



**Ending
Loneliness**



**Building
Friendships**



**Changing
Lives**



**The LaunchPad
Programme**



**The Great
Friendship
Project**

LaunchPad



The Great Friendship Project

LaunchPad

About Us

The Great Friendship Project is a youth-led grassroots movement, set-up to tackle loneliness through campaigns, partnerships, community activities and research.

We're on a mission to combat the growing loneliness crisis among young adults and build a more socially connected future for young people, one friendship at a time.

We do this through bold public campaigns, original research with leading universities, and bespoke community projects tailored to specific groups and neighbourhoods.

Alongside this, we also help adults build meaningful, lasting friendships through science backed, real-world social experiences.



Founder's Story

“At the time, I most needed the doors to be open for connection; the **world had closed its doors** - taking an extreme toll on my mental health and leaving me in a far lonelier place than I'd ever been before.”

[Read David's story here](#)



Our Impact



COMMUNITY

50,000+

Members

ENGAGEMENT

17,850

Attendees in the last year

CAMPAIGN REACH

40 Million

Impressions



Campaigns

We run initiatives and campaigns to raise awareness of youth loneliness and push for policy action and wider social change.



Partnerships

We work with partners to deliver projects, deliver training, and run initiatives that tackle loneliness and build connection.



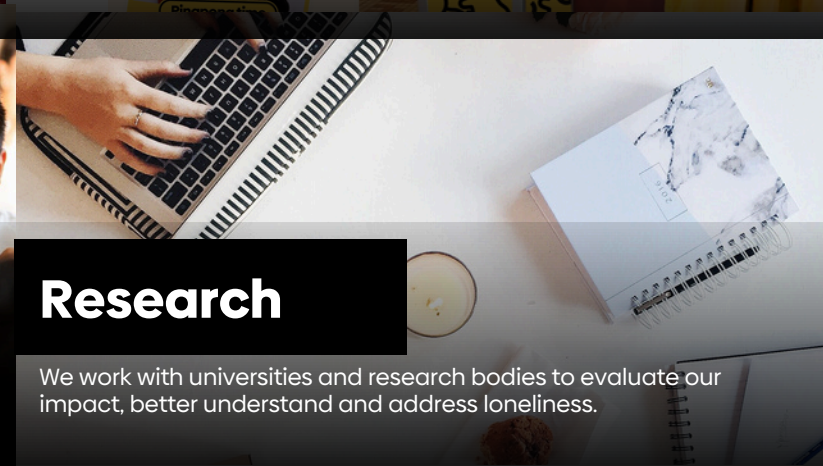
Activities

We run free or low-cost community activities designed to build connection, prevent loneliness and foster community.



Research

We work with universities and research bodies to evaluate our impact, better understand and address loneliness.





The Context

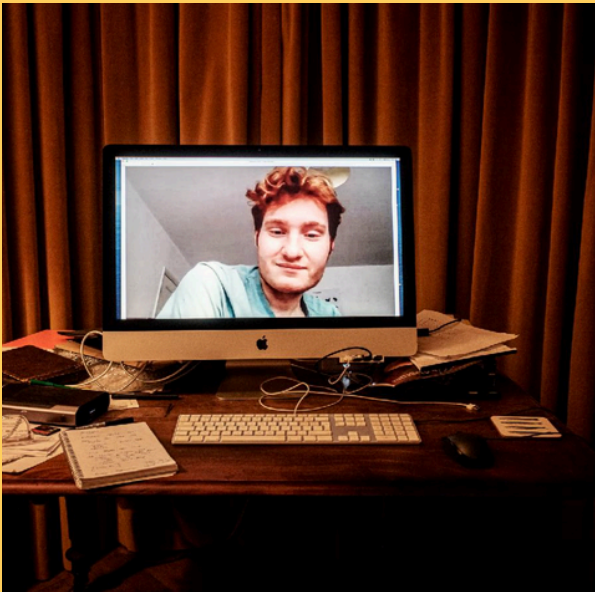
The Times recently reported that loneliness rates have over doubled in the last 10 years and that the UK now has the highest loneliness rates in Europe.

One particular group shown to be most at risk is the nearly 1 million young adults who are currently NEET.

While these two issues are often treated separately, what is frequently overlooked is the profound link between them.

Unemployment is now shown by research to be a **major driver and consequence** of loneliness amongst young adults.

We believe that addressing one without the other misses the point - it's vital that we also tackle the lost confidence, social disconnection, and emotional barriers that so often prevent young people from taking their next step.



2.5x

Unemployed young adults are 2.5x more likely to experience persistent loneliness than those in work.

48%

48% of young adults say loneliness makes them less likely to want to progress in their careers

61%

61% young adults say loneliness makes them lose confidence in themselves



Economic Costs

The cost of NEET young adults is substantial to the economy:

- Each young person who becomes NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) is estimated to cost the economy over £100,000 - totalling £96 billion nationally, over half the NHS's annual budget.
- Halving the NEET rate could generate £69 billion in increased GDP and tax revenue.



