

# Presentation of the findings on Policy interventions, effectiveness and challenges



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# Policy interventions, effectiveness and challenges

**Loneliness in the European Union: Policies at work**  
**Brussels, 6th June 2023**

*Survey Methods and Analysis Centre  
Science for Modelling, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit  
Innovation in Science and Policymaking Directorate  
European Commission, Joint Research Centre*





# Mapping of Loneliness Interventions





# Mapping of Loneliness interventions

An online repository based on a mapping of loneliness interventions in the EU-27.



Please note that the repository is not an exhaustive list of loneliness interventions in the EU-27.

To learn more about the Loneliness project, please see [Loneliness project page](#).

Country: All

Target group: All

Type of intervention: All

Type of organisation: All

Country	Project title
Austria	Gemeinsam statt Einsam
Austria	Innovationsnetzwerk "Wege aus der Einsamkeit"
Austria	Kampagne "Laute Stimmen Gegen Einsamkeit"
Austria	Lass uns telefonieren!
Austria	Pilotprojekt gegen Einsamkeit im Alter
Austria	Plattform gegen Einsamkeit & soziale Isolation Social City Wien
Austria	Plaudertischer!
Austria	Projekt Plaudernetz
Austria	Stocking Community
Austria, Poland	Green Care Verein
Belgium	1100Zeges
Belgium	30plus30

Select a project on the left to read additional information

328 Projects    297 Organisations

[Download the dataset](#)

Target group distribution:

Target group	Percentage
Older adults	~55%
All	~30%
Young people	~15%
Adults	~10%
Children	~5%
Persons with disabilities	~3%
Women	~2%
People at risk of exclusion	~1%
Older adults with immigrant...	~1%

Type of organisation distribution:

Type of organisation	Percentage
NPO	~35%
Local Govt.	~18%
Academy	~12%
Private	~10%
University	~8%
National Government	~5%
Public sector	~4%
Church/religious organisation	~3%

Intervention types distribution:

Intervention type	Percentage
Connecting people	~25%
Group/social activities	~20%
Awareness raising	~15%
Digital/te...	~10%
Home vi...	~8%
Strategy	~7%
Helpline/phone line	~10%
Befriending	~8%
Soc...	~5%
Co...	~5%
H...	~5%
Psychological supp...	~10%
Guidance	~5%
Risk ...	~3%
Cult...	~3%

[https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/loneliness/mapping-loneliness-interventions\\_en](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/loneliness/mapping-loneliness-interventions_en)

*Not exhaustive list*

# Umbrella review on the effectiveness of loneliness interventions

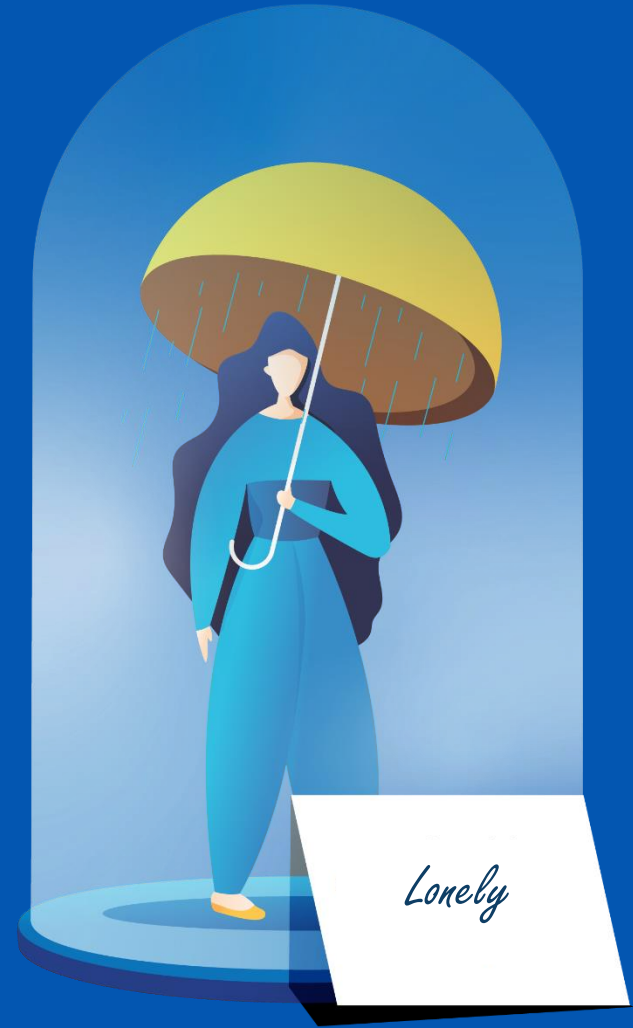


# Take-aways from the umbrella review

- Several types of interventions can work – not possible to identify one superior type
- The methodological quality of evaluation studies is insufficient
- Psychological (e.g. social cognitive training) and social support interventions (i.e. regular contacts, care or companionship) are promising approaches
- There is a need for targeted, long-term and low-threshold approaches to fit needs of different target groups, also youth
- Support for systematic evaluation of interventions is key



# Expert interviews with practitioners







# Factors that make interventions effective - examples

Theme

Illustrative quote

Connection

*“But from what I understand, what was most effective was creating a sense of belonging in the group.”*

Expert, Spain

Self-work

*“But I think a basic step that people take before they come to our treatment or how do you, service, is that they recognize they are feeling lonely and it’s a big step, like, accepting the loneliness. And that’s what we are also trying to do.”*

