



Haringey  
Circle

**SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS SURVEY  
IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES**



## Introduction

Haringey Circle is a membership-based charity for residents over 50 and over 18 with disabilities. We connect our members to pursue interests they share; activities they enjoy; and achievements they aspire to, and to better understand and challenge the things that restrict or limit their lives.

Building an evidence base to quantify our impact on reducing feelings of social isolation and loneliness experienced by our members is a priority and this online Survey provides a baseline from which we can start the evaluation process. This Report is based on survey responses in December 2024 and June 2025, from 154 individuals aged 50+ on our database and networks, some with disabilities.

We know that many members have benefited from being involved in Circle activities through testimonials we received and a selection of these are included at the end of this Report. This evidence should be included in an overall assessment of impact and validation of our theory of change.

## Survey Criteria

We used the UCLA Loneliness Scale (short version) which is regularly asked of over 12,000 people aged 50+ as part of the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA). This means that UCLA results from a small population can be compared to a national sample. The longer scale was shortened to three questions in 2004 so that it could be used in larger surveys and over the telephone. The 3-item version was first tested with over 2,100 older adults and found to be a reliable and valid measure of loneliness by comparing the results against a self-identifying statement.

## Measuring “loneliness”

The UCLA scale comprises 3 questions that measure three dimensions of loneliness: relational connectedness, social connectedness and self-perceived isolation. The questions are:

1. How often do you feel that you lack companionship?
2. How often do you feel left out?
3. How often do you feel isolated from others?

In order to score somebody’s answers, their responses should be coded as follows:

Response Score Hardly ever - 1

Some of the time - 2

Often - 3

The scores for each individual question can be added together to give a possible range of scores from 3 to 9. Researchers in the past have grouped people who score 3 – 5 as “not lonely” and people with the score 6 – 9 as “lonely”

When interpreting the findings and graphics in this Report the criteria above should be borne in mind. For example, an individual who responds, “Some of the Time” to all three questions would score 6 and should be regarded as “lonely”.

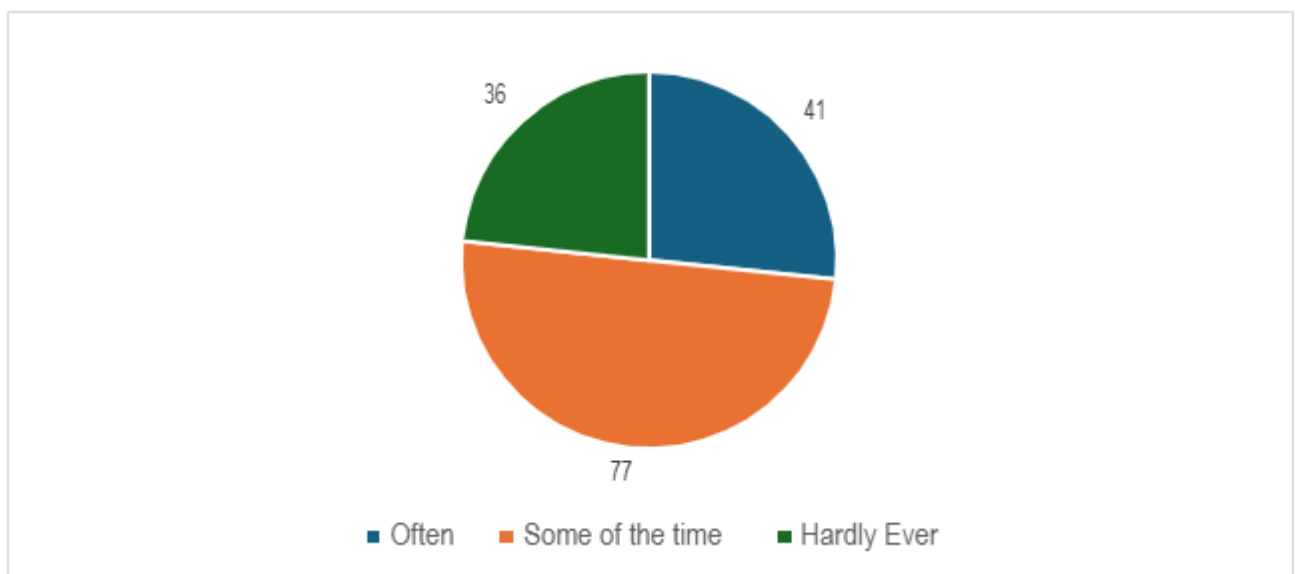
## Analysing the responses

This Report’s analysis is at the population level describing the numbers / percentages of respondents who expressed degrees of social isolation and loneliness. However, we can also use the data to identify individuals with a loneliness score of 6-9 and contact them to discuss what potential interventions Circle could

make to mitigate these feelings. Circle’s mission is to reduce social isolation and loneliness through engagement in social activities and building social networks. Using an action research methodology, we can test this theory of change in practice. This will be the subject of a further Report towards the end of the year.

