

There is clear evidence that loneliness is a major factor today in the UK, not only in the elderly, but equally with younger people as well. It has a major impact on people’s physical and mental health.

But we can all play our part in changing it

Did you know:

- Young adults are more likely to feel lonely than older age groups, says a study from the Office for National Statistics. The research found that almost 10% of people aged 16 to 24 were "always or often" lonely - the highest proportion of any age group.
- In the UK, more than a million older people say they are always, or often feel lonely, according to Age UK. Silverline get over 10,500 calls per week with many callers saying to their volunteers that they are the only people that they are likely to talk to that week.

How did “Happy to Chat” benches start?

A lady called Alison Owen-Jones from Cardiff came up with the simple idea following a walk in a Cardiff park, whilst watching an elderly man for 40 minutes who was sat on a bench in a busy City Centre park, alone.

- Did he want company? Did he want to be alone? Did anyone actually care?
- Wouldn't it be nice if there was a simple way to let people know you're open to a chat, so she came up with the idea of a sign on a bench that would open the avenues for people. She wrote,
- **'Happy to chat bench. Sit here if you don't mind someone stopping to say hello'.**
- "All of a sudden, you're not invisible anymore. “



There are already hundreds of them in towns and cities, both in the UK and across some major countries in the world

In Lymstone we could use to start with the following locations, plus Candy’s Field



Glebelands

Longmeadow Road

Highcliffe Road

Sowden End

So YES you can make a difference, either by sitting and having a chat with someone there, or encouraging someone to sit with you, everyone can win.

For more information - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-50000204>