

# A national approach

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Campaign to End Loneliness

Supported by



# We believe that people of all ages need connections that matter.

There are nine million lonely people in the UK and four million of them are older people.

Many older people find constant loneliness hardest to overcome. They lack the friendship and support we all need.

We've been experts in the field of loneliness and connection since 2011. We share research, evidence and knowledge with thousands of other organisations and the public to drive positive change in older people's lives.

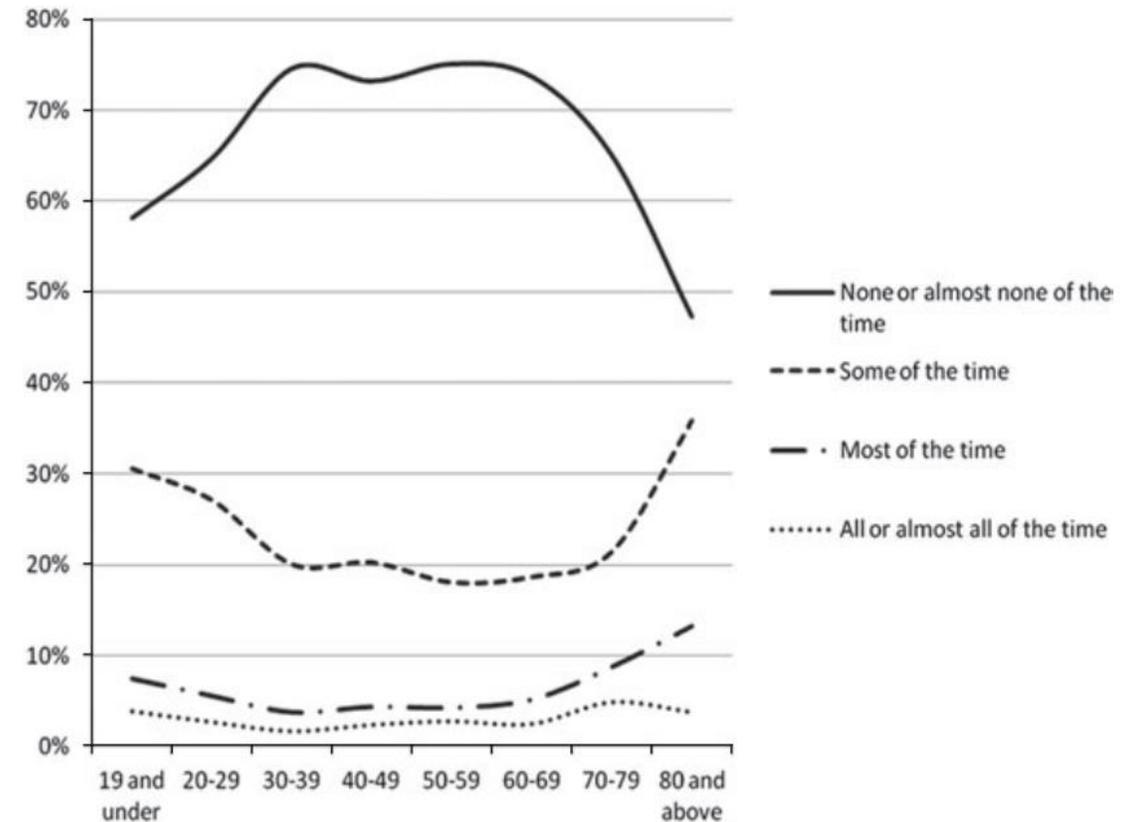
We inspire everyone to connect and bring communities together across the UK.



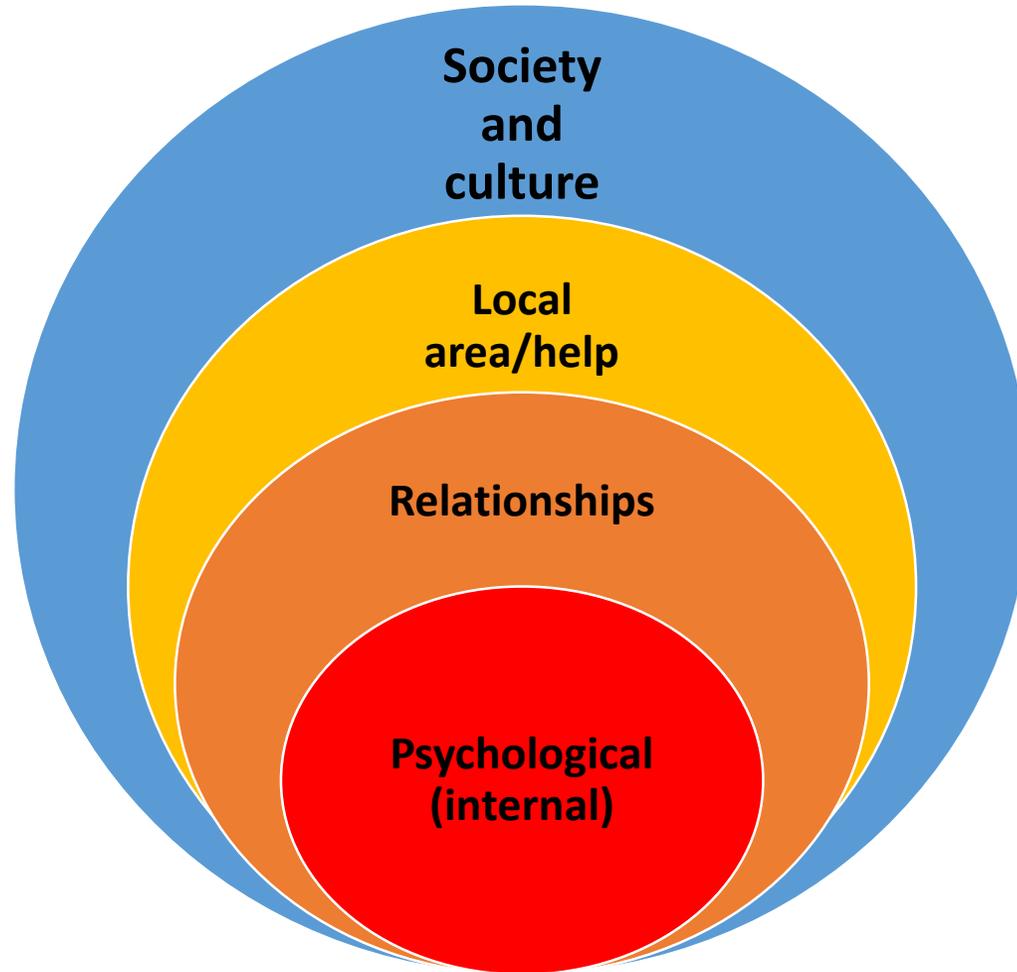
# Levels of loneliness in UK

- Around 10% of older people (65+) are often or always lonely – this has been consistent over decades
- Absolute numbers are growing
- Recent surveys have suggested that younger people are more lonely than older people (but there are reasons for caution here)
- A U-shaped curve of loneliness through the life course

