

# Perspectives in Public Health

## Call for papers: Understanding Loneliness

**RSPH**  
ROYAL SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH  
VISION, VOICE AND PRACTICE

Loneliness is defined as ‘a subjective, unwelcome feeling of lack or loss of companionship. It happens when we have a mismatch between the quantity and quality of social relationships that we have, and those that we want’<sup>1</sup>. It is an unwelcome subjective feeling that is distinct from, but may exist alongside, the objective state of social isolation. Feeling lonely most or all of the time can have a negative impact on health and wellbeing; it is associated with a number of health-harming behaviours, including inactivity and smoking, and with an increased risk of coronary heart disease and stroke, depression, low self-esteem and cognitive decline.

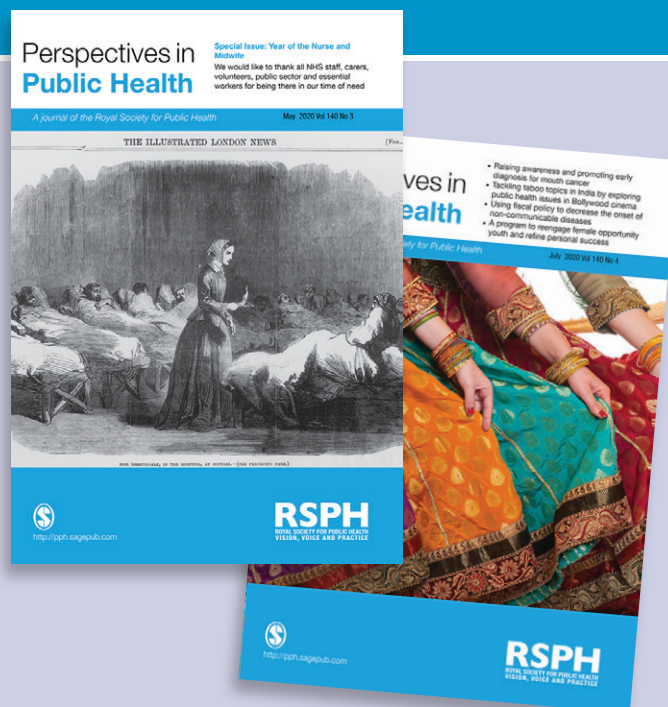
Loneliness is often portrayed as a condition of later life, but research from the Office for National Statistics found that younger adults (aged 16–24 years) reported feeling lonely more often than those in older age groups<sup>2</sup>. They identified three profiles of people at particular risk from loneliness:

- Widowed older homeowners living alone with long-term health conditions
- Unmarried middle-agers with long-term health conditions
- Younger renters with little trust and sense of belonging to their area

We will be publishing a Special Issue in July, 2021 called Understanding Loneliness. Alison Iff, Health and Wellbeing Programme Lead (Yorkshire and the Humber) for Public Health England, will be Guest Editor. The issue will have a special focus on epidemiology of loneliness across the life course and will highlight examples of best practice in interventions to improve connections and reduce its impact on health and wellbeing.

Possible topics may include:

- Thought leadership and analysis of policies and programmes in place
- How to identify those experiencing loneliness



- Original research on interventions to reduce loneliness
- Analysis of societal factors that may contribute to loneliness
- How the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the picture of loneliness

The Special Issue will comprise around five or six front matter articles (current topics and opinion, feature or in practice) and four peer-reviewed research articles.

Author guidelines and information on article types can be found here: <https://bit.ly/304pYrc>

The deadline for submissions is 8th January 2021. Authors should submit via our online submissions system: <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/pph>

1. Perlman, D. & Peplau, L. A. (1981) Toward a Social Psychology of Loneliness. In R. Gilmour & S. Duck (Eds.), Personal Relationships: 3. Relationships in Disorder (pp. 31-56). London: Academic Press
2. ONS. 2018. Loneliness – What characteristics and circumstances are associated with feeling lonely? <https://bit.ly/38V9buB>

If you would like further information or to express an interest, please contact the Editorial Office: [publications@rsph.org.uk](mailto:publications@rsph.org.uk)