The Campaign to End Loneliness Learning Programme

Free loneliness training for grassroots organisations working in Rochdale, Tameside and King's Lynn & West Norfolk

In partnership with the **Campaign to End Loneliness**, values-driven non-profit **Civil Society Consulting CIC (CSC)** is delivering the **Loneliness Learning Programme** (LLP) to over **40 grassroots organisations** working in Rochdale, Tameside and West Norfolk. The LLP is an interactive course on the theory of loneliness and 'Promising Approaches' framework that takes place over two half-days.

The Campaign to End Loneliness Learning Programme (LLP) was co-developed by CSC and the Campaign to End Loneliness in 2020. The course leverages the personal and professional experience of participants to teach key theory and coaches participants to develop action plans for tackling loneliness in their communities. Participants graduate with a thorough and memorable understanding of 1) the **theory and psychology** of loneliness, 2) the Campaign's **'Promising Approaches' framework**, which provides a framework to understand where an organisation fits in a community-wide system that can be used to tackle loneliness and 3) **examples of successful interventions** used to tackle loneliness around the UK.

Participants will graduate from the Programme with an **emerging action plan**: either to develop a new initiative or to expand existing work. Post-training, participants will be offered 0.5 days **free consultancy support** from the course facilitators - Francesca and Natasha - to co-productively develop their action plan or start setting it in motion. For example, the follow-up support could be spent co-developing a funding application to fund the proposed work, or a monitoring and evaluation framework to measure it.

On the back of the LLP, CSC will be developing **the Loneliness Reduction Network**: three informal and inclusive online **workshops** — with special guest speakers — on particular issues around loneliness. These events are open to all UK-based civil society organisations interested in tackling loneliness and are designed to create 1) **a sense of solidarity and momentum** around place-based loneliness reduction, and 2) **opportunities for collaboration.** Sharing learnings is key to the inaugural national roll-out of the LLP. At the end of the Programme, we will be producing a final evaluation in collaboration with the Campaign, which will include a bank of best practice on loneliness interventions.

Project plan:

Rochdale	Tameside	West Norfolk	Online (all three localities)
2 half days trainings with 10-15 organisations (in person)	2 half-days trainings with 10-15 organisations (in person)	2 half days trainings with 10-15 organisations (in person)	2 half days trainings with 10-15 organisations (online)
1-to-1 follow up with each organisation (online)	1-to-1 follow up with each organisation (online)	1-to-1 follow up with each organisation (online)	1-to-1 follow up with each organisation (online)
Loneliness Reduction Network meeting 1: The role of faith-led organisations in tackling loneliness			
Loneliness Reduction Network meeting 2: What works in tackling youth loneliness at grassroots level			
Loneliness Reduction Network meeting 3: Loneliness in men			
Co-production of evaluation/white paper with the Campaign to End Loneliness			

The LLP is being rolled-out thanks to funding from **The National Lottery Community Fund,** as part of the **Digital Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) 'Know Your Neighbourhood Fund.'**

About the Loneliness Learning Programme (LLP)

Civil Society Consulting and Campaign to End Loneliness have co-developed an interactive course on the theory of loneliness and promising approaches to tackling loneliness. We have created this document to explain the why, what and how of the Loneliness Learning Programme (LLP)

Civil Society Consulting

Campaign to EndLoneliness

The problem
Loneliness has been called 'the public health crisis of this generation', especially since the pandemic. Loneliness causes and intensifies mental health conditions, and prompts deterioration of physical health. In addition to having complex and profound effects on individuals, loneliness comes at a huge social and economic cost. Despite the lifting of restrictions, there is evidence that it is getting worse.

