



Prifysgol Cymru

Y Drindod Dewi Sant

University of Wales

Trinity Saint David

ASSESSMENT 1: WRITTEN REPORT

Student name	Badmus Adeshola Omotosho
Student number	1914925
Lecturers name	Diola Bijihout
Module code	BMH6009

Executive summary

This study is all about loneliness and social isolation faced by older population in UK. Impact of loneliness and social isolation has been illustrated in this report along with certain policies and legislations. The certain changes in the policies and legislations and running programmes has been depicted in this study along with the technological implementations which reduces the social isolation and loneliness from older populations in UK.

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
a) an older adult in the United Kingdom and Australia.....	4
b) Statistics on the Ageing Population.....	5
c) Theories of Loneliness and Isolation.....	6
d) Impact of Loneliness and Isolation on an Older Person	7
e) Current legislation and policies	8
f) Evaluation and comparison	8
g) Effective changes and utilization of technology	10
h) Recommendation.....	11
To recommend the application of technologies	11
To recommend certain changes in the running programmes	11
g) Conclusion	11
References.....	13

Introduction

The report introduces the impact of social isolation and loneliness among the elderly population of the UK and in another country that is Australia. Social isolation and loneliness cause many physical and mental health issues among older adults. The health issues commonly found among the elderly population due to loneliness are depression, anxiety, heart diseases, high blood pressure and sometimes death. The report aims to identify the problems of older adults related to social isolation and provide solutions to them. There are many ways older people can decrease their loneliness, they can try the new activities that they enjoy the most. The new activities will help them in being busy and will also help in reducing Stress.

a) An older adult in the United Kingdom and Australia

People above the age of 65 can be called the elderly in the United Kingdom (UK). However, it cannot be applied to everyone as people can biologically age at the same rate but a 70 years old person can be healthier than a person just at the age of 60. The healthcare of the UK is very advanced that helps the people of the UK live longer than before. It is expected that in the year 2025 the population of older people in the UK will be 18.5 million (england.nhs.uk, 2022). The **National Health Service (NHS)** of the UK provides the best services to older people to make them remain independent and healthy. People at older age find many difficulties related to mental and physical health so it is very important for them to be happy in their lives to avoid health-related issues. People at older age need more care and support so NHS in the UK conducts many programmes and activities to support them.

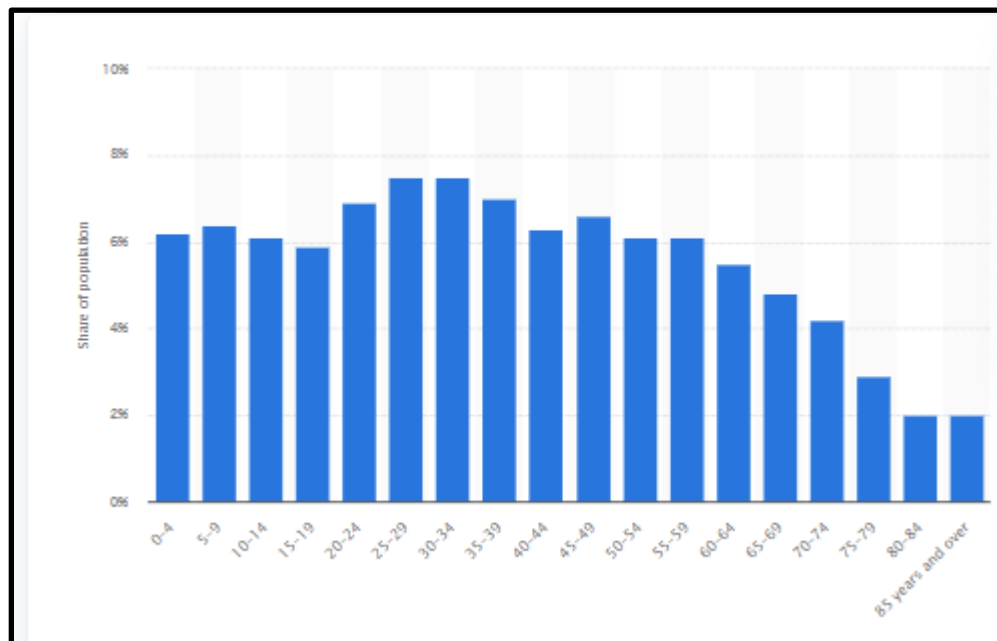


Figure 1: Population distribution in Australia

(Source: statista.com, 2022)

