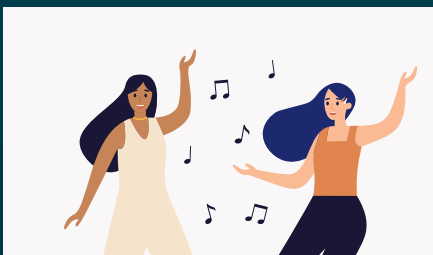
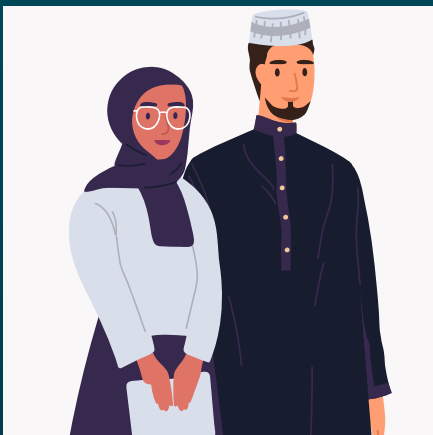


Opening Doors to Connection Summary 2026



How to help someone to develop friendships and connection



Table of Contents

Purpose of the guide.....	1
Understanding social connection	1
Common triggers to social disconnection.....	1
Spotting signs	1
How to approach conversations – for someone who may want more social connection...	2
Ideas for questions	2
Practical tips to offer	2
Signposting resources	3

Purpose of the guide

- Support young adults and adults in Kirklees.
- Raise awareness of loneliness and highlight importance of social connection.
- Provide tips for conversations, practical support, and signpost to services.

Understanding social connection

- Many people can feel less socially connected or lonely from time to time. This can happen at any age and at different points in life. This is a signal to reach out and connect.
- Chronic or severe loneliness can have an impact on emotional or physical health.
- This is different from social isolation or being alone – it is possible to be surrounded by people and still feel lonely. Many people enjoy their time in solitude.

Common triggers to social disconnection

- Life changes or transitions such as mental or physical ill health, becoming disabled, moving, bereavement, relationship breakdown, moving house, changing job, or retiring, school or college
- Financial hardship, unemployment.
- Caring for others can reduce opportunities for social connection.
- Language/cultural barriers can lead to people feeling excluded as well as discrimination.

Spotting signs

It may not be obvious as it is a very personal experience, but some signs might include:

- Changes in mood, behaviour, routine.
- Withdrawal from social situations.
- Low confidence, anxiety, excessive time online.
- Verbal outpourings or a keenness to keep talking.

How to approach conversations – for someone who may want more social connection

- Build rapport and trust – start with general ‘chit chat.’
- Start with open and non-direct questions as loneliness still carries a stigma.
- Try not to offer immediate advice.
- Use positive language – talk about building up connections.
- Focus on a person’s strengths and what they have to offer others and their community.

Ideas for questions

- What do/ would you like to do with your time?
- What hobbies and interests do you have? Do you have any skills or passions you would like to share with others?
- Would you like more opportunities to meet people? Where and how do you like to meet people?
- Who could you turn to for support if you needed it?
- Do you know your neighbours? Do you find people say hello and chat to each other?
- What is the local transport like? Is it easy to get around?
- How would you like things to be? What would you like to be doing that is different?
- What would make a difference to you? What needs to change to make this happen?
- Is there anything that stops you from making the change?

Practical tips to offer

You can encourage people to:

- acknowledge their feelings
- identify their own needs and goals
- build up connections gradually- call a friend, join a group, volunteer
- show vulnerability, take interest in others – this helps to connect with others
- offer kindness and share their skills

- consider self-care: try to be physically active, enjoy nature and outdoors, and pursue hobbies
- contact their Social Prescribing Link Worker or Community Plus for ideas on connecting into local activities

Signposting resources

- [Community Plus](#)
- [Social Prescribing](#)
- [Kirklees Libraries](#)
- [Mental Health Support](#)

For further information, you can read or download our full guide from our social connection pages [Being socially connected in your community | Kirklees Council](#)

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