeling-lonely)

Many of us experience feelings of isolation or loneliness. The risk may be higher for those with health conditions like epilepsy, who may feel isolated at times, leading to feelings of loneliness.

Epilepsy Society Helpline
01494 601400
helpline@epilepsysociety.org.uk
Confidential, national call rate.
Information and emotional support.

Organisations that can offer support

The British Red Cross

Your local Red Cross Connecting Communities team can help you to explore what may be available and start doing the things you want: meeting new friends, rediscovering interests, or finding new ones, or building your confidence. You can see what support is available in your area. You can also volunteer to help others.

[Visit \[redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-with-loneliness\]\(https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-with-loneliness\)](https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-with-loneliness)

Faith groups/community halls

See what is available in your local area, from groups for young parents, to reading groups and gardening clubs.

Libraries

Your local library will have information about what is on in your local area, and many hold events, such as talks and activities, where you can meet other people.

Making music

[makingmusic.org.uk](https://www.makingmusic.org.uk)

See what is happening near you.

Meet Up

[meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com)

Join a local group with others and try out new things.

Mind

0300 123 3393

[mind.org.uk/information-support](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support)

Offers tips to manage loneliness and a list of organisations that can help.

Phab

0208 667 9443

[phab.org.uk](https://www.phab.org.uk)

Charity running clubs across England and Wales, supporting adults and children with disabilities.

Reading friends

[readingfriends.org.uk](https://www.readingfriends.org.uk)

Reading Friends tackles loneliness by bringing people together to read, chat and share stories.

Ramblers wellbeing walks

[ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/get-healthy/walking-for-health.aspx](https://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/get-healthy/walking-for-health.aspx)

Find a free group walk in your local area. Leaders have information about epilepsy.

Samaritans

116 123

[samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)

A charity dedicated to reducing feelings of isolation. You can contact them day or night if you are struggling to cope, need support, or if you need someone to listen to you without judgement or pressure. You can also visit your local branch to speak to a volunteer.

Volunteering

There are many ways to volunteer. Find out more at [gov.uk/government/get-involved/take-part/volunteer](https://www.gov.uk/government/get-involved/take-part/volunteer)

Royal Voluntary Service

0330 555 0310

[royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](https://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk)

Help for older people

Age UK

0800 678 1602

[ageuk.org.uk](https://www.ageuk.org.uk)

Independent Age

0800 319 6789

[independentage.org](https://www.independentage.org)

Reengage (formerly Contact the Elderly)

0800 716 543

[reengage.org.uk](https://www.reengage.org.uk)

The Silver Line

0800 470 8090

[thesilverline.org.uk](https://www.thesilverline.org.uk)

For a printed copy of this information contact our helpline.

Epilepsy Society

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@epilepsysociety

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