Australian people that are above the age of 65 are known to be older adults in the country. From the above graph, it can be observed that the people from the age of age 65 to 69 are 4.8% in Australia. It is also estimated that there will be much older people in future in the concerned country. The people of Australia think highly of older Australians as they believe that older people add value to society through their experience, knowledge and work. 90% of Australians feel that they have the obligation to care for and support the older generation. The government of Australia has launched many programmes to support the older people of the country (aph.gov.au, 2022). Government and non-government of all three sectors are involved in these programmes to support and care for the elderly people. Most of the programmes in the country state that the benefit of the programme can only be taken by people above the age of 65.

b) Statistics on the Ageing Population

The UK has the most ageing population with 12 million people aged 65 and above. The country has 5.4 million people that are aged 75 and above and 1.6 million people that are aged 85 and above. The country also consists of that are aged 90 and above, and the number of people that are 90 and above is 500000. The number of people that have crossed the age of a hundred is increasing in the country by 85% (ageuk.org.uk, 2022). It is also estimated that by the year 2030 people of age above a hundred will have a population of 21000 in the country. It has been observed that since the 19th century the UK elder population are increasing and the mortality rate are declining. The people aged 65 and above are growing rapidly as compared to the other age group of the country.

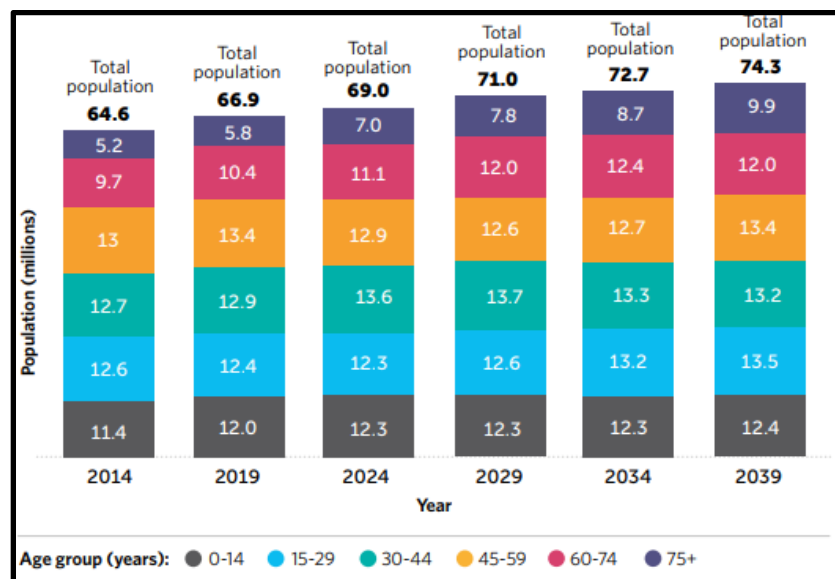


Figure 2: Ageing Population of the UK

(Source: assets.publishing.service.gov.uk, 2022)

The above figure implies that the number of people above 75 age in the country will increase by 9.9% in the year 2039. The increase in the ageing population was first observed in the mid-year of 2014 and from there the older population of the country has been continuously increasing. From the above figure, it can be observed that 70% of the UK growth in the population between 2014 to 2039 will be in the age group 60 and above (Li *et al.* 2019). There will be a change from 14.9 million in 2014 to 21.9 million people in the year 2039. There are two factors responsible for the ageing of the population one is the low fertility rate and the other is the decline in the mortality rate. Fewer young people are entering the country's population and due to the advanced health care of the country, older people are increasing. The decline in the mortality rate of people aged 65 and above is driving the increase in life expectancy of the people.

