



Keeping Excellence
in Training Standards

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EQUALITY MATTERS

KEITS Training Services Ltd

THIS ISSUE:

Mental Health Awareness Week 2022



Mental Health
Awareness Week

9 - 15 May 2022

Together we can
tackle loneliness

#IveBeenThere

- Why the theme of loneliness?
- What is loneliness?
- Did the pandemic have an impact?
- Can you get involved?

Mental Health Awareness Week is an annual event when there is an opportunity for the whole of the UK to focus on achieving good mental health. The Mental Health Foundation started the event 21 years ago. Each year the Foundation continues to set the theme, organise and host the week. The event has grown to become one of the biggest awareness weeks across the UK and globally. This year's theme is loneliness..

Why the theme of loneliness?

Loneliness is affecting more and more of us in the UK and has had a huge impact on our physical and mental health during the pandemic. Our connection to other people and our community is fundamental to protecting our mental health and we need to find better ways of tackling the epidemic of loneliness. We can all play a part in this.

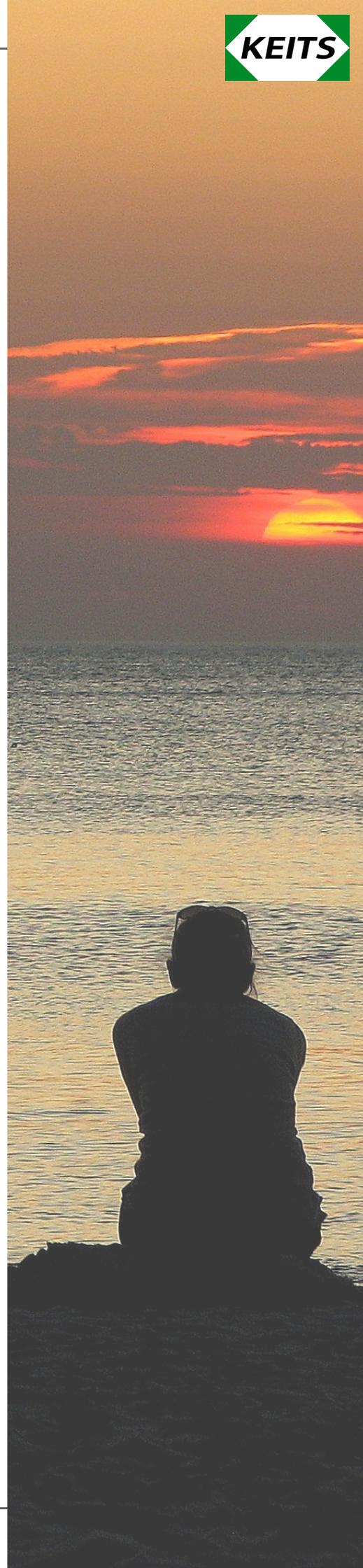
So, in May 2022, Mental Health Foundation will be raising awareness of the impact of loneliness on our mental wellbeing and the practical steps we can take to address it.

Reducing loneliness is a major step towards a mentally healthy society.

Their own CEO Mark Rowland shares his own experience of loneliness and shows that anyone can be effected by it.

"I was in my early thirties the first time I knew I was lonely. My marriage had disintegrated, I was living in a new flat and I was travelling 120 miles a week to see my young son. The feeling of loneliness was crushing as I struggled to keep in contact with friends and family at exactly the time when I needed them the most.!"

Loneliness is a normal part of life, with most of us feeling lonely at some point and experiencing how it can gnaw away at our sense of self-worth and belonging.



What is loneliness?

Loneliness is not about the number of friends we have, the time we spend on our own or something that happens when we reach a certain age. Loneliness is the feeling we experience when there is a mismatch between the social connections we have and those that we need or want. That means it can be different for all of us.

Loneliness is a significant public health issue. It remains one of the key indicators of poor mental health, the Mental Health Foundation's own reports have shown that being connected to other people in a way that helps us feel valued is absolutely fundamental to protecting our mental health.

