

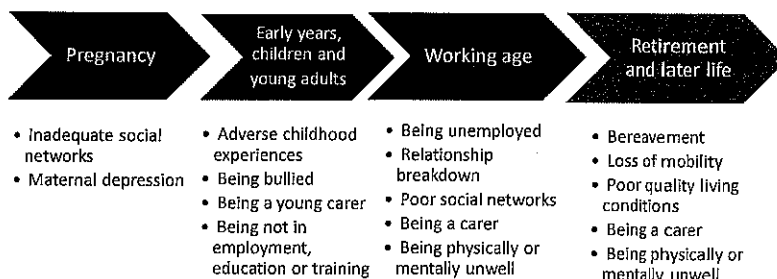
# Social isolation and loneliness *facts and figures for Hammersmith and Fulham*

Public Health Intelligence January 2018  
 and

## Definition

*Isolation and loneliness are often used interchangeably, though they are not actually the same thing. Isolation is being separated from other people and your environment. Loneliness is a feeling of sadness or distress as a result of being by yourself or feeling disconnected from the world around you. Even when surrounded by people, it is possible to feel lonely.*

## Groups at risk of social isolation and loneliness




Source: *Public Health England and UCL Institute of Health Equity Local action on health inequalities: Reducing social isolation across the lifecourse Practice resource: September 2015*

**Pregnancy** **Loneliness and social isolation experienced during pregnancy and by new mothers**

*One in five mothers suffer from depression, anxiety or in some cases psychosis during pregnancy or in the first year after childbirth.*

*One in five mothers lack support networks to help them through pregnancy and are unaware of the services available to help with depression.*

*A new mother who is socially isolated is more likely to suffer from depression and its effects are likely to be worse. This sets her at a disadvantage in providing a good start in life for her child.*



There are 2,345 births per year in Hammersmith and Fulham

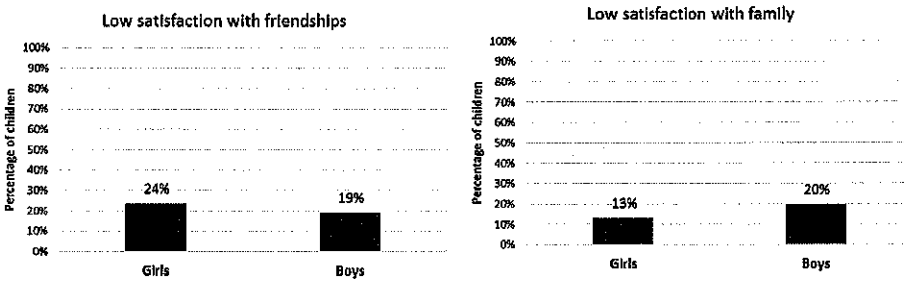
**20% of mothers suffer from mental health issues in the first year after childbirth**

Sources: [LSE & Centre for Mental Health, The cost of perinatal mental health problems](#); [ONS; Family Action survey Mahadevan J. New mums lack support to cope with isolation and depression 2012 \(see more \[here\]\(#\)\)](#)

3

**Early years, children and young adults** **Estimated percentage of children affected by loneliness**

*In a local survey with children from five primary schools in Hammersmith & Fulham, 24% of girls and 19% of boys (22% overall) reported that their satisfaction with their friendships was very unhappy, unhappy or mixed. 16% reported low satisfaction with their family.*



**Low satisfaction with friendships**

Gender	Percentage of children
Girls	24%
Boys	19%

**Low satisfaction with family**

Gender	Percentage of children
Girls	13%
Boys	20%

Source: *Healthy Schools Survey by Health Education Partnership*

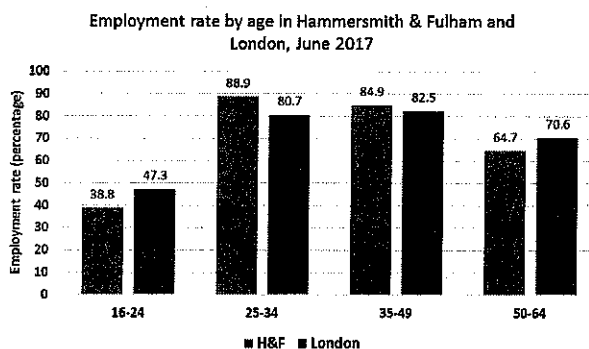
4

**Working age**

**Unemployment increases the risk of social isolation**

*While adults of working age are less likely to report loneliness, experiences and life transitions can lead to social isolation.*

