Good Morning

The Good Morning® Service
The Good Morning Service is multi-award winning charity, providing 52,000+ Good Morning Calls to over 330 older people each year, with additional Good Night Calls over Winter. It is currently operating in Glasgow and South Ayrshire. As the multi-faceted service provides practical and emotional support which meets health, social care and safety objectives, Good Morning Service would like to see every older person in Scotland have the opportunity to be, and feel, connected, safer and valued, as a member of the Good Morning Community.

Introduction
Loneliness and social isolation are deeply personal and value-based to the individual. They are neither co-dependent nor mutually exclusive. Loneliness and the effects of social isolation are major public health risks – but can be mitigated and prevented. The increasing population of older people and the resultant demands which will be placed on statutory services is well documented both at local and national levels. The Scottish Government’s Single Outcome Agreement 2013 guidance identifies older people as a priority group and the need for preventative and anticipatory support to help older people retain their independence for as long as possible in their own homes and communities.

This is precisely what the light-touch, high-impact Good Morning Service does.

Evidencing Need
It is widely recognised that older people can become isolated and lonely and, as such, less resilient to coping with difficult and challenging events associated with advancing age such as the deterioration of physical health, the loss of role, of family and friends. The level of incidence is indicated in national statistics, about half of older people consider the television as their main form of company (1), 10% those over 65 report being often or always lonely (1), while 50% of people aged 70 or over report having a limiting illness, health problem or disability (2). In contrast, having good social networks and the availability of social support is associated with higher levels of life satisfaction and happiness.(3)

Research demonstrates that lonely people are more likely to visit A&E than non-lonely individuals. Non-lonely people spend fewer days in hospital and have fewer outpatient appointments,(4) When looking at GP services, the results of a UK survey indicate that at least 1 in 10 visits by older people to their GP appear to be motivated mainly by loneliness. (4) Ultimately, social isolation can dramatically increase the risk of mortality in both men and women (by almost 50%), even after underlying health problems are taken into account.(5)

The Good Morning Service 365-day Package of Support

1. Telephone Befriending - Telephone befrienders call out to members at a pre-arranged time to check that all is well and for a good blether. Over time trust and meaningful relationships are built to become a friend on the phone who can be a listening ear who can give emotional support in difficult times. With very low staff turnover rates telephone
befrienders become a source of long-term support; part of someone's life. For some the Good Morning Community is their social network in it's entirety.

“To speak to someone first thing in the morning it's a great start to the day. It means you belong to a fellowship and you are not alone. Even when I'm low, speaking to someone encourages me to get on with it. I feel cared about and connected to others – people care.” Ishbel, 84

2. Alert to Potential Health Problems - Details of nominated contact persons are held e.g. next of kin, GP, and any service used. When a member fails to answer their Good Morning Call, telephone befrienders will try to locate them. Both GP and hospital appointments are checked. When a member cannot be found and their safety verified befrienders will alert a nominated contact person or Police Scotland. Help will be sent, 365 days a year. Additional Good Night Calls are offered over Winter.

“My legs have collapsed before but I don't worry about that now because when I need help you're always there, it's very reassuring. The callers are my link to the outside world. The interest shown by Good Morning callers gives me confidence to be independent, simple as that.” Alan, 72

Simple solutions work best. As a trusted friend telephone befrienders are a sounding board, a source of information, an encouraging person who is wholly interested in a member's well-being. For some, telephone befrienders have become their closest friend, an ally, a confidant. (A hefty responsibility.) For others the 'distance' between befriender and befriended is what makes their relationship work.

“Very often a worry, or what seems like a crisis, is diffused after a heart to heart chat. All my callers are very attentive, kind and concerned. They often put a different perspective on things and can give me information I was unaware of. I can face the day and tasks more readily after my calls. It reassures me that at difficult times, and in general, I am not alone.” Caroline, 65

As telephone befrienders, we are non-judgemental but do gently challenge someone to consider how their thought patterns, feelings and actions can impact on their relationships with others and their own health and wellbeing. “I don't want to tell my family my problems but I do tell Good Morning because they're patient and caring. When I'm worried about something the callers will put a different point of view across which I've usually not thought of.” Ella, 86

3. Bogus Caller Warning Scheme - Police Scotland give Good Morning Service warning of bogus caller conmen operating in the area. Befrienders pass this on to members along with a positive re-enforcement message of good doorstep management. As the fear of crime can be debilitating, care is taken not to alarm anyone. Teaming up with COSLA and Trading Standards in 2014, Good Morning Service promoted Good Neighbours Stop Rogue Traders and No Cold Calling zone schemes. “I knew right away he was a bogus caller because it was the same sort of story Good Morning tell me about.”