Source: Yang K. & Victor C. (2011), using data from the European Social Survey



# Loneliness requires systems change



# Tackling loneliness: The Campaign to End Loneliness

- Not a new issue, but a new focus
- Launched in 2011 by a coalition of organisations working with older people to bring focus to the issue, identify action and bring people together
- Started with research – published *Safeguarding the Convoy* – bringing together the evidence, and using it to call for action
- Aimed to raise national awareness, promote local action, and improve practice
- A network of local and national organisations and service providers
- A funder (the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation) prepared to take risk

# The reasons...

...why the UK needed a loneliness movement

## **Plenty of local activity – no national leadership**

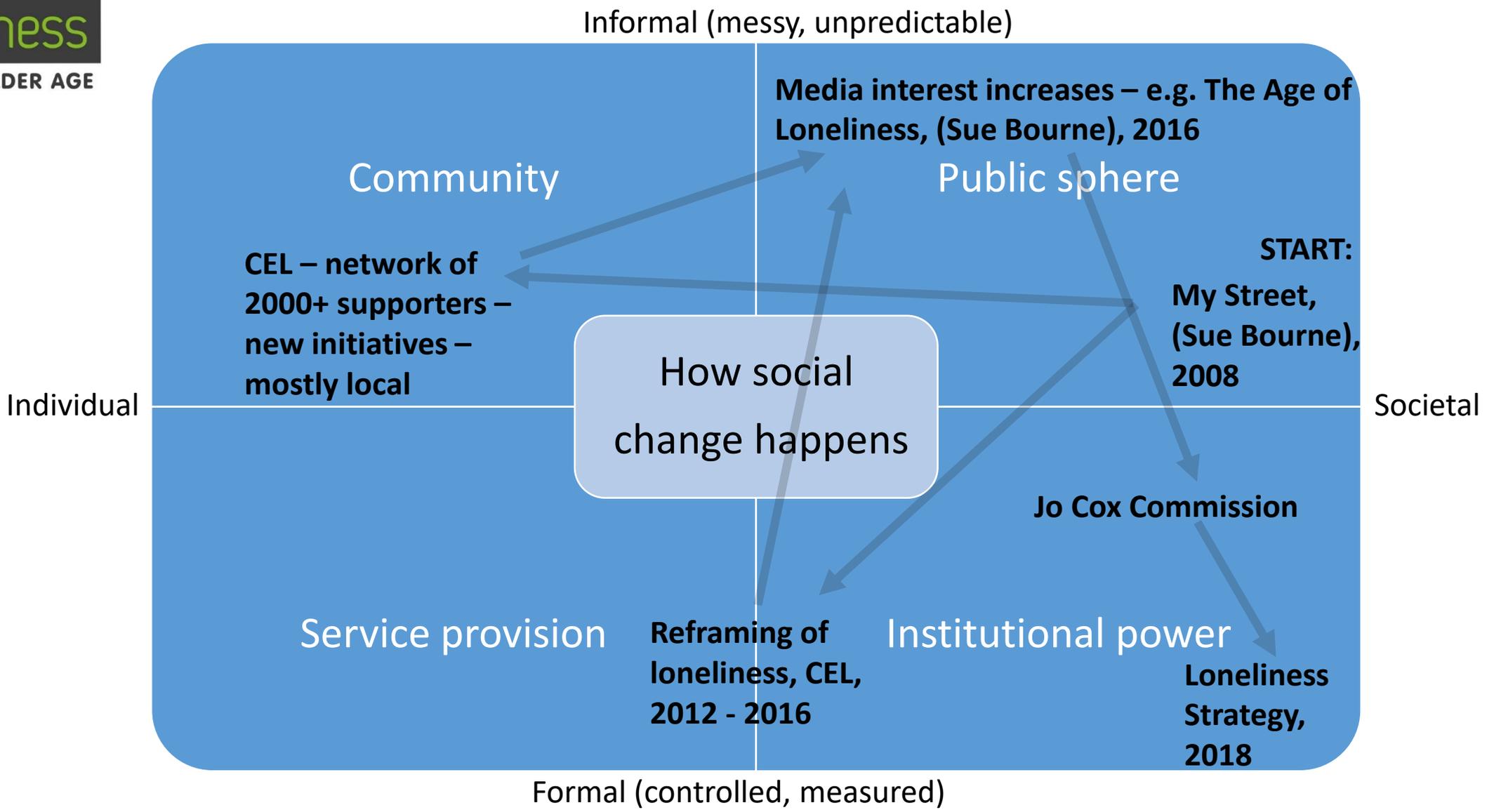
### **Some attention in policy:**

- Marmot review: “Fair Society, Healthy Lives” – life course approach 2008
- Mental Health Foundation “The Lonely Society?” 2010