## The Findings

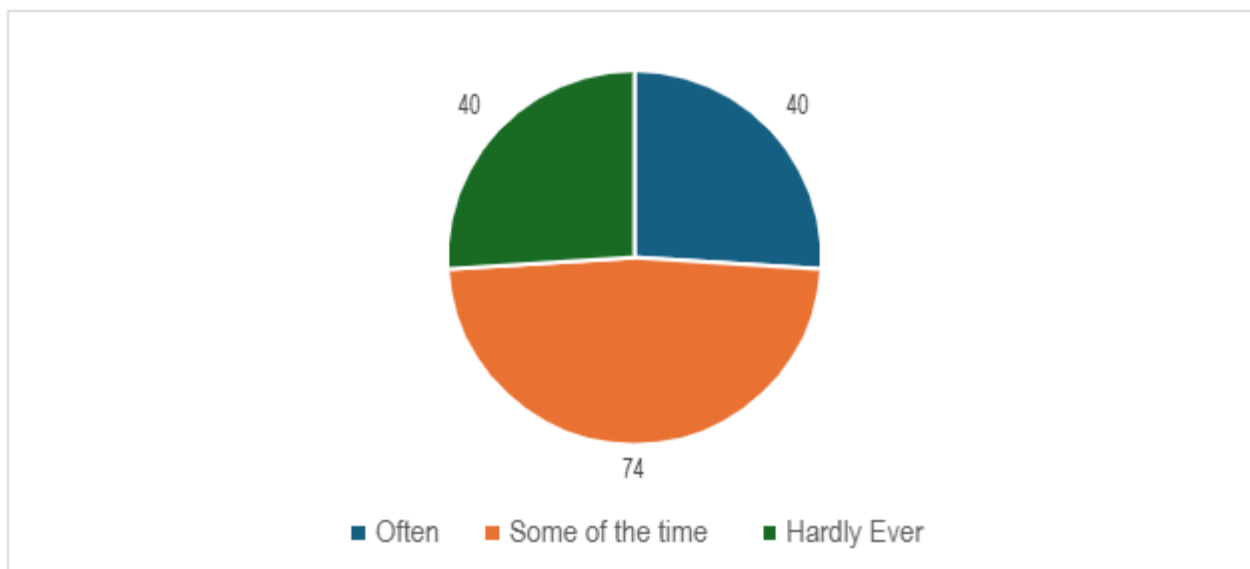
How often do you feel you lack companionship?



Only 23% of the respondents reported that they “hardly ever” felt that they lacked companionship whereas 50% and 27% felt they “sometimes did” and “often did” respectively.

There is a difference in responses from those age 50-64 and 65+ with 40% of the younger group and 17% of the older group reporting that they “often” felt they lacked companionship with 30% of the older group and 9% of the younger group saying that they hardly ever did.

How often do you feel left out?

