

Neighbourhood News Online: <https://neighbourhoodnewsonline.com/brum-citizens-urged-to-connect-together-in-innovative-ways/>

Brum citizens urged to connect together in innovative ways



Birmingham campaign focuses on having virtual conversations and phone calls to help reduce loneliness and isolation.

The Make Someone's Day campaign is launching Friday 20 March 2020, to encourage people to pick up their phones, tablets and computers to connect with those who are most vulnerable and isolated in Birmingham. During these challenging times of self-isolation and social distancing made necessary by the coronavirus pandemic, the campaign's message is that people do not need to be lonely, and anyone can create small moments of connection by reaching out to those who are most vulnerable.

Almost 57,000 people over 65 live alone in the city, increasing their risk of being socially isolated, making the campaign more timely than ever.

The campaign is run by Ageing Better in Birmingham, a programme funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and delivered by Birmingham Voluntary Service Council.

BVSC Programmes Director Stephen Raybould leads on the partnership of organisations behind Ageing Better in Birmingham. He said: "The campaign is the start of a movement of friendliness in Birmingham which helps build bonds of support between people in our communities. Coronavirus means we have to be more physically distant for a while – but picking up the phone to reconnect with people can make a real difference to those who are vulnerable and isolated."



Research shows that the more people you talk to, the happier you are. There are people in our communities who can go a whole week without speaking to anyone. Andrew Mitchell, Member of Parliament for Sutton Coldfield, strongly supports the campaign. He said: “These are challenging times, especially for vulnerable and isolated people. It has been wonderful to see the grassroots support that has sprung up in response to Covid-19 and this campaign further nurtures those connections being made.”

Liam Byrne, Member of Parliament for Hodge Hill, said: “Looking out for our vulnerable and isolated neighbours is always important but never more so than during this testing time. Lending your support to a campaign like this is a great way of showing your community spirit and encouraging other people to do the same.”

Nina, 57 from Castle Vale, has experienced social isolation and helped develop the campaign. She said: “I used to be lonely and isolated and I know that without connections, you get stuck in a rut and out of the habit of connecting with people. Speaking to people makes all the difference!”

For more information about the campaign and how to support it, visit www.ageingbetterinbirmingham.co.uk/makesomeonesday or email: ageingbetter@bvsc.org.

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