### **Needed to reframe the issue**

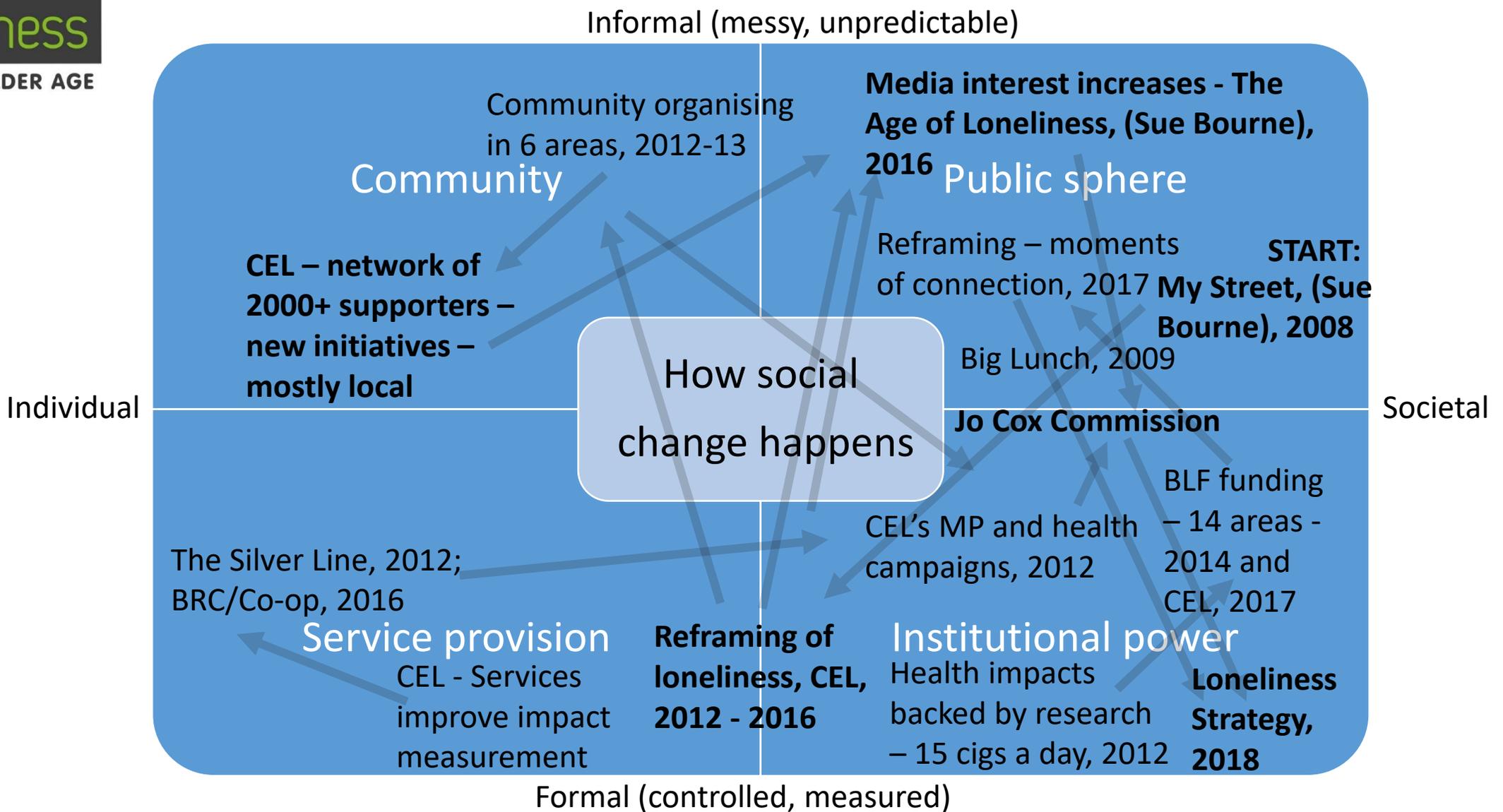
- Tackling loneliness a “nice to have”
- Move the issue from a pity based issue to a solutions based issue

# Steps to a loneliness movement



With thanks to the Sheila McKechnie Foundation – adapted from *Social Power*, 2018 [www.smk.org.uk](http://www.smk.org.uk)

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# Building the pressure: Media interest

- Growing press attention: e.g. Yorkshire Post campaign (since 2014); regular national press (not just at Christmas)
- Documentaries: e.g. The Age of Loneliness (Sue Bourne, 2016)
- Charity campaigns: e.g. Man in the Moon (John Lewis Christmas advert 2016, with Age UK)
- TV campaigns: e.g. ITV's One Million Minutes
- Social media: e.g. Sarah Millican #joinin

The collage shows a page from 'THE YORKSHIRE POST' with several headlines and images. The main headline is 'No excuse to keep loneliness hidden in shadows' with a sub-headline 'Regional summit hears calls for urgent action'. Below this is a photo of a woman in a blue hat and a man. Other headlines include 'FASHION'S GOING GLOBAL', 'FEARS FOR OUR RURAL PUBS GROW', 'SEE INSIDE CITY'S TOP NEW STORE', 'Royal eyes smiling for Irish on historic day', 'Government may offer funds for 'managed close-down' of colliery', and 'Preston's breaks down at death trial'. There is also a small 'LONELINESS' graphic and a 'FAB 2' graphic at the bottom right.

# Building the pressure: Funding for change

- Ongoing funding for the Campaign to End Loneliness from Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, and now other trusts and foundations
- Major investment by Big Lottery Fund in Ageing Better programme in 14 local areas
- Big Lottery Fund now funding Campaign to End Loneliness to extent their work
- Co-op partnership with British Red Cross
- Co-op Foundation investment in loneliness among young people
- Research funding especially via National Institute for Health Research, and Economic and Social Research Council

# Building the pressure: The Jo Cox Commission on loneliness

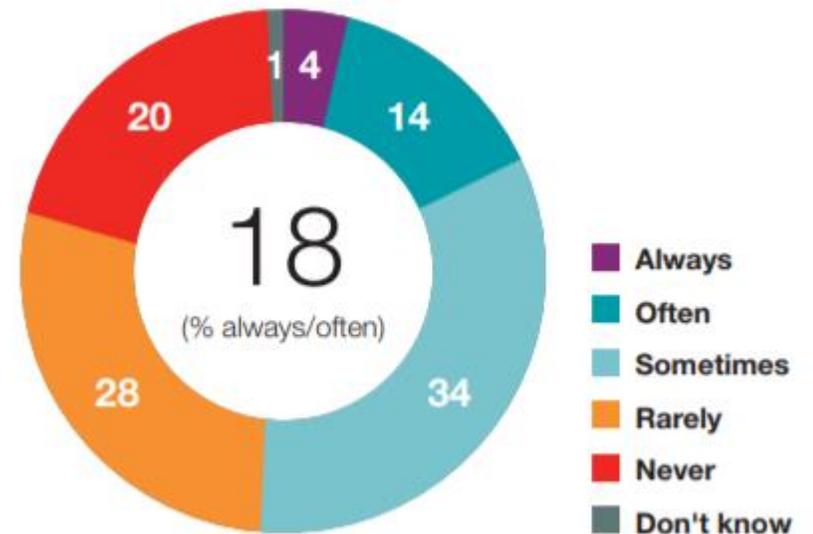
- Established by backbench MP Jo Cox, who brought together a coalition of charities and businesses with an interest in loneliness across all ages
- Jo was inspired by stories of loneliness in her constituency, and by her experience of loneliness as a student
- She wanted to “turbocharge” the loneliness agenda
- In June 2016 Jo was murdered by a far right extremist
- Her work was taken forward by two MPs – one Labour and one Conservative – and the coalition she assembled