Physical and Mental Health   **&**   **Productivity**

The solution?
Agile civil society organisations (CSOs) are well-positioned (i.e. trusted) to reach marginalised groups at particularly high risk of loneliness - and **motivated** to do so. However, they are often not empowered to act in a coordinated community-/borough-wide response. Also, particular knowledge gaps can limit their ability to design and implement effective initiatives. **CSOs need:**
- **A theoretical understanding of loneliness,**
- **Knowledge of what has been shown to work, and**
- **Clarity on their role within a borough- or region-wide syndicate.**

This observation was first made by Campaign to End Loneliness (CtEL), who commissioned us (Civil Society Consulting) to develop a loneliness learning programme (LLP) at the end of 2020. Our team made the same observation while delivering free consultancy support to >70 minority-led organisations throughout the pandemic (via our flagship initiative, S2R)

Unlocking the potential of CSOs with the LLP

Thanks to the CtEL's initial impetus and pioneering research into the science of loneliness, we have co-developed the Loneliness Learning Programme (LLP), which coaches participants to be ready and able to tackle loneliness - either by developing new evidence-based initiatives or by making small changes to enhance their existing work.

Participants graduate from the course with:

1. **A thorough understanding of loneliness** as a psycho-social phenomenon:
   - what causes loneliness,
   - how it affects people - often in a downward spiral, and
   - what people need to be lifted out of loneliness (in an upward spiral).
   All of which they won't forget easily, having used their own lived experiences to colour key concepts and frameworks.

2. An advanced understanding of the CtEL's 'Promising Approaches' framework and **a clear sense where their organisation fits in a community-wide system of connector services,** direct solutions and gateway infrastructure, and the most impactful way to direct their resources.

3. **A semi-developed action plan:** ideas and practical ways to prevent and reduce loneliness in their community.

4. Warm and collaborative **relationships with coursemates,** and a good understanding of their work and potential areas of collaboration.

The entire learning style is co-productive, to develop capacity and transfer ownership. After the course, CSO leaders are given some time to reflect on their ideas, before being offered **one-to-one follow up sessions with the course facilitators,** to coach them to further develop and implement their action plans.

We are confident that knowledge will be retained, thanks to the interactive learning style. There is a comprehensive **workbook to help participants follow the course content, which they can refer back to after the course,** and which they can share with colleagues (and future colleagues, as the learning is unlikely to become out-of-date).

Course structure and format
We designed the course to be delivered over two mornings (so one half day for sessions 1&2 and one half day for sessions 3&4):

But we can adapt delivery to suit preferences. The learning can be delivered **online** or **in person.**

Catalysing a place-based approach to loneliness
Given that the interactive learning programme builds understanding and relationships between participants, the LLP has added potential to work well as a place-based initiative, if all participants are operating in the same area. Follow up sessions can be conducted in twos or small groups (rather than one-to-one) to prompt and develop partnerships between CSOs with complementary strengths.

Other ways the LLP can be used
We designed the course to be adaptable to a wide range of contexts/audiences, including:
- Colleagues from the same organisation (rather than from different CSOs).
- Businesses (rather than CSOs) motivated to make small changes to their procedure.

Proof that it works
In July 2021, we ran a highly successful pilot of the LLP with. From our feedback:
- **100%** felt ready and/or motivated to plan and/or implement a loneliness intervention in their community.
- **90%** were "very likely" to use the course content in their day-to-day work;
- **100%** would recommend the course to others.

Read the full evaluation of our pilot here.

A note on the Promising Approaches framework

CtEL developed the Promising Approaches framework to spotlight loneliness interventions that have proven effective around the UK. The framework shows how services should work together. According to Promising Approaches, lonely individuals need to pass through effective **'connector services'**, that (1) identify/reach them, (2) understand them, and (3) actively support them to access a package of **'direct solutions'** tailored to them, which (4) enhances their existing relationships and/or (5) supports them to make new social connections.

This route out of loneliness requires an enabling environment, by means of (6) **gateway infrastructure** (e.g. transport, digital infrastructure) and (7) **system-level approaches** (e.g. asset-based approaches and neighborhood approaches).

Many localities have an active council and a thriving voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector. However, no one organisation can 'cover all these bases' (1-7) on its own. To combat loneliness in a given area, a coordinated response by statutory, private, and VCSE partners is required, leveraging the strengths of each local body. Throughout the course, CSOs have the opportunity to establish links across different parts of the system, laying the groundwork for a stronger overall community response to loneliness.