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The [Campaign to End Loneliness](https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/) (<https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/>), an organisation that works to tackle loneliness in older age, is launching in Peterborough. The launch event, held in partnership with Peterborough City Council, takes place next week on Monday 4th December.

The event will:

- > Explore the issue of loneliness in later life in Peterborough
- > Celebrate the best local practice to support older people to remain connected
- > Include a 'Loneliness and Men' discussion, with panel of older men and the Men's Shed Association

There are almost 30,000 people aged 65 and over in the city - and a third of those people live alone. These figures reflect national statistics. The people living alone could be going for days or weeks at a time without meaningful contact with others, and the effects of this can be devastating.

Loneliness is as bad for you as smoking 15 cigarettes a day, and worse for you than obesity. Lonely people are more likely to suffer from dementia, heart disease and depression. This puts a strain on NHS services, and destroys the quality of life of older people.

The stigma of loneliness is huge too. Three quarters of over-65s (76%) say they would find it hard to admit to feeling lonely because they do not want to be a burden. This is isolating older people all over Peterborough and nationwide.

Andy Nazer, Campaign Manager for the Campaign to End Loneliness, said:

"Loneliness is a major issue nationally, and one which isn't spoken about enough. Our campaign aims to get all partners - locally, regionally and nationally - talking about loneliness. We can share best practice case studies from all around the UK, and access some of the leading specialists in this area.

"We're delighted to be launching the Campaign in Peterborough as we know there are proven benefits in getting everyone involved in the same room talking on this subject.

"The human need for friendship and support does not go away with age. Whether we are 24 or 84, we all need connections that matter. With Christmas just a few weeks away, it's a great time to highlight loneliness in Peterborough and around the UK, and work out how we can tackle it."

Cllr Wayne Fitzgerald, Cabinet Member for Integrated Adult Social Care and Health for Peterborough City Council, said:

"We have some really strong partner organisations and volunteering groups here in Peterborough that work really hard to help individuals that identify themselves as lonely.

"However, there's still lots of work to do. Many residents, particularly men, don't speak up if they are experiencing loneliness and instead suffer in silence, significantly damaging their physical and mental health.

"This campaign launch will gather everyone in a room together to talk specifically about loneliness, and what can else can be done to combat this often hidden condition."

