

Who are Linking Lives UK?

Linking Lives UK are a national Christian charity whose passion is equipping the local church to reduce loneliness in their communities. Since 2012 we have been doing this through establishing befriending projects across the UK.

Loneliness in the UK

We have all experienced feelings of loneliness from time to time. It can cause you to feel insignificant, disconnected and abandoned. For many people these feelings are temporary, but if it continues, it can lead to **chronic loneliness** which can be incredibly damaging to a person's wellbeing, causing mental health problems such as anxiety, emotional distress, addictions, or depression. It also impacts significantly on a persons' physical health, the equivalent of smoking 15 cigarettes a day, increasing the risk of heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, cognitive decline and dementia. [1]



Coronavirus has exacerbated the problem of loneliness in the UK. In November 2020, 4.2 million people said they were 'always or often' lonely, compared to 2.6 before the pandemic.[2]

Two's Company befriending



Linking Lives provides the tools and support for churches to engage with loneliness on a local level by establishing a **Two's Company** befriending project within their community. Through the local church, Two's Company offers dependable relationships from volunteer befrienders to people in the community who would otherwise experience feelings of loneliness or social isolation. We use three models of befriending within local communities: **Telephone Befriending**, **Home Visiting**, and a **Hybrid model**, where both telephone befriending and home visiting occur within one project.

"A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families."

Psalm 68: 5-6

The benefits of befriending

- It provides vital personal contact with another person
- It places a value on the individual and says 'you matter'
- It builds links with the wider community
- It opens the door to other ministries and activities offered by the church and other local initiatives
- It can be mutually beneficial!

What's involved in Two's Company befriending?

Two's Company takes you through the process of running a project step by step, providing the resources as you go. These include:

- Appointing & training a Coordinator
- Recruiting Volunteers safely
- Finding those to befriend
- Training for Volunteers
- Pairing Volunteers
- Ongoing support and monitoring

Partnering with Linking Lives

For churches wanting to partner with us to set up their own Two's Company befriending project, we offer an annual membership scheme of £150. The benefits of this include:

- ✓ Comprehensive training and guidance in setting up a Two's Company project
- ✓ Volunteer training
- ✓ Access to tried and tested document templates
- ✓ Dedicated local webpage & access to online members area
- ✓ Access to Microsoft Office 365
- ✓ Access to regular coordinator gatherings
- ✓ Access to regular workshops and written resources
- ✓ Attendance at our annual national conference
- ✓ Telephone and peer-to-peer support



Next steps to becoming a Two's Company project:

- Request an Introductory Pack
- Registration & Membership
- Planning & Preparation
- Training (for Coordinators & Volunteers)
- Launch

"If it wasn't for my befriender and the befriending scheme, I would be stranded without any hope."
(Link Friend)

[1] Campaign to End Loneliness
[2] Office for National Statistics 2020