*Unemployment increases the risk of social isolation, particularly in men. While the overall rate of unemployment is similar to the London average, there are about 5,400 unemployed men aged 25 years and over in the borough (1,000 men aged 25-34, 2,000 aged 35-49 and 2,400 aged 50-64).*



Source: Annual Population Survey Jun 2017, nomisweb

5

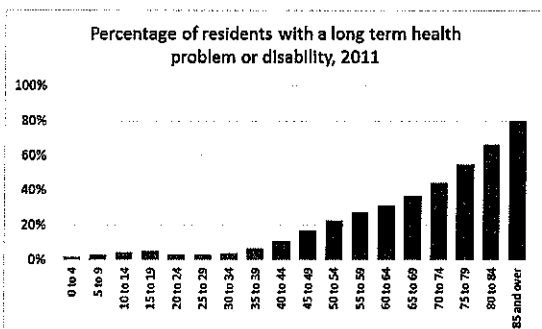
**Retirement and later life**

**Long term health problems and unpaid care**

*In particular, three life events are associated with social isolation among older people: retirement and losing connection with colleagues; falling ill and becoming less mobile; a spouse dying or going into care.*

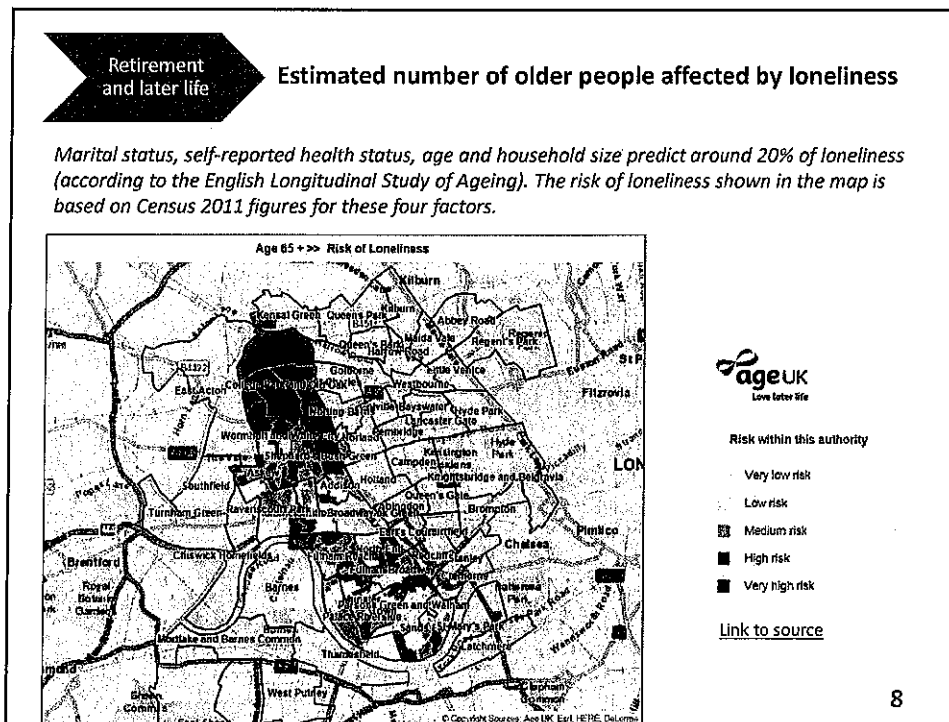
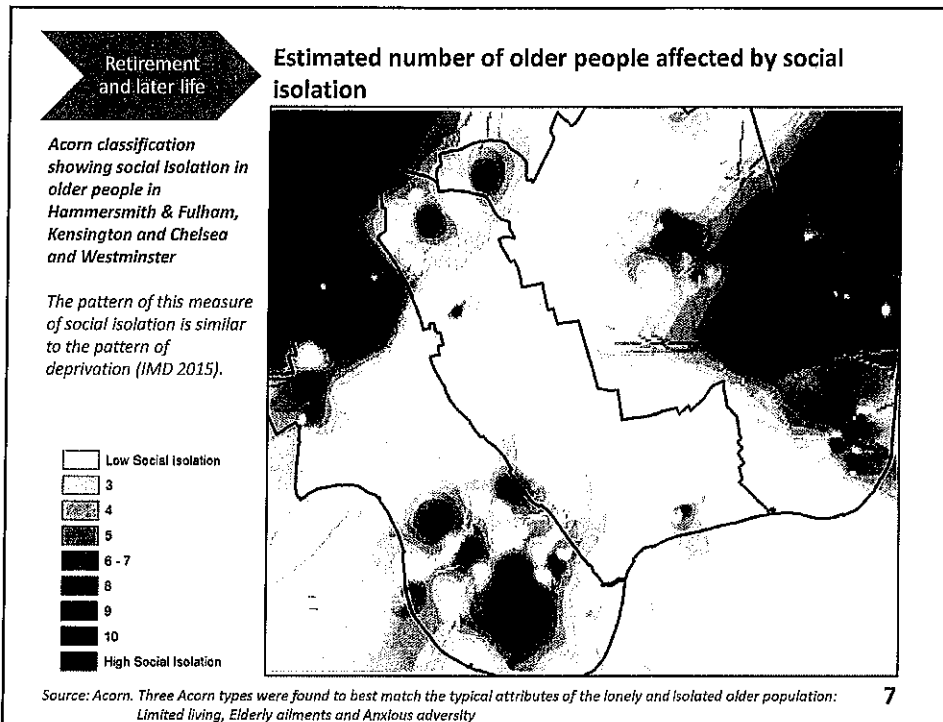
*As residents age they have a greater risk of physical and mental impairment.*


