



Alex Neil  
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice,  
Communities and Pensioners' Rights  
By email

Equal Opportunities Committee  
Email: [equal.opportunities@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:equal.opportunities@scottish.parliament.uk)

8 June 2015

Dear Alex Neil,

**Re: Age and Social Isolation**

The Committee found the evidence session on the 4 June extremely constructive and helpful. In addition to the issues explored the Committee had further questions that it was unable to cover due to time restrictions and would be grateful if you could respond in writing to the matters raised.

The questions are as follows—

The Campaign to End Loneliness in England has come up with a model to tackle loneliness which can be summarised as:

1. Identify people, through GPs or other services
2. Have services available, such as befriending or group based activities
3. This needs to be supported by access to transport and technology
4. All this must be underpinned by policy and strategy that enables this to work, such as volunteering, asset based community development, and neighbourhood approaches.

What is the Scottish Government's view on the Campaign to End Loneliness's model to tackle loneliness? Is this something the Scottish Government could use in the development of a strategy to tackle social isolation?

How is the Scottish Government promoting befriending services in Scotland?

How does the Scottish Government promote services which support the needs of specific groups, such as those with learning disabilities, or mental health problems?

Does the Scottish Government have any data to quantify the saving to the NHS of preventative measures?

What is the Scottish Government doing to support and encourage the work of volunteers in Scotland?

How does the Scottish Government encourage organisations like, schools, housing services, social work and third sector agencies to develop particular approaches for young people? Might the development of peer support be a way of combating social isolation for young people?

Considering the work of the Third Sector Interfaces and the role played by the third sector in combating social isolation, how might the Scottish Government encourage the statutory sector to work with the third sector as equal partners?

I would be very grateful if you could respond to these questions as soon as possible. The Committee will begin to consider the themes of its report on 18 June 2015 and if it is possible would appreciate a response in advance of papers being issued on 15 June 2015.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "M McCulloch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first "M" being particularly large and stylized.

Margaret McCulloch MSP  
Convener, Equal Opportunities Committee