



LONELINESS AMONG EMPLOYEES.

AN EMPLOYER'S GUIDE

JUNE 2022

Professional insights, expert advice and
useful tips to help your organisation.

THE COST OF LONELINESS TO UK EMPLOYERS HAS BEEN ESTIMATED TO BE £2.5 BILLION EVERY YEAR.

Source: Co-op and New Economics Foundation (2017)

The Cost of Loneliness to UK Employers: The impact of loneliness upon business across the UK

The pandemic has given rise to a sense of loneliness and isolation. Our workplaces are also changing. With many adapting to home and hybrid working, we need to embrace this change while building and maintaining meaningful connections with our colleagues.



WITH WELLBEING IN MIND.



LONELINESS CAN DEVELOP IN THE WORKPLACE IN THREE KEY WAYS:

1

Existing feelings of loneliness unrelated to work may be carried into the workplace

2

Features of work may trigger or exacerbate loneliness

3

The impact of work (stress, long-hours etc) can spill over into our lives and isolate us from others.

Source: Holt-Lunstad J. (2018) Fostering Social Connection in the Workplace. American Journal of Health Promotion.

WHAT CAN YOU DO IN THE WORKPLACE TO SUPPORT YOUR TEAM?

- **Start before day one**; introducing new hires to the company's work culture before onboarding creates connections from the beginning
- **Create healthy and supportive working environments**
- **Relationships with line managers are key**. Provide training for managers in Mental Health Awareness and Leadership to help them foster a great culture and identify when colleagues are struggling
- **Invite conversations about isolation** and find out how individual employees experience social connections in the workplace
- **Don't make assumptions about loneliness**, some employees may prefer limited social interaction but do not feel lonely
- **Consider the workspace layout** and involve the team where possible, for some employees suffering from loneliness, hearing and listening to the conversation of others can be very comforting and of course for others that can be too much
- **Encourage time together** through regular team meetings and team days
- **Encourage video catch-up calls**. Video calls do not always have to be task-focused, what about a virtual cuppa?
- **Create a health and wellbeing strategy**, with input from your teams. Communicate this and keep it current



A 2016 study involving 1,81,000 adults found that loneliness increases the risk of coronary heart disease by 29%.

Source: BMJ (2016) Loneliness and social isolation and increased risk of coronary heart disease and stroke: clinical implications

SIGNPOSTING TO SUPPORT SERVICES.

Addressing loneliness and supporting social connections as part of workplace wellbeing has benefits for both employers and employees. Some suggestions for supporting those with feelings of loneliness include:

Try peer support

There are many different types of peer support services such as Side by Side, which provide people with a space to use their own experiences to help and support each other, including experiences of loneliness and related mental health problems.

Talking therapies

Talking therapies like the service we offer here at Talk Works offer organisations a way to support their employees offering them the opportunity to explore and understand their feelings of loneliness and can help individuals develop positive ways of dealing with them.

To understand how Talk Works can support your organisation, email us at;
talktous@talk-works.org.uk
or call us on;
0191 490 9301



At an individual level, the monetised impact of severe loneliness has been estimated as £9,900 per person per year, due to the impact on wellbeing, health and productivity.

Source: [DCMS \(2020\) Loneliness monetisation report](#)

RESOURCES.

References:

- Co-op and New Economics Foundation (2017) The Cost of Loneliness to UK Employers: The impact of loneliness upon business across the UK
- Holt-Lunstad J. (2018) Fostering Social Connection in the Workplace. American Journal of Health Promotion.
- [DCMS \(2020\) Loneliness monetisation report](#)
- BMJ (2016) Loneliness and social isolation and increased risk of coronary heart disease and stroke: clinical implications

Resources:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employers-and-loneliness/employers-and-loneliness#fn:7>