c) Theories of Loneliness and Isolation

Loneliness occurs in people due to insecurity and distressing experience. Loneliness is mostly found in elderly people and prolonged loneliness can cause them to have stress and can make them depressed. The theory of loneliness given by the Sociologist **Weiss** states that if the psychological needs of the people do not get fulfilled then they may have the feeling of loneliness and isolation. Weiss's theory of loneliness suggests that when elderly people get rejected by their family and friends feel lonely (Cacioppo and Cacioppo, 2018). The rejection from their family and friends makes them reduce socialising and increases their distrust in the people making them isolated. According to Weiss, there are six social needs that contribute to people feeling of loneliness and isolation. The six social needs are reassurance of worth, guidance in stressful situations, attachment, nurturance, alliance and Social integration.

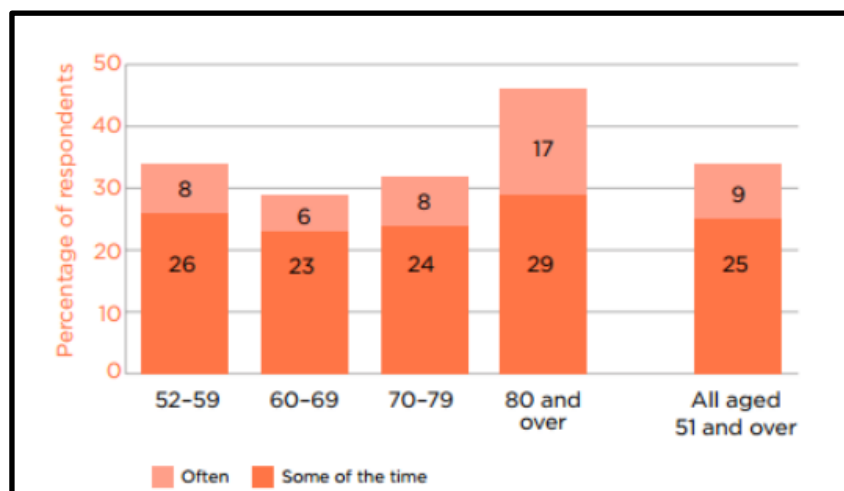


Figure 3: Frequency of Loneliness by Age

(Source: iotuk.org.uk, 2022)

The above figure shows that people aged 80 and above tend to feel more loneliness compared to the other age group. Loneliness also depends on personality traits and is correlated to social anxiety, sadness, distrust, hostility and social inhibition. People with self-negative prospects are more like to feel stressed and isolated. Older people when rejected by their loved ones lose confidence in them and distance themselves from other people (Spithoven *et al.* 2019). They start thinking that no one is interested in them and suffer from the diseases like high blood pressure and heart attack (Ingram *et al.* 2020). Older people require most of the attention and care and if they fail to get that they start feeling isolated. According to the theory, the older population need to start getting involved in the activities that interest them the most. They need to focus on being healthy for that they need to exercise daily and eat healthy foods. The family and friends of the older generation need to show their affection and care so that they do not feel lonely.

d) Impact of Loneliness and Isolation on an Older Person

Older people living in a care setting face the impact of isolation and loneliness. They start suffering from both mental and health conditions such as high blood pressure, heart attack, anxiety, obesity and depression. Loneliness and social isolation are not the same and do not together always. It has been observed that people that leave alone are not necessarily facing the issue of loneliness. Rather it has been observed that some older people despite being with their family face the issue of loneliness (Perissinotto *et al.* 2019). Nowadays people are always busy with one or other things and do not get the time to spend with their old age parents. The lack of care and affection shown by the parents makes older people suffer from depression. Older people that unexpectedly find themselves alone due to the death of their loved ones make them stressed and can result in feeling depressed. Social isolation comes with the physical separation from particular people whereas loneliness is the state of mind with distressing feelings.

