



#### End Loneliness in Mendip – Focus on Bereavement Support January 2018

Mendip District Council, working alongside a number of leading local health and wellbeing service providers, including Health Connections Mendip, Somerset Public Health and Mendip General Practices, has launched the End Loneliness in Mendip campaign, which aims to raise awareness of the support available for older people who might be feeling lonely.

Each month the End Loneliness in Mendip campaigns highlights different services that might support people if they are feeling lonely. This month the focus is on support services for those who have been bereaved.

One of the local organisations supporting the campaign is Dorothy House Hospice Care. Wayne de Leeuw, Executive Clinical Lead for Community Services at Dorothy House Hospice Care, said: “Losing a loved one can be an extremely difficult time in someone’s life and if the person who dies is a spouse or partner the grief you experience may be magnified by the loneliness that is felt after they have gone. Unless they want to no one should have to face bereavement alone and there are organisations, including Dorothy House Hospice Care, who may be able to help.

The important message is that not all of the support available will suit all people. It may be that one to one counselling with an organisation such as We Hear You is useful for some, but for others it may be contacting Cruse or attending a bereavement support group like ‘Coffee, Care and Cake’ in Frome. At the hospice we try and offer the families and carers of patients we have supported similar options and so we have a drop in bereavement support group in our outreach centres on Sundays, one to one counselling with our volunteer counsellors or drop in support when people just need to have someone to talk to. These services are specifically for people whose family we cared for, but even if we were not involved don’t feel that you need to cope alone. Contact national support organisations such as the Good Grief Trust [www.thegoodgrieftrust.org.uk](http://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org.uk) who will be able to find

local support to meet your own unique needs. Or call Health Connections who can signpost you to services in the community 01373 468368 or visit their website for more information [www.healthconnections-mendip.org](http://www.healthconnections-mendip.org) . You may be surprised at just how much support could be available to you during this time”

Dr Julian Abel, Compassionate Communities UK also says "Bereavement can leave people feeling lonely and isolated, there is support out there but it can often be us, as members of the community, who can make a real difference. Take time to talk to your friends and relatives. Offer help and support. Look out for people in your neighbourhood who may be lonely. A simple conversation can be transformational. Simple human kindness is invaluable."

To find out more about the End Loneliness in Mendip campaign and how to get involved go to - [www.endlonelinessinmendip.org.uk](http://www.endlonelinessinmendip.org.uk)