Expert, Finland

# Challenges for intervention effectiveness - examples

Theme

Illustrative quote

Reaching lonely  
people to participate  
in interventions

*“Yeah, yeah, and we try and one of the difficulty is to find more isolated people because we say that the more isolated the people are, the more invisible they are and so, it hard to find them, but we try to find...”*

Expert, France

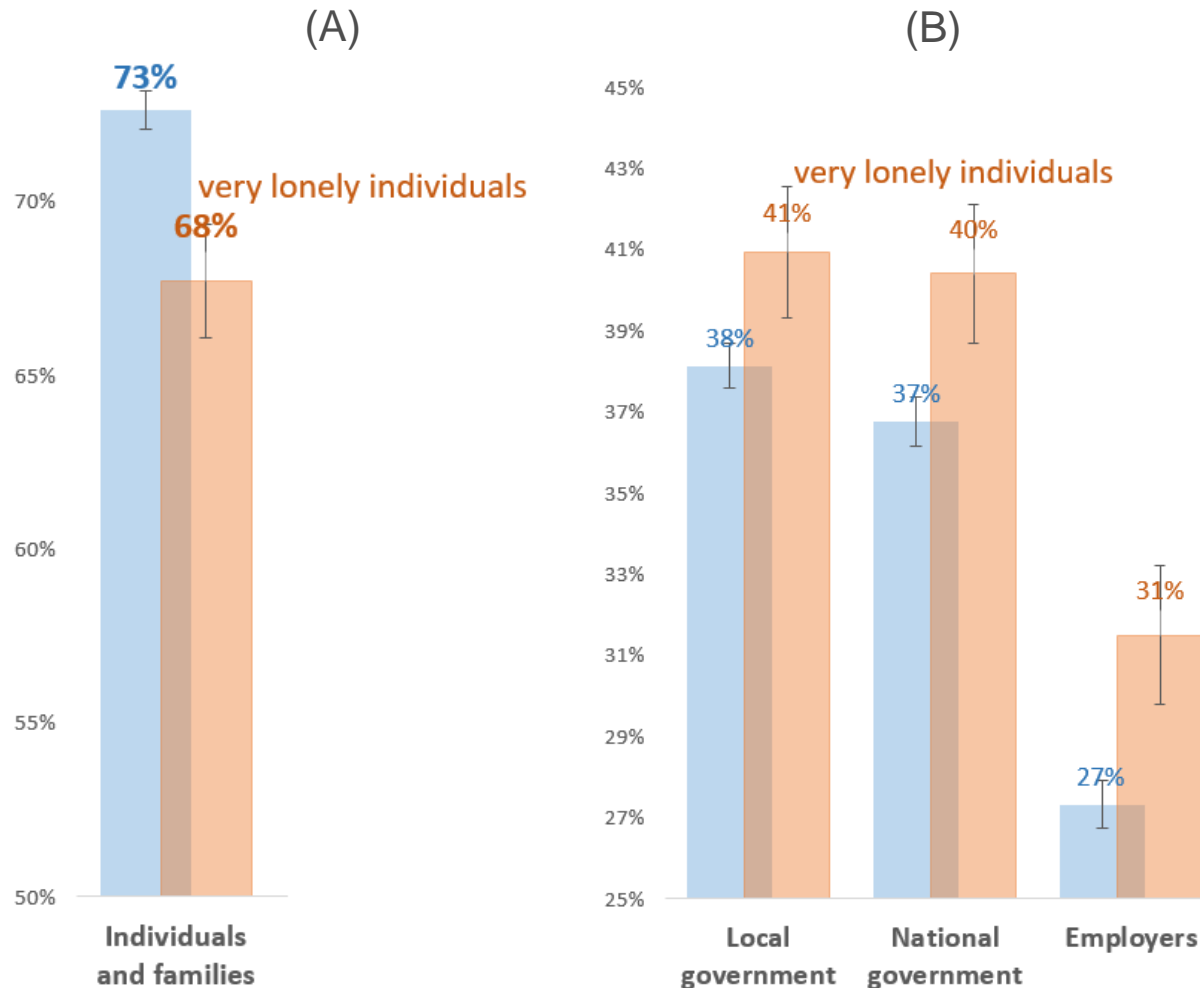
Resources

*“There are a lot [challenges]. One is resources and being an NGO, resources, resources.”*

Expert, Denmark

# EU Loneliness Survey – Results on Interventions

Role of different actors and impact of loneliness



- High expectation that families and individuals should support lonely people
- Lonely individuals also most often turn to their close networks for support
- A concerning share of very lonely people did not know what to do to reduce feelings of loneliness
- 43% of respondents report being aware of loneliness interventions offered in their country

# Pillars for effective solutions

- More systematic and better quality evaluations of interventions needed in the EU!
- Increased research and policy focus on interventions for youth and other risk groups
- Both quantitative and qualitative insights from existing interventions key to scale up what works
- Effective interventions should consider cultural contexts, the level of loneliness, stigma and different preferences for activities



# Thank you



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Slide 2: hands-puzzles-pieces-together, source: © Alphaspirit – Stock.Adobe.com; Slide 6: Colleagues having a video call to respect social distance work's rule; Slide 10: Black marking on checklist box with pencil close up; Slide 11: Woman-Hand-yellowLef-TreesBackground, source: © Wirestock – Stock.Adobe.com



# Interested to know more?

- Visit our [page on loneliness](#) on EU Science HUB
- Get in touch: [jrc-smac-loneliness@ec.europa.eu](mailto:jrc-smac-loneliness@ec.europa.eu)

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