# An all-age agenda for Loneliness

- Research for Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation highlighting the role of transitions across the life course
- British Red Cross and Co-op partnership research said 9 million people in the UK were often or always lonely
- Jo Cox Commission reports and focus weeks emphasised different communities at risk
- Work to shift attitudes: “Happy to chat”  
Coop (2016) *Trapped in a Bubble*

Figure 3. Prevalence of loneliness in the UK general public



Source Q1: How often do you feel lonely, if at all.  
Base: All UK adults aged 16+ (2,523).

# The Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness

- Final call to action launched in December 2017, focussed on the need for national action to provide:
  - Leadership (strategy, and a loneliness test)
  - Measurement (impact and prevalence)
  - Funding (for research, innovation, and roll out)
- Highlighted need for shift in societal norms around loneliness and connection – 5 a day?

**JO COX**  
**LONELINESS**  
start a conversation

**Combatting loneliness**  
**one conversation at a time**

*A call to action*



# Becoming a world-leader in loneliness

- In January 2018 the Commission's recommendations were accepted in full
  - A Minister for Loneliness was appointed
  - Work to develop national measures of loneliness was begun
  - A "Building Connections" fund was launched
  - A cross departmental team was established within Government to develop a new strategy, backed by a Ministerial group
- Loneliness Action Group brought stakeholders together to feed in to the work in Government

**British People Are So Lonely That They  
Now Have a Minister for Loneliness**

# A connected society: The national strategy for tackling loneliness

- Launched October 2018
- Headline commitments include:
  - rolling out social prescribing services to all GPs by 2023 (a key foundation service – if we get them right)
  - Employer pledge for tackling loneliness in the workplace
  - £1.8 million fund for improving community spaces
- Commitments across every government department

**A connected society**  
A strategy for tackling loneliness –  
laying the foundations for change



# A connected society: The national strategy for tackling loneliness

- Government listened to stakeholders. The strategy includes commitments on:
  - Housing – around community-led housing and cohousing, and designing for wellbeing and connection
  - Employment support
  - Support for bereaved people
  - Transport - including community transport, and support for people who can no longer drive
  - Improving information about community activities
  - Highlighting loneliness within mental health campaigns
  - Improving mental health support for students
  - Building loneliness into curriculum for children and young people
  - Pilot programmes with the Royal Mail to check in on isolated residents
  - Enabling people to volunteer right through the life course
  - Promoting sporting, art and cultural activities as means of reducing isolation
  - Support for care leavers
  - And more

# A connected society: The national strategy for tackling loneliness

- Plans for ongoing Ministerial oversight
- Developing a loneliness test
- Reporting on loneliness via the Ministerial group
- Commitment to building the evidence
- Embedding national measures in key frameworks

**A connected society**  
A strategy for tackling loneliness –  
laying the foundations for change



# Loneliness movement?

There are thousands of organisations, and recently national government has taken on a leadership role:

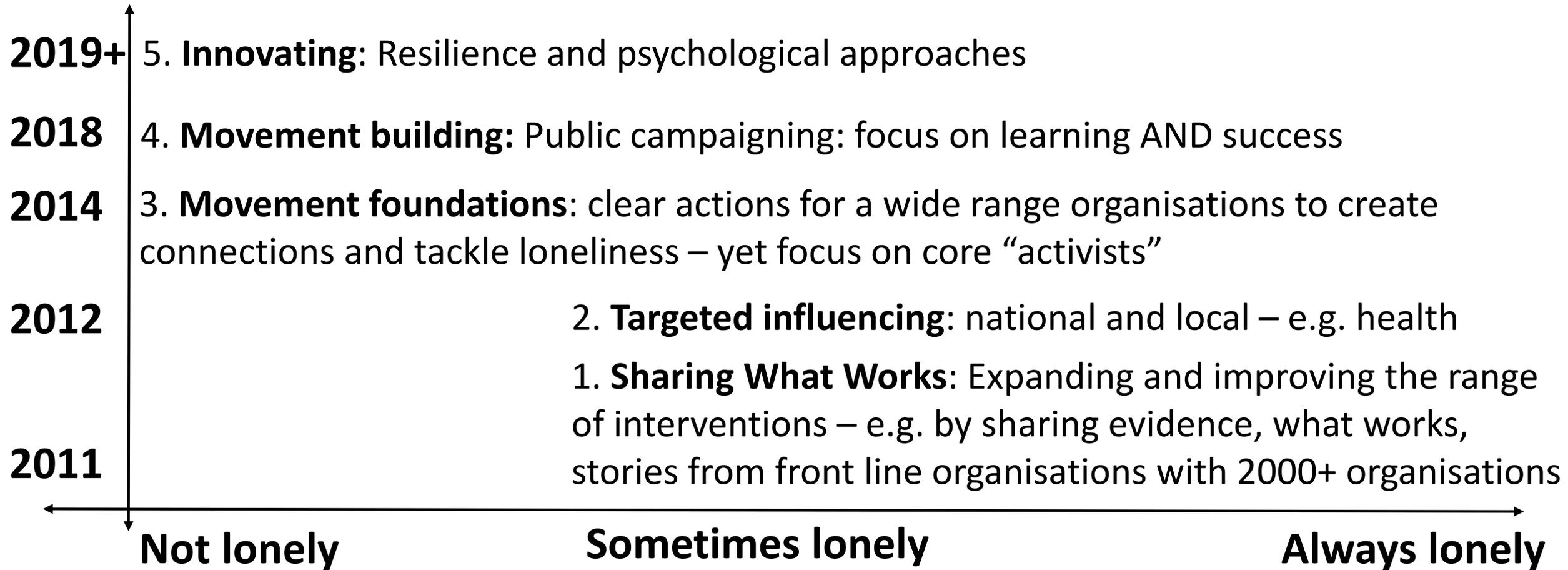
- Campaign to End Loneliness
- Jo Cox Commission
- **British Red Cross and the Co-op**
- **English Government strategy announced with employers and businesses part of this policy shift**
- **Scottish Government strategy**
- **Upcoming Welsh Government strategy**

All strategies include businesses and employers, all four sectors, the public and international learning and exchange.