Societal Costs

The broader societal cost is estimated to be over £77 billion per year as a result of:

- Poorer mental and physical health, and increased risk of early mortality
- Recurring unemployment, lower wages and insecure work
- Higher rates of teenage pregnancy and early parenthood
- Increased likelihood of youth offending and custodial sentences
- Greater risk of homelessness and housing insecurity
- Higher rates of alcohol and drug use, including earlier transitions to Class A substances



The LaunchPad Programme

Research tells us that unemployment is both a driver and symptom of loneliness, and a vicious cycle in which young people can tragically become stuck.

Too often, unemployed young adults are left feeling invisible - disconnected from peers, overlooked by systems, and unsure how to find a way back in at a critical stage of early adulthood with wide-reaching consequences.



Breaking the Cycle

1. Unemployment leads to increased loneliness arising from long hours alone, increased social isolation, lack of purpose, routine, and direction.

2. Loneliness significantly increases the risk of developing mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. When young people feel disconnected or excluded, they lose confidence and internalise feelings of failure or hopelessness.

3. Reduced Employability - Diminished social and interpersonal skills lead to unsuccessful applications, further damage to confidence, growing demotivation and more entrenched loneliness.



Who is it for?

LaunchPad is designed for young adults aged 18–25 who are currently NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) - especially those who may not be engaging with traditional job or skills programmes.

It's for those who feel stuck, disconnected, or unsure where to begin - who may be struggling with low motivation, confidence, or anxiety, and need a softer way into engaging.

LaunchPad offers a safe, structured environment where young people can rebuild routine, reconnect with peers, and regain belief in themselves - so they feel ready to take the next step, whether that's work, training, or something else entirely.



What makes it different?

- **Engagement-first, not obligation-led** - Most NEET or employability programmes feel compulsory or transactional - something young people have to attend, not want to. LaunchPad flips that by creating a space young people actively look forward to, prioritising peer connection, trust, and emotional safety.
- **Designed by and for young people** - Unlike traditional, top-down services, LaunchPad is co-designed by young adults with lived experience of loneliness, social anxiety, and unemployment - making it more authentic, relatable, and better aligned with what participants actually need.
- **Fills a gap in the current system** - LaunchPad supports young people who may be reluctant to engage with employability programmes. It complements existing provision by offering a softer, more relational way to rebuild structure and confidence - a space to work on applications with support, not scrutiny.
- **Partnership Model** - Rather than starting from scratch, LaunchPad would in partnership with DWP, Youth Hubs and Jobcentre coaches.
- **Referrals** - LaunchPad serves as a light-touch referral route from councils, GPs, youth workers, and social prescribers - bridging the gap between social connection and employment pathways in a way that feels socially led, not service led.



The Goals

The LaunchPad Programme seeks to break the cycle of loneliness and unemployment by building connection, agency, social confidence and increasing employability.

L

Loneliness Reduction - Combat feelings of loneliness by creating pathways for connection and fostering friendships.

A

Agency - To help participants rediscover direction, personal motivation and belief in their ability to take action on their future.

U

Uplift - Boost mood and hope to counteract common barriers like low motivation, or feeling stuck or demoralised.

N

Networks - Create a peer-to-peer community of young adults with a shared sense of purpose, offering mutual support and accountability.

C

Confidence - To help them build their social skills and interpersonal confidence, known to be vital for job and interview success.

H

Habits - To establish a weekly routine and structure that can reduce the drift and demotivation that often can accompany unemployment.





The LaunchPad Programme

Overview

Our LaunchPad programme is a 6-12 week programme combining:

P

Practical Help - Co-working sessions will be supported by a dedicated job coach, on hand to help with CVs, job searches, applications, and setting realistic weekly goals.

A

Activities: In the afternoon, there will be a mix of fun social activities tailored to foster confidence, teamwork and connection.

D

Dedicated Space: Above all, the programme will provide a welcoming, structured spaces to show up, focus, and take small, supported steps forward.



The LaunchPad Programme

Evaluation & Learning

We're committed to building evidence about not just what works, but why it works around this under-explored but critical area in supporting NEET young adults. Our pilot will seek to:

- Use pre-and post-programme self-assessments aligned with the LAUNCH outcomes (loneliness, confidence, networks, etc.)
- Track attendance, consistency, and participant progression
- Capture qualitative feedback and case stories to bring lived experience into the learning
- Engage external evaluators (if funded) to strengthen the rigour and share learning with DWP, Youth Hubs, and the wider sector

How to Get Involved

If you'd like to find out more about LaunchPad, get involved in the programme, or explore ways to support it, we'd love to hear from you.

Whether you're a young person interested in joining, an organisation keen to refer participants, or a funder, venue, or volunteer who wants to help make it possible, your involvement can play a vital role in creating a supportive community where young adults feel less alone and more ready to take their next step.