



1.3 million older people spend two months a year alone new poll finds

Some 1.3 million older people spend the equivalent of two months a year without seeing anyone according to a poll.

A OnePoll/Bluebird Care survey of 1,000 over 65-year-olds, found 11% said they spent five days or more a month without seeing anyone.

The poll also found:

- Two million older people have spent a week without seeing any one
- Some four million older people (36%) speak to less than one person a day (5 people a week or less)
- Some 4.5 million older people (39%) feel lonely either often or sometimes
- Some 3.4 million older people (30%) would not admit to someone they trust that they are lonely.
- While 5.4 million (47%) say they do not have access to support when they are feeling lonely

There are 11.4 million people in Britain aged 65-years-old or more, according to Age UK, which means 1.3 million older people are spending more than two months a year alone.

Women, who live longer on average, make up 70% of the people over the age of 65.¹ Older women are twice as likely to spend at least two months a year alone: 1.1 million older women (14%) spend two months a year alone compared to 200,000 older men (7%).

The survey also found two million older people (18%) have spent more than a week consecutively without seeing anyone.

Again older women are more likely to have spent longer periods alone than older men with 21% of female respondents saying they have gone a week or longer without speaking to another person compared to 14% of men.

Scotland and Northern Ireland have the largest prevalence of people who had gone a week or more without seeing anyone (23% each). While the South East and East Midlands has the lowest proportion (14% each).

The poll was commissioned by homecare company Bluebird Care to mark the start of the Every Visit Counts campaign, launched today (July 4), to tackle loneliness.

¹ http://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Factsheets/Later_Life_UK_factsheet.pdf?dtrk=true

Bluebird Care COO Duncan Berry said: "These shocking statistics show just how much needs to be done to tackle the crippling yet silent problem of loneliness in Britain. Changes in our society mean many of us, especially older people, are spending more and more time alone. But spending time alone does not automatically translate into loneliness. When people have strong relationships with others who respect, care for and are interested in them then visits can have an effect that last long after the meeting is over. Carers and care assistants have a role to play. That is why we are proud to get behind Every Visit Counts."

Contact the Elderly is the only national charity solely focused on combating loneliness and isolation amongst older people through regular face-to-face contact.

Cliff Rich, Contact the Elderly's Executive Officer for the South, said: "These statistics are shocking, however sadly they do not come as a surprise to us. We know from over fifty years' experience that isolation amongst older people is an increasing issue, and we hear first-hand the crippling effects that loneliness has on our older generation."

The aim of the campaign is to highlight the high rate of loneliness amongst older people in the UK. The campaign brings expert tips and highlights ways that everyone can help to spot and beat loneliness in society. It also features a powerful film which the campaign is encouraging outlets to promote.

Ends

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Notes to editor:

- OnePoll surveyed 1,000 British adults aged 65 or over, online, between June 13 and June 23, 2016
- There are 11.4 million people over the age of 65, 8 million of which are women, according to [Age UK](#)
- Bluebird Care is one of the largest providers of homecare services in the UK. It operates a franchise model with 200 offices delivering more than 20,000 visits per day to customers across the UK
- For more information on Every Visit Counts go to: www.everyvisit.co.uk
- Contact the Elderly is the only national charity solely focused on combating loneliness and isolation amongst older people through regular face-to-face contact. Supported by volunteer hosts and drivers, the charity organises monthly Sunday afternoon tea parties for older people aged 75 and over, who live alone. For more information visit www.contact-the-elderly.org.uk