Loneliness and Social Isolation in Rural Settings Policy Brief

Professor Niall Hayes
Lancaster University, UK
Loneliness and Social Isolation?

“Loneliness can have profound impacts on physical and mental health, and quality of life. For example, loneliness can be as harmful for our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day, and people with a high degree of loneliness are twice as likely to develop Alzheimer’s as people with a low degree of loneliness.” AGE UK (2015)

• Loneliness and social isolation are related but not the same

• It is important for older adults to have access to meaningful social connectedness, and interventions to address loneliness.
Enabling Social Connectedness Through ICT

- Meaningful Practices: Face-to-face Connectedness
- Personalising
- Extending the user
- Linking Resources
- Appropriate Technologies
- Enhanced Social Connectedness

Join up through information.
Customise to the user.
Enable majority participation.
Policy Conclusions: Technology as a enabler

• Developers and service providers focus on the **enabling links** to **face to face group connectedness**.

• Data is **open and joined up** across organisations.

• User profiles can **customise** and reduce the cognitive load.

• **Intermediaries** can use technology on behalf of older adults.