4. Group Befriending - Members have the opportunity to meet up with each other and befrienders at social outings each month. Places of interest visited include: Scotland St. Museum, Science Centre, Botanic Gardens, Kelvingrove Art Galleries and Ayr town and beach.
“I haven’t laughed like that in so long – I’m really glad you persuaded me to go. In fact, I’m still enjoying it just thinking about it”, Ruthmary, 89

Photo: Halloween Bash, 2014

5. Community Directory - Local services/ events are promoted during the Good Morning Call and newsletter e.g. Meal Makers, Food Train, Handyperson Service, NHS course on managing long term conditions. Befrienders will refer members on to services where we can’t meet their needs. As it comes from a trusted friend who knows them well then our suggestions are more likely to be taken up/ actioned. As a result the local communities are strengthened. “Even when I’m not able to go I like knowing about things - keeps you interested” Jim, 85

6. Monthly Newsletters - Two editions are published, Glasgow and South Ayrshire, keeping members up to date on charity news, local services, readers’ poems, recipes, and quizzes. Key NHS articles include info on diabetes, strokes and falls. “Lots of useful information which nobody else has ever thought to tell me. I keep them and hand them round my neighbours.” Jimmy, 84

Staff Training

Telephone befrienders need an understanding of mental health conditions in order to better understand members as well as to prepare staff for a crisis event on a Good Morning Call. Initial training courses include: Applied Suicide Intervention and Support Training and Scotland's Mental Health First Aid. One afternoon per month is set aside for ongoing training: an awareness of age related conditions and multi-morbidity, alcohol use and keeping up to date on useful services. Chief executive, Nicky, is a SMHFA instructor, and wrote 'Communicating with someone who has dementia: 12 helpful hints' leaflet, initially published by the North Dementia Forum and republished by Sporting Memories network and Alzheimer Scotland. Social networks can be a key factor in reducing the risk of dementia in later life, as people with a high degree of loneliness are twice as likely to develop Alzheimer’s than people with a low degree of loneliness. (6) Having a mental health trainer and counsellor on staff adds to the core skills of the charity.

Evidencing Impact

175 members took part in a postal evaluation in 2014:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How has being a member made a difference?</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduced feelings of isolation and loneliness</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel safer at home</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel cared about</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boosted self confidence and self esteem</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved overall sense of health and well being</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Feel better connected to the community  1%  99%
Improved knowledge of community services and events  2%  98%
Helped family, neighbours and friends by giving them peace of mind  2%  98%

“I used to be lonely. The service gives reassurance, comfort, and makes me feel at ease with life. I’m on my own but don’t feel it if you know what I mean? Gives me a lift on bad pain days.” Archie, 68

“We’re part of one big family. If anything upsets us we can talk about it with you. You’ve made my life worth living. Once I just stayed in day by day but now my confidence is back. I'm a changed person thanks to Good Morning.” Agnes, 74

“You have helped with my confidence after my fall. I've been walking without my stick a lot more, taking baby steps to try things because you encourage me every morning.” Evelyn, 85

"This changes how I live, it saves me panicking and getting into a state. Because they are so calm it makes me feel calm. This happy person phoning keeps me going for the rest of the day." Pat, 63

Case Study: Jeanette, 67
Jeanette was referred by her GP who thought she would benefit from social contact as she had chronic anxiety and agoraphobia. She was isolated from society, describing herself as slowly developing mental health problems as she grew older to become “a shell of my former self, I couldn't be around people, I was terrified.” Her only contact with other people and services was the GP and a friend who supported her to health appointments.

At the beginning of Jeanette's service she seemed anxious, usually ending the call as quickly as possible. Although not being entirely comfortable, she requested that we continue to call her on just two days per week. After a few Good Morning Calls Jeanette began to open up, describing her agoraphobia and it's effect on her life. In the third week when Jeanette failed to answer her Good Morning Call we located her in hospital. “I loved it when the nurse told me you'd phoned, it was lovely to feel so cared about.” From then on Jeanette became more comfortable with the service and began to share more about herself; her wide and varied life experience, thoughts and feelings. She recognised and valued the friendships being formed: “Usually any gripe or groan I have I'm straight on the phone to my GP, but that's you now. You are the ones who care about me. I feel I can trust again.”