Long-term feelings of loneliness have also been shown to be associated with higher rates of mortality and poorer physical health outcomes.

Have you ever felt lonely?

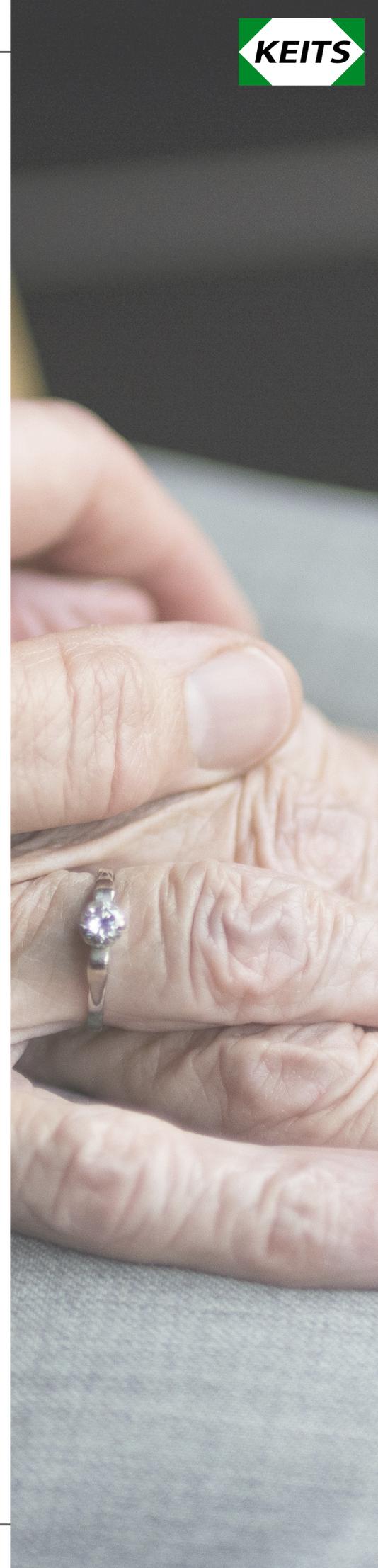
Has anyone you know ever felt lonely?

Did the pandemic have an impact?

One of the few consolations of the pandemic is that it reminded us of our need for each other. During the lockdowns, it was found that loneliness was almost 3 times that of pre-pandemic levels. Connections with loved ones, friends, family and everyday relationships were disrupted, or in some cases broken.

This loneliness wasn't experienced in the same way across our communities. People with long-term physical conditions, people on lower incomes and people with existing mental health problems were more likely to experience loneliness compared to the general UK population. Older people's risk of loneliness was influenced by factors like whether they were digitally connected.

Mental Health Week 2022 will be an opportunity to ask vital questions about how we will reduce loneliness as we continue to come out of the pandemic, and live with Covid-19 in a different way. The Mental Health Foundation will be releasing a policy briefing on the action that can be taken by national and local governments in a number of areas of our society to enable more human connection. And they'll be taking those ideas directly to MPs in Westminster during the week, and also making representations to governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland!



Can you get involved?

There is so much you can do during the week!

Perhaps take the chance to get in touch with a friend or neighbour you haven't spoken with in a while.

You could have a look at and share the Mental Health Foundations' podcasts, animation, personal stories, social posts, research, policy asks and tips that they'll be publishing in the week.

Most of all, they want to hear your stories of loneliness. Sharing your own stories will help reduce the stigma around loneliness and challenge the stereotypes about who experiences loneliness and how it affects us.

Get involved in the largest collective sharing of loneliness experiences and together let's shatter the stigma around loneliness.

Share your experiences and send a powerful message to others, using the hashtag #IveBeenThere and #MentalHealthAwarenessWeek.

All the information given in this newsletter and more can be found [here](#).