	Odds ratio	95%CI	p Value
Anxiety	1.23	0.989, 1.52	0.061
Depression	1.25	0.994, 1.57	0.055
Memory	1.52	1.10, 2.07	0.010 ^a

Figure 4: Ratio Related to Loneliness

(Source: Littlejohn *et al.* 2022)

The above figure is the ratio of people that suffer from anxiety, depression and memory loss due to the hearing problem. According to the above figure, the ratio of anxiety among people due to the hearing problem is 1.23, depression at 1.25 and memory loss at 1.52. People feeling lonely

may weaken the immune system that causes them trouble in fighting viruses. The lack of immunity makes them vulnerable to diseases and makes them feel lonelier. They feel isolated due to many reasons such as retiring from the job, death of someone dear, disability, diseases and no longer being the head of the family and losing the power of decision making (Beller and Wagner, 2018). The loss of hearing is also one of the major reasons older people feel lonely and isolated. The older people when unable to listen to the people feel depressed as the others get irritated easily.

e) Current legislation and policies

In this world of technology, everyone is getting addicted to their work professions and time-consuming activities on their relevant cell phones and computers. This is the only reason older adults in the UK or any other country like Australia are left alone as the young generation wants to spend quality time with their friends and colleagues. Following the Ministry of Housing, specific communities in the UK and the local government have planned a framework or policy. The main purpose of formulating this policy is to adhere to healthy and safe locations where people can interact with each other without restrictions or hesitations (assets.publishing.service.gov.uk, 2018). The **“care act 2014”** has been set out to deliver effective services in England which reveals that the local; authorities of England are concerned about the care and loneliness of the elderly population. The policies and legislations are framed with a common purpose of reducing loneliness and isolation in the elderly population.

On the other hand, the **“aged care act 1997”** is framed and followed in Australia which sets out specific rules and regulations for funding and providing quality care for the elderly population facing loneliness and isolation problems in Australia (health.gov.au, 2020). The Australian government is highly concerned for the elderly population as they feel that they are left alone and isolated from this hectic world. The **“safety commission act 2018”** under the privacy policy reveals that the Australian governing bodies are concerned with aged care (agedcarequality.gov.au, 2022). This ensures that none of the elderly population is left alone and isolated as they are provided with a place and a suitable environment where they can communicate and interact with each other. Various committees and legislative bodies in Australia are generally concerned about the isolation and loneliness factors of the elderly population as they are framing certain legislations and policies to make the country aware of this fact. Various awareness programs are charged in Australia which is just to help the elderly population by providing them effective services and a suitable environment where they can spend their quality time by communicating and sharing their feelings.

f) Evaluation and comparison

England is one of the ageing societies where the population of elderly people above 65 years is more than below 65 years. NHS is one of the authorized trusts in England and the UK which aims at providing services to the elderly population in the concerned country. The concerned trust invests approximately 40% of its total budget in people aged over 65 (assets.publishing.service.gov.uk, 2020). The NHS trust sets out a framework which outlines a programme of actions to identify and reform the various problems faced by older people. Older people require much more attention and care than younger ones as they are left alone and isolated in their respective places where no one stays to communicate or to exchange their feelings. Everyone in this world is busy with their daily routine work they do not have time for their parents and grandparents. This is all because of the increasing technological programmes and software which has created a huge gap between parents and their respective children. The below graph depicts the amount of money invested in the different age groups of people in England.