# What part have CEL played?

- 1. Collaboration – leveraging numbers of organisations**
- 2. Reframing - amplifying robust academic evidence**
- 3. Pioneering – thinking differently**
- 4. Letting it go - open up the space for others to fill**
- 5. Next... voices of people experiencing loneliness**

# How have we done this? We have taken a long view



# Still a lot to learn

- Growing interest across the globe – beginnings of a global movement
- It's great to be at the forefront but we:
  - Are only at the start of understanding how to change attitudes
  - Still don't have enough evidence about what works, for whom, and in what circumstances
  - Still haven't cracked where to locate this politically and structurally to maximise impact and some things are going in the wrong direction e.g. local government budgets
- Let's work together to make this happen

**Join us** [www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/support-us](http://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/support-us)

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**Facebook** @Thecampaigntoendloneliness

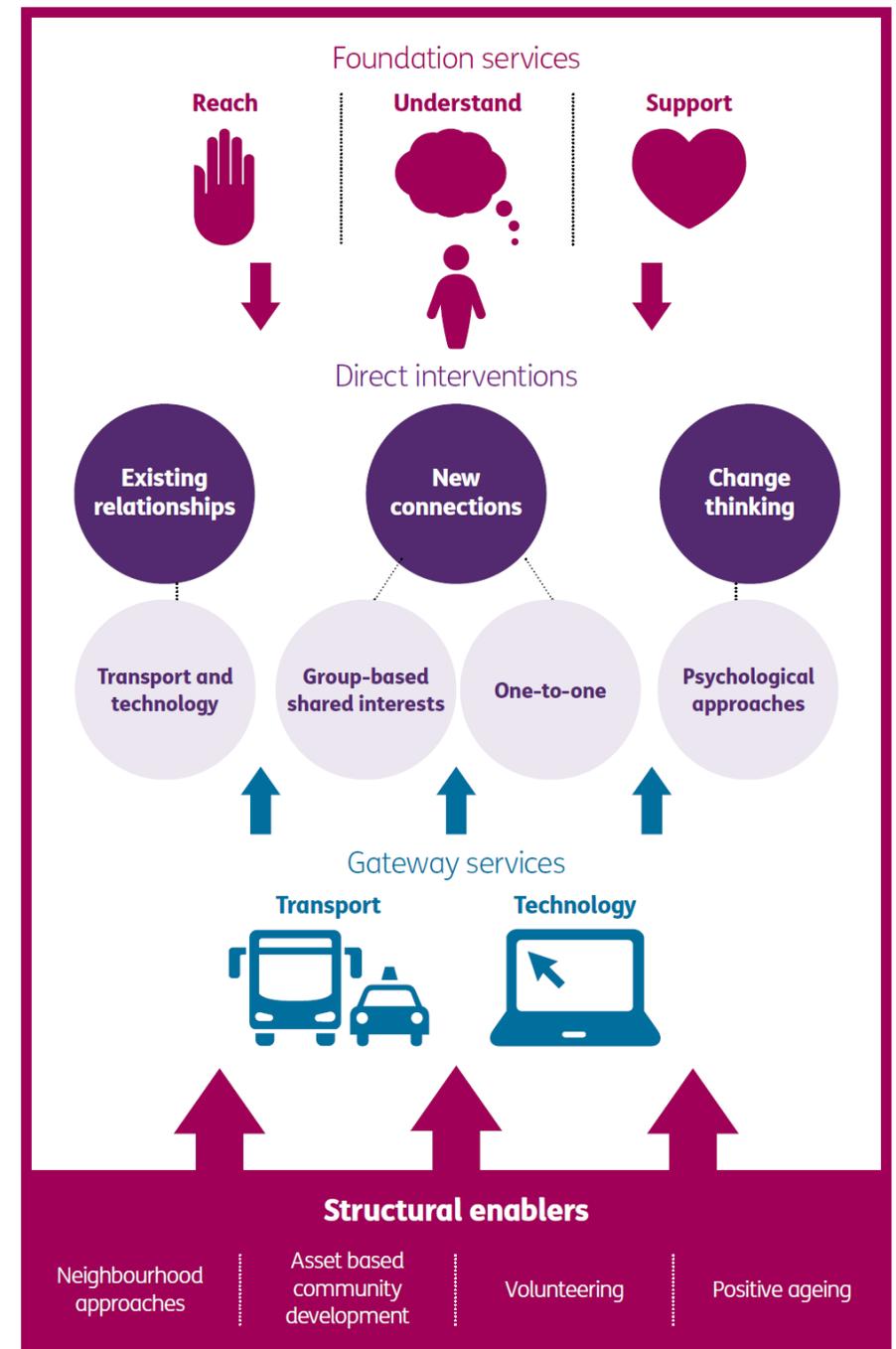
**Email Us** [info@campaigntoendloneliness.org.uk](mailto:info@campaigntoendloneliness.org.uk)

