

Supporting meaningful connection and why it is important for people

This factsheet has been designed to accompany this webinar, which you can view [here](#).

Meaningful connection is about all the connections that are important to people – families, friends, staff, pets, the wider community, and can also include our environment and belongings. [Research](#) has evidenced how beneficial meaningful connection is to physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing. Isolation and loneliness can have profound negative outcomes for people. Meaningful engagement - being involved in activities and spending time doing things that are important to us - influences quality of life, supports personhood and has been shown to increase life expectancy. Nevertheless, many people who live in care homes for adults and older people can experience moderate to severe loneliness, and this is linked to a range of negative health consequences including depression, dementia, cardiovascular disease and poor nutrition, as well as a reduced quality of life.

The right to respect for private and family life is also a fundamental human right (Article 8, Human Rights Act 1998). ([Webinar](#).)

During the Covid-19 pandemic, people who lived in care homes were separated from their loved ones for lengthy periods, resulting in negative consequences for many people. Two new [Health and Social Care Standards](#) (5.16 and 5.17) have since been introduced which support people's rights to see and get support from those important to them, even in the case of an outbreak of infectious disease. The planned [Anne's Law](#) will also ensure these rights are protected.

Everyone has their individual "recipe for connection" which supports their own health and wellbeing needs, and good quality, responsive, person-centred personal planning is essential to ensure people are supported to connect in the ways that are most meaningful to them.

People who experience care often face a range of barriers and challenges, such as sensory impairment, dementia or learning disabilities, which can affect their ability to connect with other people. This can lead to an increased risk of social disconnection and isolation, and may lead to people experiencing stress and distress. It's important therefore to find out what is important to people, how they prefer to connect and communicate, what the barriers are, and to ensure people have opportunities to connect in ways that are right for them and support them to get the most out of life.

More resources on meaningful connection are available [here](#).