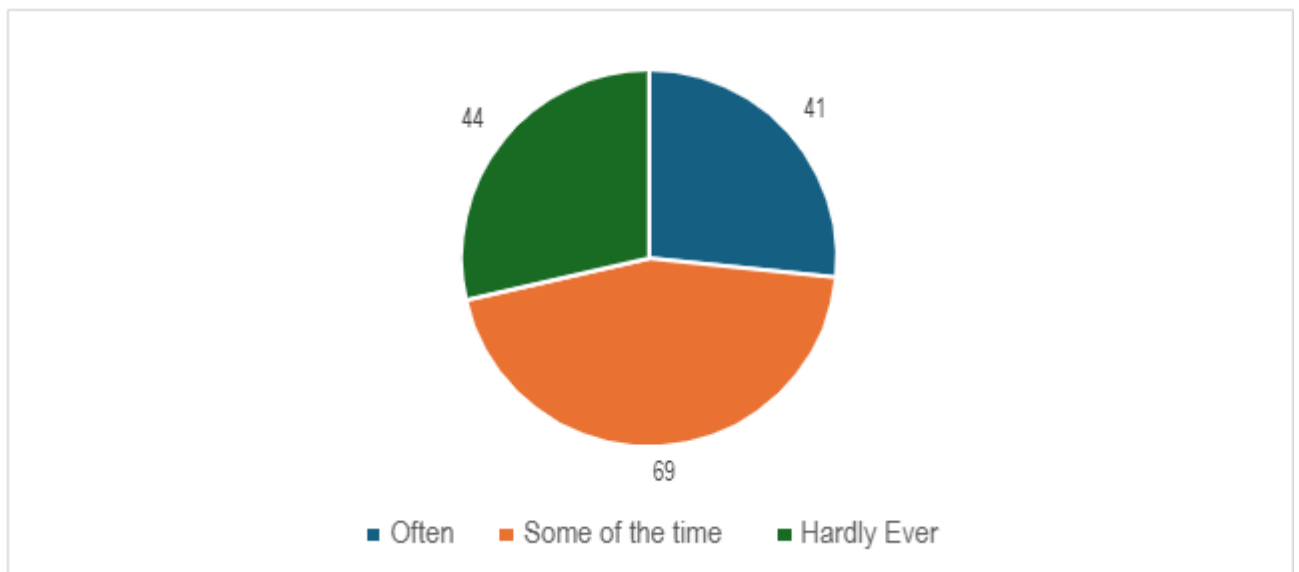


The responses indicate that 48% feel “left out” some of the time and 26% often feel “left out”.

There is a significant difference in the responses from those aged under 65 and those aged over 65 which will be worth exploring further. In the younger age group 36% say they often feel “left out” and 13% never feel left out whereas in the older age group only 19% feel they are often “left out” and 31% that they are never left out.

Without further investigation it is not possible to explain the reasons for this difference; perhaps it is linked to the transition from being younger and more active to being older where expectations of social connectedness are lower.

How often do you feel isolated from others?



In response to this question 27% said that they often felt “isolated from others” and 45% that they sometimes did, with only 29% saying hardly ever.

Again, there is an interesting difference between the under 65 and over 65 years age group with 38% of the younger age group saying they often felt “isolated” and only 19% of the older age group doing so. Similarly, only 11% of the under 65s didn’t feel “isolated” from others whereas 39% of the over 65s didn’t feel this way.

### Disability

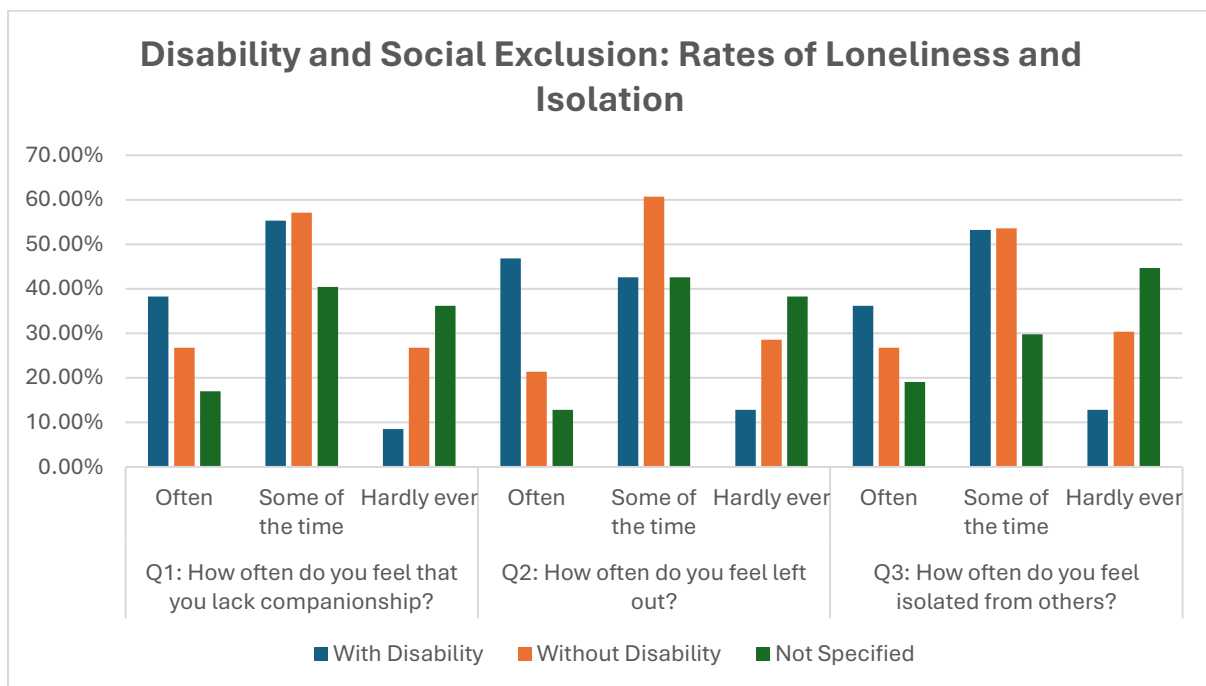
We asked respondents if they had a disability and the responses were as follows:

Yes 48 (31%)

No 62 (40%)

Didn’t say 44 (29%)

Responses to the three questions are outlined in the chart below, identifying those with a disability separately:



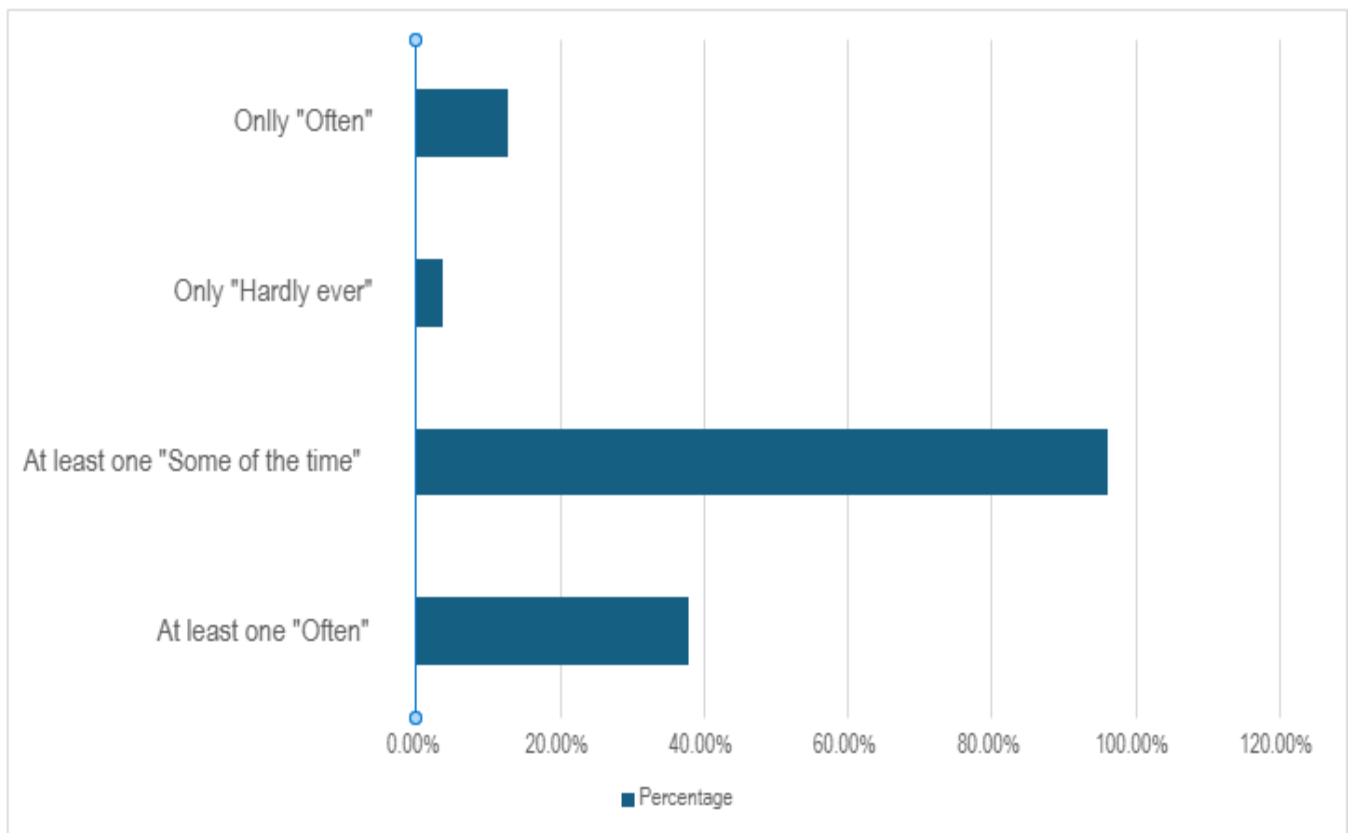
There are very distinct differences between those self-reporting as Disabled and those who do not; these differences are most significant at the extremes. On all the scales those with a Disability are more likely to respond “often” than the non-disabled and less likely to respond, “hardly ever”.

In response to the questions “how often do you feel you lack companionship” and “how often do you feel isolated from others”, a similar proportion with a disability and those without say “some of the time”. However, the most significant differences are in response to the question “how often do you feel left out”. This may be indicative of the fact that disabled individuals face significantly higher levels of social exclusion.