**Call Us** +44 203 865 3908

**Write To Us** Campaign to End Loneliness, 3 Waterhouse Square, 138 Holborn,  
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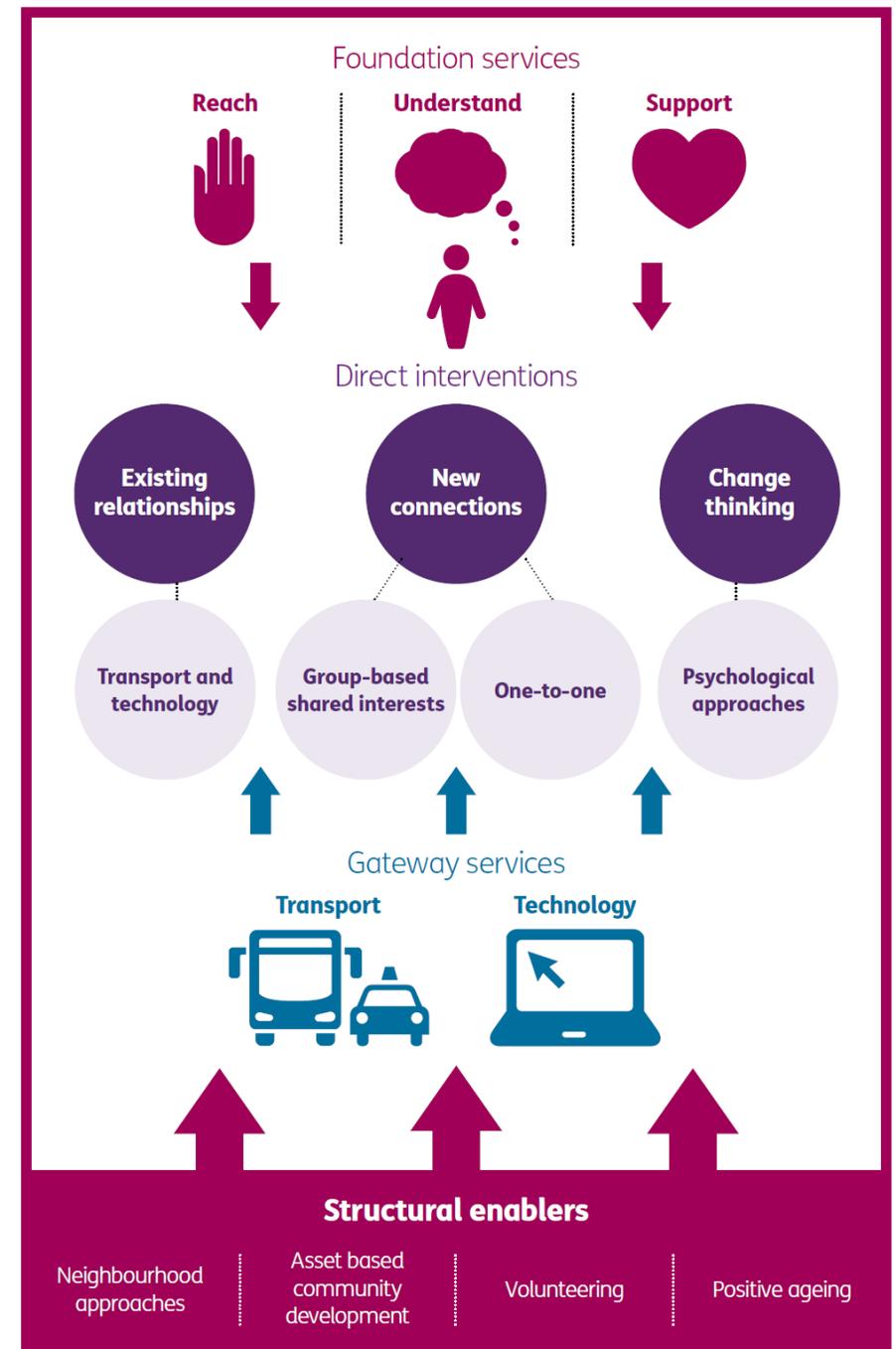
# What works in addressing loneliness?: The *Promising Approaches* framework

- Developed for Age UK and the Campaign to End Loneliness
- Aim to offer direction for local authorities looking to act
- Has been used to inform local strategies in communities throughout England
- The approaches have been further piloted and tested by Age UK



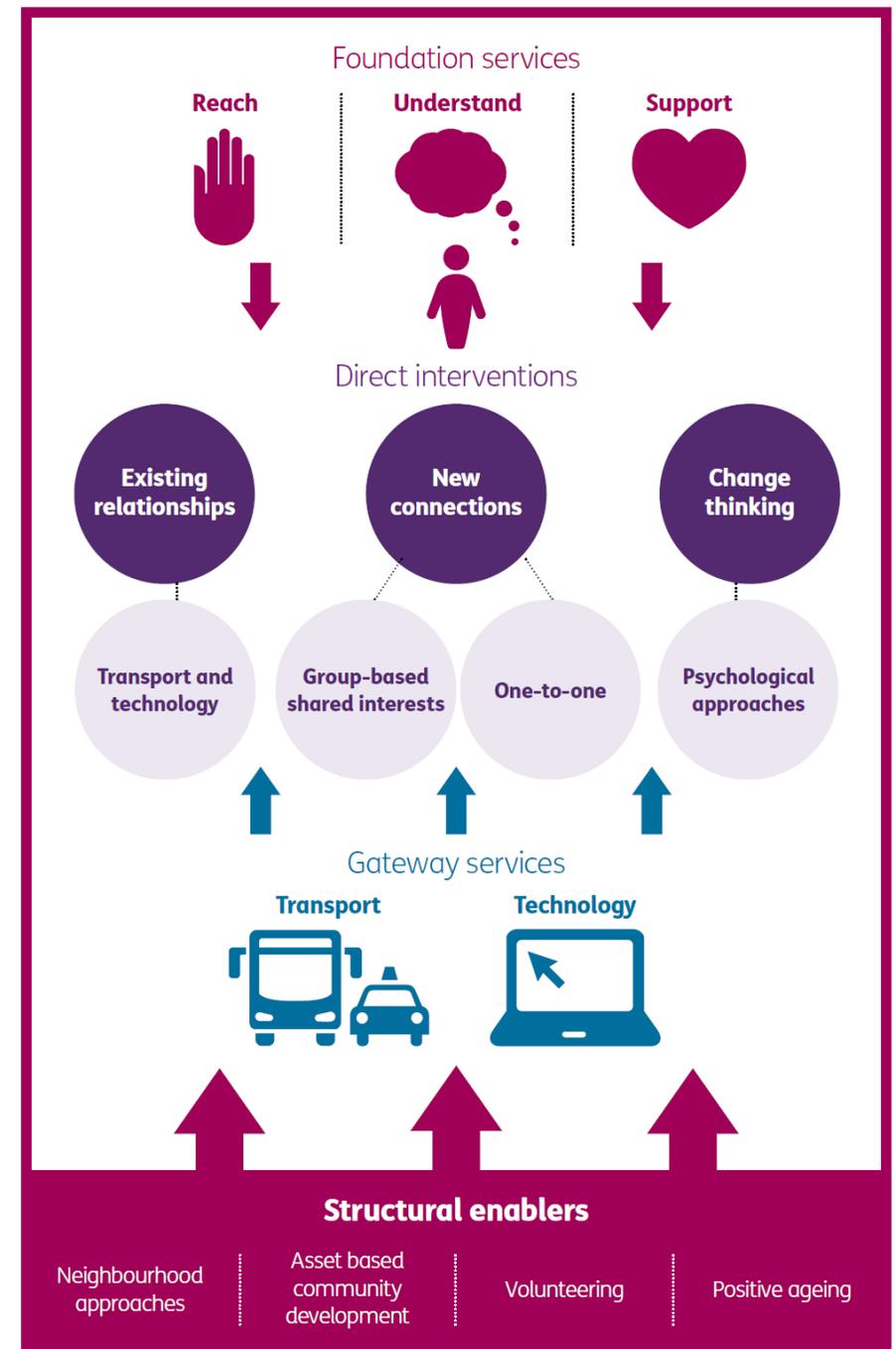
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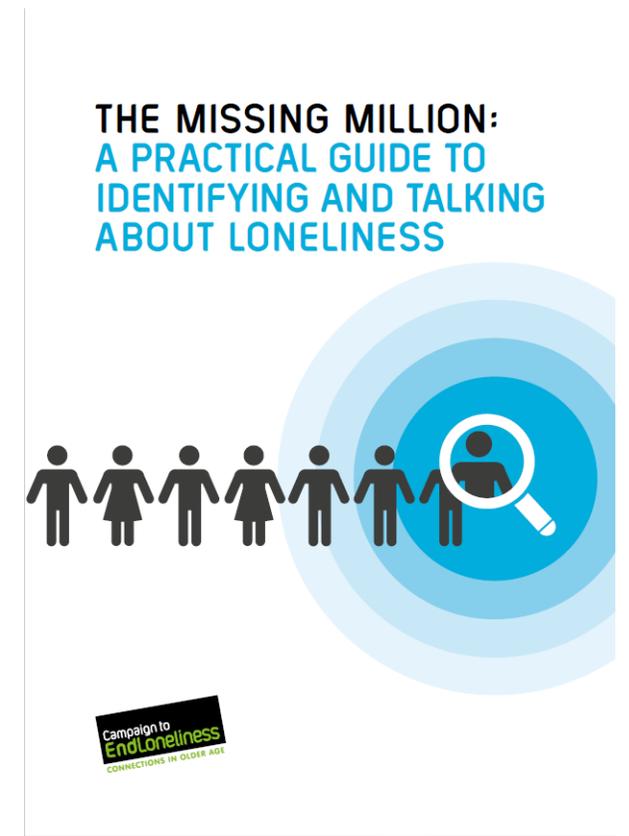
# The *Promising Approaches* framework

