

APPENDIX 1

Recent research (How has COVID-19 and associated lockdown measures affected loneliness in the UK? What Works Wellbeing in partnership with UCL. 2020) on loneliness during the pandemic has three main findings:

- People who felt most lonely prior to COVID-19 in the UK now have even higher levels of loneliness. This increase began as physical distancing, shielding and lockdown measures were introduced in the UK, in March 2020.
- Adults most at risk of being lonely, and increasingly so over this period, have one or more of the following characteristics: they are young, living alone, on low incomes, out of work and, or with a mental health condition.
- The impact on wellbeing from people at risk of loneliness is likely to be compounded by other economic and social impacts experienced by the same people, such as those experiencing job losses and health anxieties.

Research also found that risk factors for loneliness were near identical before and during the pandemic. Young adults, women, people with lower education or income, the economically inactive, people living alone, and urban residents had a higher risk of being lonely. Some people who were already at risk for being lonely (e.g. young adults aged 18-30, people with low household income, and adults living alone) experienced a heightened risk during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to before COVID-19. Further, being a student emerged as a higher risk factor during lockdown than usual (Who is lonely in lockdown? Cross-cohort analyses of predictors of loneliness before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Feifei Bu, Andrew Steptoe, Daisy Fancourt)