

Loneliness and unwanted social isolation

Research Question(s)

- What interventions are effective* in reducing loneliness and unwanted social isolation and improving health and wellbeing?

The NIHR Public Health Research Programme wishes to commission research on the effectiveness* of interventions to reduce loneliness and unwanted social isolation and improve health and wellbeing. Health risks of loneliness and unwanted social isolation are well documented. People may move into and out of loneliness and/or social isolation across the life course.

Proposals must evaluate interventions, with a primary health outcome, provided outside of healthcare, which may be multi-component. General population and/or sub-groups may be studied. Effectiveness of interventions in different population groups should be considered, such as those identified by age, gender, ethnicity, and deprivation.

The following issues are of particular interest:

- Interventions which could be widely applied, due to feasibility and cost, for example by building on existing initiatives with target groups
- Interventions using digital and social media
- Population groups who may have particular needs, such as first generation migrants, older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) adults, those without employment, those with disabilities or those caring for older people or those with disabilities.
- Prevention of loneliness including opportunities at life transitions.
- Research should consider the pathways to loneliness and duration of loneliness.
- Research that considers the effects of context and environment on outcomes
- Research that considers the involvement of third sector groups

Research should consider the impact of the intervention on health inequalities, incorporate a mechanism for public involvement and where appropriate include a health economic evaluation.

For all proposals, applicants should clearly state the public health utility of the outcomes and how they would inform future public health policy and practice. Details on the potential impact and scalability of interventions, if shown to be effective, should be provided.

*'Effectiveness' in this context relates not only to the size of the effect, but it also takes into account any harmful or negative side effects, including inequitable outcomes.

Remit of Call:

All proposals submitted under this call must fall within the remit of the Public Health Research programme. Please go to www.nets.nihr.ac.uk/programmes/phr/remit for details.

General Notes:

The PHR programme evaluates public health interventions, providing new knowledge on the benefits, costs, acceptability and wider impacts of non-NHS interventions intended to improve the health of the public and reduce inequalities in health. The scope of the programme is multi-disciplinary and broad, covering a range of interventions that improve public health delivered in a non-NHS setting.

Notes to Applicants

The NIHR Public Health Research programme is funded by the NIHR, with contributions from the CSO in Scotland, NISCHR in Wales, and HSC R&D, Public Health Agency, Northern Ireland. Researchers in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are eligible to apply for funding under this programme.

Applicants are recommended to seek advice from suitable methodological support services, at an appropriate stage in the development of their research idea and application. It is advisable to make contact at an early stage as possible to allow sufficient time for discussion and a considered response.

The NIHR Research Design Service

(<http://www.nihr.ac.uk/research/Pages/ResearchDesignService.aspx>) can advise on appropriate NIHR programme choice, and developing and designing high quality research grant applications.

Clinical Trials Units are regarded as an important component of many trial applications however, they are not essential for all types of studies to the PHR programme. The CTUs can advise and participate throughout the process from initial idea development through to project delivery and reporting. NIHR CTU Support Funding (http://www.netscc.ac.uk/supporting_research/CTUs) provides information on units receiving funding from the NIHR to collaborate on research applications to NIHR programmes and funded projects. In addition, the UKCRC CTU Network (<http://www.ukcrc-ctu.org.uk>) provides a searchable information resource on all registered units in the UK, and lists key interest areas and contact information.

Transparency agenda

In line with the government's transparency agenda, any contract resulting from this tender may be published in its entirety to the general public. Further information on the transparency agenda is at:

<http://transparency.number10.gov.uk/>

http://www.ogc.gov.uk/policy_and_standards_framework_transparency.asp <http://www.contractsfinder.businesslink.gov.uk/>