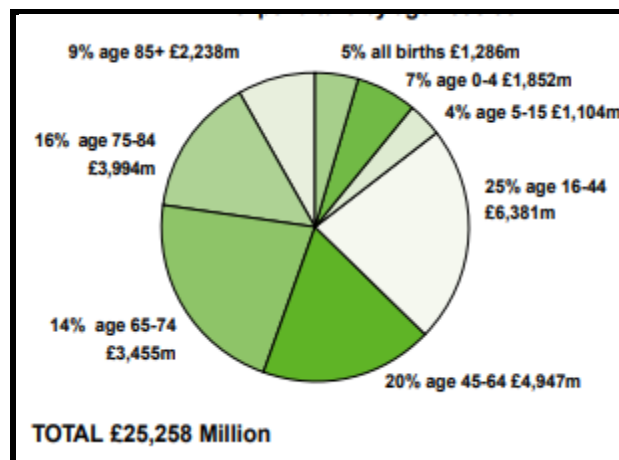


Figure 5: Gross current expenditure on older people

(Source: assets.publishing.service.gov.uk, 2020)

The government and legislative bodies in the UK are highly concerned for older people aged above 65. In the UK there are more than 400 charity shops along with this there is a prominent helpline service which offers older people to make effective relationships over phone calls through effective communication. The silver line in the UK is one of the prominent helpline providers irrespective of age, gender and so on. It understands that everyone in this world needs connection, and needs to share their feelings through effective conversations (thesilverline.org.uk, 2022). Furthermore, there are various provisions in Australia which provide the same services to reduce loneliness and isolation from the life of older aged people so that they could live their lives happily. The Australian governing bodies have subsidized many of the organizations to provide home services for the older people for which the Australian government is running various programmes just to reduce loneliness and isolation from the lives of old people.

g) Effective changes and utilization of technology

The concerned governing bodies and authorities in the UK must focus on developing relevant strategies which implement certain changes in the current running programmes for the betterment and reduction of loneliness and isolation. The governing bodies must indulge in making changes which would be enabling the engagement of older people in different activities and in different programmes (Brooke *et al.* 2022). It can be achieved through nurturing and strengthening existing relationships which would include inviting people for coffee or for an exciting trip. Furthermore, the faith-based organization in the UK must ensure certain events and activities in which older people can participate and stay connected to their loved ones (Littlejohn *et al.* 2022). In the UK, there are several such agencies and organizations aiming to provide and deliver an effective and welcoming environment for older adults and caregivers. Eldercare locator is a government-providing service agency or local provisions in the UK which aims at connecting older adults with their families.

The concerned governing bodies in the UK must ensure certain programmes which identify various older people facing isolation and loneliness problems and further help them in connecting with their families and friend circle so that they feel that they are not left alone. UK-based charities have joined and participated in Ability net webinars which enable an older population to stay in good touch with their irrespective family and friends (abilitynet.org.uk, 2022). Technology is the best equipment which connects different people to a wide range for example people stay connected on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and various social media platforms. The various social media platforms depicted help not even older people but everyone facing loneliness and isolation problems can use these platforms to stay connected with respective families and friends.