### Frequency of Individual Responses

The graphs above illustrate the overall responses to the individual questions, and we have identified some interesting

differences between the younger and older age groups and those with a disability. However, they don't show the frequency of specific responses at an individual level which would give us an insight into the numbers of respondents who may be classified as lonely. For example, how many individuals responded "often" to all three questions which would indicate a loneliness score of 9 or responded "sometimes" to all the questions indicating a loneliness score of 6. The chart below gives an insight into the individual patterns of response.



The chart shows that 13% of individuals responded "often" to all three questions, giving a loneliness score of 9. Only 4% responded "hardly ever" to all three questions with 96% saying "some of the time" and 38% "often" to at least one of the questions. At the individual level the differences between the under and over 65s are small and unlikely to be significant.

## Conclusions

Our on-line survey, based on the UCLA loneliness scale indicates that a significant number of the respondents would be classified as “lonely” with a score of between 6-9 on the scale. Of the 154 respondents 145 said “some of the time” to at least one of the questions; 60 of them responded “often” to at least one question, with 20 responding “often” to all three. Based on the above it is probable that 70-90 of the 154 respondents would have a score of 6-9 and be classified as “lonely”, representing c. 50-60% of those in the survey.

Given the nature of the survey design, we cannot extrapolate the findings to the wider population of over 50 year olds living in Haringey, however that was not the purpose of the survey. We now have a database of individuals we are in contact with who have identified as being lonely who we can engage, with a view to reducing their feeling of social isolation and loneliness.

In conclusion we can say that the impact of social isolation and loneliness is likely to be serious issue for a significant number of our 550 Circle members. Social isolation and loneliness are more prevalent for those with a disability who experience a higher level of social isolation and who can potentially benefit from the inclusive social activities and social networks that we offer.

These findings are important as we know that social isolation and loneliness are associated with poor mental and physical health. Public Health evidence suggests that the health impacts of loneliness are equivalent to smoking 20 cigarettes / day and there is a link with earlier onset of Dementia. The “cost” of loneliness is not only a personal one but also impacts on health, social care and community services.

## TESTIMONIALS

“In the UK it’s not like in the Caribbean - as you get older, your circle of friends gets smaller and smaller. No-one checks you out and you get lonely. Haringey Circle has started to broaden my social life a lot and I’m finding new friends. Its great chatting to everyone and hearing their news when we meet up!” Edith

“I’ve have recently joined and have received a very warm welcome and friendly reception at my first group meal. I believe it is very important for older and disabled people, especially when we live alone, to have the opportunity of peer group friendships and being introduced to new cultural activities,” Susan

“It’s given me an opportunity to meet others in the area – otherwise I sit at home not talking to anyone for days.” John (92)

“I’m 85 now and I live I in sheltered housing which is safe but has cut me off from those I used to know, although a good many friends have passed away now too. It been good to join the coffee drop ins and the arts classes too, which I really look forward too.” Germaine (85)

“Since joining Circle, I’ve broadened my social outlook by meeting like-minded people, and I’ve formed a new social family!” Dawn (60)

“Haringey Circle has opened up a completely different social circle for me, and I truly appreciate the events, classes and social occasions” Elena

“I have a disability and often feel isolated, but I’ve joined groups and don’t feel very welcome. However, with Haringey Circle I always feel welcome and my needs are discussed quite openly, and everyone joins in in a lovely way.” Jo

“I’m often home alone with nothing to do, and I do need to try to keep fit. But with Haringey Circle there has been plenty to do, and I’ve loved the walks and the classes” Janis

“Haringey Circle has made a huge positive change to my life. I attend the walking group, line dancing classes, as well as other social events like lunches. The line dancing has improved my confidence as well as giving me additional exercise. It's also great to meet new people. I haven't found

any other group for the over-50s that gives me this range of activities.”  
Graham

“I just wanted to say how much I’ve lived becoming part of Haringey Circle over the past few months.

I joined in September last year when I had started to feel quite isolated because several of my friends had moved out of London and others family situations had changed. I started to feel lonely for the first time in my life.

I’ve also had my own stresses since the new year which mean I haven’t been able to work. I genuinely believe that the activities offered by Haringey Circle have helped me through this time, both physically and mentally. And for the first time I’ve been making new friends and I’m starting to feel more a part of my local community which I’m loving! Thank you to the whole team. You are a really committed group of people who I believe are doing an amazing job” Gisela

“We have really enjoyed the Sunday walks with Haringey Circle. They’ve opened our eyes to some lovely parks and countryside within easy reach which we didn’t know were there. And we talked as we walked and got to know people we’d never otherwise have had the chance to meet. We’re going to be regulars now!” Michele and Haroon