- A way of understanding the role played by different types of intervention
- Demonstrates the “web” of support needed for people at risk of, or experiencing loneliness
- Does not cover every form of intervention that could be made to combat loneliness – e.g. does not touch on preventative measures / culture change activity



# Foundation Services

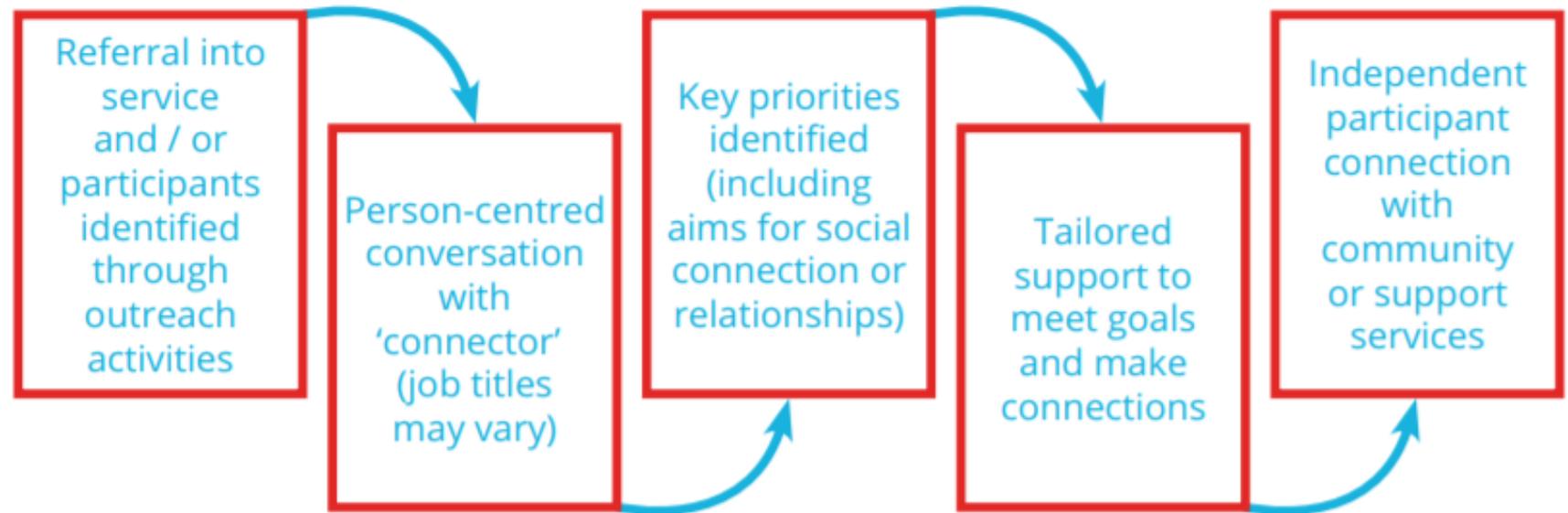
- These identify, understand and support people – many do all three
  - Identifying people who are lonely, and outreaching to them
  - Understanding why they are lonely and what would work for them
  - Supporting them to access these services (more than “signposting”)
- They work – in Age UK’s *Testing Promising Approaches* programme:
  - More than 70% of people who said they were lonely sometimes or frequently reduced their loneliness scores
  - Nearly 90% of people who were frequently lonely reduced their scores



# Community Connectors

- Umbrella term for a raft of services – including Village Agents, Social Prescribers, Local Area Coordinators etc
- Good evidence these are effective in supporting lonely people – as well as meeting other needs