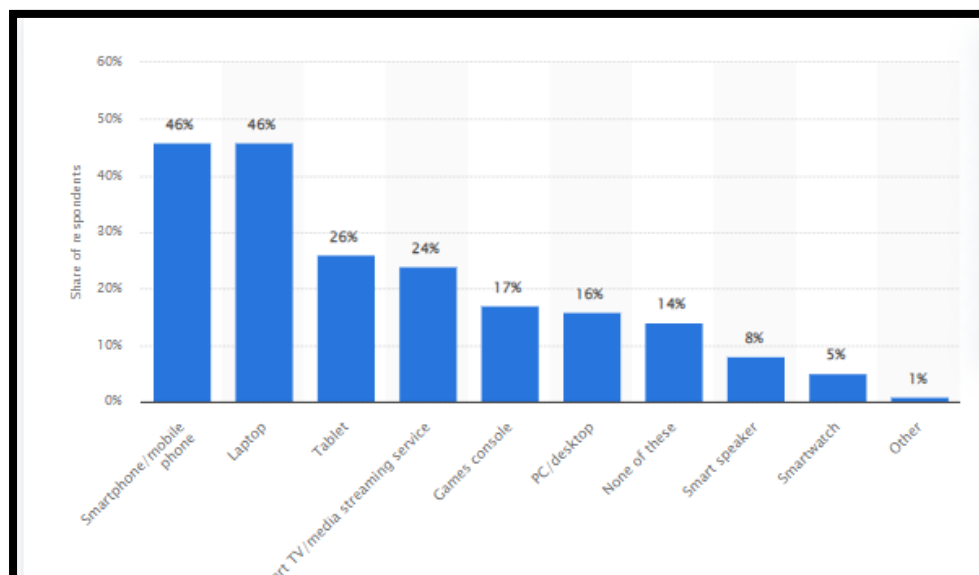


Figure 6: Increase in the use of media devices

(Source: statista.com, 2020)

The above graph reveals that during Covid-19 pandemics loneliness and isolation in older and even in every age group were at a peak. The pandemics have brought a frequent increase in the utilization of media devices such as Smartphone's, laptops, TV and other devices which could help individuals in getting entertained at the crucial time of pandemics. So it can be said that technology plays a vital role in entertaining individuals of every age group when they are bored or isolated alone.

h) Recommendation

- ***To recommend the application of technologies***

The health care provisions and various governing bodies of the UK must ensure the utilization of media devices and technological activities and programmes which would help older people to stay away from loneliness and social isolation. The government of the UK, as well as the government of Australia, must ensure that different IT organizations create effective platforms and software tools for reducing social isolation and loneliness (Johansson-Pajala *et al.* 2022). Further, the governing bodies of the concerned countries must develop certain programmes for creating effective sites and platforms using technologies or making a group on various social media platforms. In those particular groups, the older adults can stay connected with their family, friends, and colleagues.

- ***To recommend certain changes in the running programmes***

The governing bodies and relevant authorities of the concerned countries must ensure certain changes that are necessary for the current running programmes and provisions in the concerned country. The changes must be made to reduce social isolation and loneliness by providing or connecting older people with their friends over a phone call or in alive events organized by the concerned agencies or firms. The organizations and agencies in the UK must focus on organizing certain events and activities which enable get together of older adults along with their family and friends. The relevant changes must be approved and validated by the government of the concerned countries just for ensuring that no one even thinks of escaping these organized events and activities.

g) Conclusion

The study concludes the Loneliness and social isolation that is the prominent cause of distress, mental distractions and so on. Loneliness and social isolation are increasing every day as every individual is busy in their daily life work and activities and they do not have time to look after their older ones. Further, this report illustrates the impact of loneliness and social isolation which has

resulted in deteriorating the mental and health conditions of the concerned elderly population in the UK. This context reveals certain legislation and policies which are set by the governing bodies just with the motive of reducing social isolation and loneliness. The working of the policies and legislations are evaluated and discussed along with the results of the implementation of those policies and legislation. The certain changes in various running activities and events have been illustrated in this study. At last effective changes have been depicted in this study in which the governing bodies of the concerned countries have made certain changes in the running programmes through the implementation of technologies.

