

**Age and Social Isolation  
Equal Opportunities Committee  
Call for views**

The Equal Opportunities Committee is looking into issues around age and social isolation.

We've already heard some evidence on the devastating effects of social isolation on young people during our inquiry into Having and Keeping a Home, and on both younger and older people going through transitional stages during our scrutiny of the Draft Budget for 2015-16. There is a growing body of research that links social isolation with loneliness, particularly in older people.

People can feel lonely when not isolated, and isolated when not lonely. Some people might be happy to be isolated and choose to be so. Social isolation tends to have negative consequences when it makes a person feel lonely. This is something that can affect all people at different times, but often when there are big changes in their lives. While some people may get over these periods of isolation and loneliness, for some younger and older people there can be long term impacts, for example, on their health or on their chances of employment. One way to combat social isolation and loneliness is to build better relationships and social networks. How to achieve this is the difficulty.

We'd like to look further into what can be done by focusing on the causes, effects, and ways of combating social isolation in both younger and older people.

We're hoping to hear from individuals, support workers in the health and social services, local authorities and the voluntary sector on the following issues—

- **Prevalence of social isolation in urban and rural settings**
- **Impacts of social isolation, for instance loneliness, ill-health**
- **Best practice and ideas that could be shared across Scotland, including examples of targeted support or initiatives (including housing, health, third sector)**
- **Potential ideas for improvement and influencing policy**
- **Effective awareness-raising within communities**

We invite submissions, in writing, **by Friday, 13 March 2015**

Please—

- **structure your response using the themes above** – if you wish to add any further issues, use additional headings at the end of your response
- **read the [policy on treatment of written evidence by subject and mandatory committees](#)** before sending your submission
- **try not to exceed 6 sides of A4**
- **send submissions by email** to [equal.opportunities@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:equal.opportunities@scottish.parliament.uk) or **by post** c/o the Clerk, Equal Opportunities Committee, TG.01, The Scottish Parliament, EDINBURGH, EH99 1SP
- **contact us** with any queries, by email or by post as above or by telephone on 0131 348 5408.