Addressing older men's experiences of loneliness and social isolation in later life.
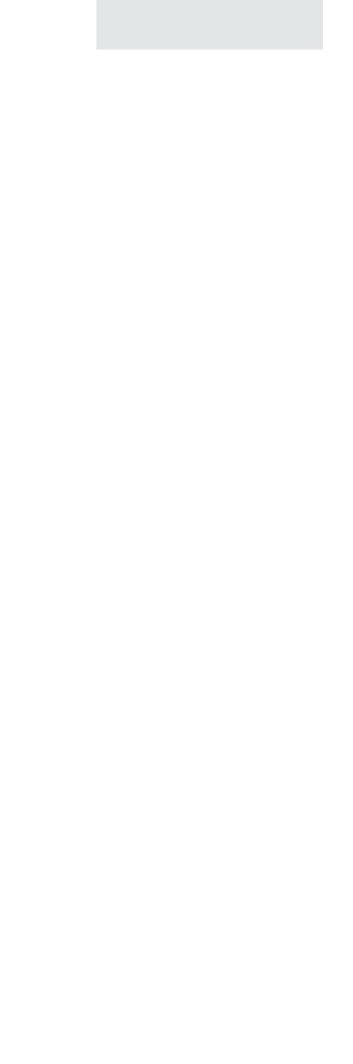
Key ndings

1. Variations in experiences of loneliness and social isolation across groups.

Loneliness and social isolation impacted negatively on men's social connections across the groups. Feeling 'left out', socially excluded, overlooked, cut-off: these were emotions commonly expressed across groups. The way loneliness is experienced in later life differs not only according to gender but also on the basis of other intersecting dimensions. Key differences are identi ed in Table 1.

2. Alleviating loneliness and reducing social isolation on one(en-GB)dh /S1T-wn

Practice and policy implications

For social care workers and statutory services:

- Social care practitioners need to understand how men from diverse social backgrounds and circumstances experience loneliness and isolation in different ways. This includes recognising challenges in speaking about loneliness and knowing how to initiate conversations about this.

- Alongside this, practitioners need a fine-grained understanding of the ways in which older age can intersect with other important aspects of identity and how these shape older men's patterns of social engagement and help-seeking.

For voluntary service providers who run groups:

- Group interventions may not always be the most suitable intervention for change, particularly for men who experience interpersonal difficulties in groups. One-to-one interventions are also needed.

- When planning groups, it is important to recognise that older men's identities, social

Further information:

The Older Men in the Margins (OMAM) project was based at the School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol in collaboration with Age UK, 2016-2019. This document summarises independent research funded by the National Institute for Health Research School for Social Care Research. The views expressed in this document are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the NIHR SSCR, the National Institute for Health Research or the Department of Health and Social Care.

More information about the project is available at: www.bristol.ac.uk/sps/research/projects/current/ older-men-at-the-margins/

To view resources and short lms from the project on the Age UK website:
www.ageuk.org.uk/men-and-loneliness/

Age UK (2018). All the Lonely People: Loneliness in Later Life. URL:
www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-press/articles/2018/ october/all-the-lonely-people-report/

Campaign to End Loneliness (2019). Loneliness research. URL:
www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/loneliness- research/

Independent Age (2013). Isolation: the emerging crisis for older men. URL:
www.independentage.org/policy-research/ research-reports/isolation-emerging-crisis-for- older-men

Contact the author

Dr Paul Willis (project lead)
Email: paul.willis@bristol.ac.uk
Twitter: @pwillis5