References

Journals

- Beller, J. and Wagner, A., 2018. Loneliness, social isolation, their synergistic interaction, and mortality. *Health Psychology*, 37(9), p.808.
- Brooke, J., Dunford, S. and Clark, M., 2022. Older adult's longitudinal experiences of household isolation and social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Older People Nursing*, p.e12459.
- Cacioppo, J.T. and Cacioppo, S., 2018. Loneliness in the modern age: An evolutionary theory of loneliness (ETL). In *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 58, pp. 127-197). Academic Press.
- Ingram, I., Kelly, P.J., Deane, F.P., Baker, A.L., Goh, M.C., Raftery, D.K. and Dingle, G.A., 2020. Loneliness among people with substance use problems: a narrative systematic review. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 39(5), pp.447-483.
- Johansson-Pajala, R.M., Gusdal, A., Eklund, C., Florin, U. and Wågert, P.V.H., 2022. A codesigned web platform for reducing social isolation and loneliness in older people: a feasibility study. *Informatics for Health and Social Care*, pp.1-16.
- Li, J., Han, X., Zhang, X. and Wang, S., 2019. Spatiotemporal evolution of global population ageing from 1960 to 2017. *BMC public health*, 19(1), pp.1-15.
- Littlejohn, J., Venneri, A., Marsden, A. and Plack, C.J., 2022. Self-reported hearing difficulties are associated with loneliness, depression and cognitive dysfunction during the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Audiology*, 61(2), pp.97-101.
- Littlejohn, J., Venneri, A., Marsden, A. and Plack, C.J., 2022. Self-reported hearing difficulties are associated with loneliness, depression and cognitive dysfunction during the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Audiology*, 61(2), pp.97-101.
- Perissinotto, C., Holt-Lunstad, J., Periyakoil, V.S. and Covinsky, K., 2019. A practical approach to assessing and mitigating loneliness and isolation in older adults. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 67(4), pp.657-662.
- Spithoven, A.W.M., Cacioppo, S., Goossens, L. and Cacioppo, J.T., 2019. Genetic contributions to loneliness and their relevance to the evolutionary theory of loneliness. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 14(3), pp.376-396.

Websites

- abilitynet.org.uk, 2022. *11 ways to use technology to reduce social isolation*. Available at: <https://abilitynet.org.uk/news-blogs/11-ways-use-technology-reduce-social-isolation> [Accessed on: 14.07.2022]

agedcarequality.gov.au, 2022. *Privacy Policy*. Available at: <https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/about-us/legislation-and-policies/privacy-policy> [Accessed on: 14.07.2022]

ageuk.org.uk, 2022. *Demographics of an Ageing Population*. Available at: https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/late_life_uk_factsheet.pdf. [Accessed on: 14.07.2022]

aph.gov.au, 2022. *'Caring for the Elderly' - an Overview of Aged Care Support and Services in Australia*. Available at: https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Publications_Archive/archive/agedcare#:~:text=The%20terms%20'elderly'%20and%20',even%2055%20years%20of%20age. [Accessed on: 14.07.2022]

assets.publishing.service.gov.uk, 2022. *Future of an ageing population*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/816458/future-of-an-ageing-population.pdf. [Accessed on: 14.07.2022]

assets.publishing.service.gov.uk, 2018. *A connected society A strategy for tackling loneliness*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936725/6.4882_DCMS_Loneliness_Strategy_web_Update_V2.pdf [Accessed on: 14.07.2022]

assets.publishing.service.gov.uk, 2020. *National Service Framework for Older People*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/198033/National_Service_Framework_for_Older_People.pdf [Accessed on: 14.07.2022]

england.nhs.uk, 2022. *Improving care for older people*. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/clinical-policy/older-people/improving-care-for-older-people#:~:text=Generally%2C%20someone%20over%20the%20age,healthier%20than%20someone%20aged%2060>. [Accessed on: 14.07.2022]

health.gov.au, 2020. *Aged care laws in Australia*. Available at: <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/aged-care/about-aged-care/aged-care-laws-in-australia#:~:text=The%20Aged%20Care%20Act%201997,also%20apply%20to%20aged%20care> [Accessed on: 14.07.2022]

statista.com, 2022. *Population distribution in Australia in 2019, by age*. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/608088/australia-age-distribution/>. [Accessed on: 14.07.2022]

statista.com, 2020. *Increased media device usage due to the coronavirus outbreak among internet users in the United Kingdom (UK) as of July 2020*. Available at:

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1121168/device-usage-coronavirus-in-the-uk/> [Accessed On: 14.07.2022]

thesilverline.org.uk, 2022. *Everyone needs someone to talk to sometimes*. Available at: <https://www.thesilverline.org.uk/> [Accessed On: 14.07.2022]