Figure 1. How connector services work



# Direct Interventions

- Often studied and most “front of mind” in tackling loneliness
- We know the criteria for effective group-based interventions:
  - Targeted towards a specific group
  - Focussed on a shared interest / enabling learning
  - Involve older people in running the group
- Group based interventions include choirs, knitting groups, COPD peer support groups, carers support, Men’s Sheds etc
- One-to-one interventions are crucial. Evidence is mixed, but they are highly valued; and may be critical for the most lonely individuals
- There is strong evidence of the impact of psychological approaches – but these are rarely found

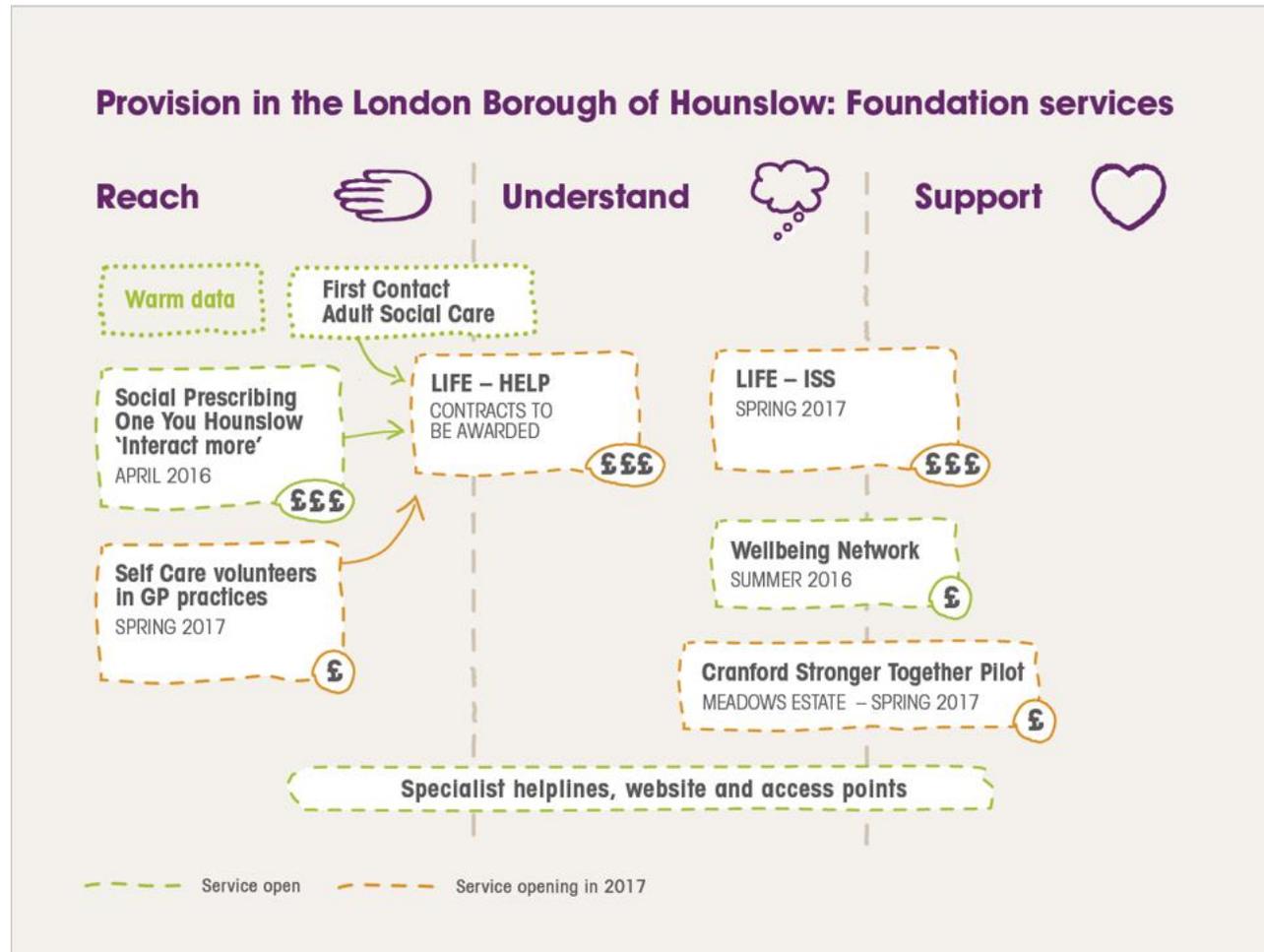
# Promising Approaches in action

- Not intended as a blueprint for new services - many of the *Promising Approaches* are already found in communities
- Few would need / want to be defined as “loneliness services”
- Many are commissioned or funded under broader ambitions

However:

- They will be more effective if they are conscious about tackling loneliness
- They may need modification to be most effective

# Applying Promising Approaches in a London Borough



# Applying Promising Approaches in a London Borough



# Beyond *Promising Approaches*

- The loneliness challenge is broader:
  - Preventing loneliness – by enabling individuals to act and building “loneliness proof” communities
  - Addressing societal attitudes and changing behaviour
- National leadership was needed particularly around:
  - Funding
  - Measurement
  - The wider policy environment
  - Public messaging

# But...

- There are real risks:
  - Multiple drivers around many of the key commitments
    - E.g. social prescribing – balancing health vs social aspirations
  - Lots of pilots and plans – but will action follow?
  - Work on changing public attitudes still to be developed, and not yet matched by funding needed (especially when compared to mental health)
  - Some of the key trends are in the wrong direction – e.g. Underfunding of local government, especially social care; cuts to public health; voluntary and community sector under strain etc.
  - The Minister has resigned
  - And..... Brexit

# The work continues...

- Campaign to End Loneliness continues to explore new ways of tackling loneliness – e.g. exploring how to encourage behaviour change:
  - Focusing on small moments of connection
  - Shifting the debate from loneliness to the power of connection
  - #BeMoreUs
- The Jo Cox Foundation’s “Great Get Together” and the “Big Lunch” continue to promote neighbourliness
- The Loneliness Action Group continues to support work to influence and shape activity
- New evidence is being developed, including through the Building Connections Fund
- Work in local communities continues
- ...We’re still on the journey ...

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