

Isolation, loneliness and epilepsy



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, or for long periods, it can be harmful to their health.

We know that loneliness can be a bigger problem than simply an emotional experience, especially if it goes on for a long time.

[Visit mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/loneliness/about-loneliness](https://mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/loneliness/about-loneliness)

Some people find that epilepsy doesn't affect them 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, lifestyle, leisure, getting out and about, or social life, and they may worry about how others will react if they have a seizure.

[Visit epilepsysociety.org.uk/anxiety](https://epilepsysociety.org.uk/anxiety)

Not having contact with others is sometimes known as social isolation and this can lead to loneliness for some, and feeling lonely 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.

[Visit nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/lifes-challenges/loneliness/](https://nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/lifes-challenges/loneliness/)

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.
- Volunteering 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://nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/feeling-lonely)

Organisations that can offer support

The British Red Cross

Your local Red Cross can help you to explore what may be available and help you start doing the things you want.

This may include 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://redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-with-loneliness)

Many of us feel lonely from time to time for many different reasons. The risk may be higher for those with health conditions like epilepsy, who may sometimes feel isolated, leading to feelings of loneliness.

Helpline 0300 102 0024
Confidential, information, and emotional support.
Visit epilepsysociety.org.uk/helpline for opening hours.

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

See what is happening near you.

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

Meet Up

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

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

Mind

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

[Visit mind.org.uk/information-support](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support) or call 0300 123 3393

Phab

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

[Visit phab.org.uk](https://www.phab.org.uk) or call 0208 667 9443

Reading Friends

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

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

Ramblers wellbeing walks

Find a free group walk in your local area.

[Visit ramblers.org.uk/go-walking-hub/walking-and-epilepsy](https://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking-hub/walking-and-epilepsy)

Samaritans

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. Calls are free.

[Visit samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org) or call 116 123



Every effort is made to ensure that all information is correct at the time of publishing. Please note that information is intended for a UK audience. This information is not a substitute for advice from your own doctors. Epilepsy Society is not responsible for any actions taken as a result of using this information.

Volunteering

Gov.uk

The government website has information on volunteering.

[Visit gov.uk/government/get-involved/take-part/volunteer](https://www.gov.uk/government/get-involved/take-part/volunteer)

Royal Voluntary Service

You can volunteer for projects in your local community, and there are also local services available such as lunch clubs and social activities.

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

Help for older people

Age UK

Age UK offers befriending services, local day centres and also a free advice line.

[Visit ageuk.org.uk](https://www.ageuk.org.uk) or call 0800 678 1602

Independent Age

Independent Age offers advice and information for those over 65.

[Visit independentage.org](https://www.independentage.org) or call 0800 319 6789

Reengage (formerly Contact the Elderly)

Re-engage provides vital, life-enhancing social connections for older people at a time in their lives when their social circles may be diminishing.

[Visit reengage.org.uk](https://www.reengage.org.uk) or call 0800 716 543

The Silver Line

The Silver Line Helpline is run by Age UK. It is a free, confidential telephone service for older people, providing friendship, conversation, and support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

[Visit thesilverline.org.uk](https://www.silverline.org.uk) or call 0800 470 8090

Epilepsy Society is grateful to Dr F J Rugg-Gunn, Consultant Neurologist & Honorary Associate Professor, Clinical Lead, Chalfont Centre for Epilepsy, who reviewed this information.

For a printed copy of this information contact our helpline.

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