When we gently suggested coming along to our monthly group befriending Jeanette declined: “I am not in a place of getting out yet but it's lovely to be included and hear how everything goes – it's giving me a better spin on things.”

In a 3 month evaluation interview we revisited the values Jeanette rated herself on her member application form where 1 is a low value and 10 is high:  Impact of GMS

- My sense of being safe: 11 (eleven) up from 5. Improved by 220%
- My confidence to take part in conversations: 9, up from 6 Improved by 150%
- My feeling of belonging to my community: 9, up from 6 Improved by 150%
- My sense of being cared about: 9, up from 3 Improved by 300%
- My ability to go out by myself: 1, “I'm not there yet but that's next!” No change
- My general sense of well being: 8, up from 4. Improved by 200%
How often do you feel lonely? 'Sometimes', a reduction from 'often'.

How would you describe yourself 3 months ago, before you joined the Good Morning Service?
“I thought I was going to end up in hospital with a nervous breakdown, I was very, very low.”

How would you describe yourself now, having been a member of Good Morning Service for 3 months?
“My CPN cannot believe the improvement in me. She told me it is absolutely brilliant and I can feel it within myself. I've been full of self determination and strong enough to pull myself together – all thanks to you lot. You are real gems. I'm so glad I got put onto you as I would never have changed myself without you.”

Jeanette now describes herself as 'living in the moment, for the moment thanks to Good Morning.”

GMS Relationship With Hospital Wards

By pro-actively keeping track of members who are in hospital, ie calling the ward and/or nominated contact person for an update, Good Morning Service can co-ordinate with discharge dates in order to resume the Good Morning Support Calls as soon as the person is home. This puts a continuation of care into place:

1. Practical support for when potential health problems prevent someone from answering their Good Morning Call or a deterioration in health or circumstance is detected.

2. Emotional support which gives someone the chance to speak about their experience in hospital, to share worries and fears with a trusted friend which helps in processing and understanding their experiences. Telephone befrienders can help people to help themselves in coming to terms with a new way of living.

Reducing Delayed Discharge: Room For Improvement

The Good Morning Service cannot be put in place to a new service user overnight. It can take days, sometimes weeks to gather all the information needed to register a new member, therefore, a referral made soon after arrival at a ward would help put the service in place for their return home. The person's capacity to understand their responsibilities and consequences of failing to answer our Good Morning Call, and that of their nominated contact persons, needs to be ascertained and accounted for.

In practical terms, a member's written consent to contact their GP re attendance at health appointments must be gained and sent to their GP so that the practice can be part of our locating procedures. Medical information is not sought - we are interested in someone's location so will ask only if they have attended, are attending, or are expected to attend for a health appointment. This helps build a picture of where the person might be and can prevent an unnecessary emergency alert to Police Scotland.

Summary

Simple solutions work best. The light-touch, low-cost, Good Morning Service is a natural fit
with government policy in shifting the balance of care towards home and community-based services. William's, 84, insight sums up the return on investment for public services: “I take a lot of medication but it’s your call that makes me feel better, not the pills. Doctors should prescribe calls.” and

“Sometimes I have a bad time with my husband, his dementia, and just being able to talk about it relieves some of the pressure. I can end up laughing about it! And that means I can do it all again tomorrow.” Carer, 83

**Connected** People are, *and feel*, connected to the Good Morning Community, and in turn to their wider community. Local communities are strengthened.

**Safer** People are, *and feel*, safer knowing that potential health problems will be alerted to if they fail to answer their Good Morning Call.

**Valued** People are, *and feel*, valued because trusting, meaningful, long-term relationships are built.

**Confident** As a result people have confidence to live alone, or as a carer, as independently as possible, living well in the some of most deprived and least safe communities in the UK.

Nicky Thomson  
Chief Executive  
Good Morning Service  
13 March 2015

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**References**

1. ICM Research survey for Age UK, December 2009
2. Scottish Household Survey 2007
4. Campaign To End Loneliness, 2013