*In addition, a increasing number of older people are providing unpaid care to a spouse, relative or friend (10.2% of residents aged 65 years and over). This also increases the risk of social isolation.*



Source: Census 2011

6





## Social disadvantage


*Social isolation is a health inequality issue because many of the associated risk factors are more prevalent among socially disadvantaged groups.*

*Social disadvantage is linked to many of the life experiences that increase risk of social isolation, including poor maternal health, teenage pregnancy, unemployment, and illness in later life.*


*In addition, deprived areas often lack adequate provision of good quality green and public spaces, creating barriers to social engagement. Access to transport is also vitally important in building and maintaining social connections.*

1	7.1%
2	15.0%
3	14.7%
4	14.2%
5	16.8%
6	11.5%
7	13.5%
8	7.1%
9	2.7%
10	0.6%

**Deprivation in Hammersmith & Fulham**  
1 = most deprived, 10 = least deprived




Source: <http://lirae.staff.shef.ac.uk/ind15/> 9



## Neighbourhood ties

*Hammersmith & Fulham has a high churn rate (meaning that people move around a lot).*

*This decreases the likelihood of social bonds existing between residents and increases the risk of social isolation.*



**Population churn decile (London)**

1 (lowest churn)

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

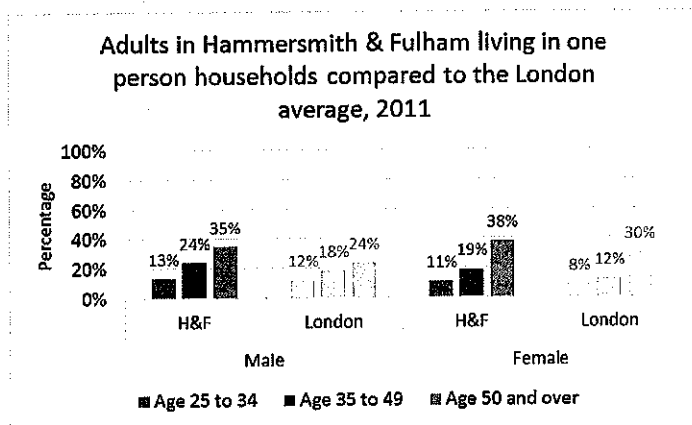
10 (highest churn)

Source: 2011 Census, as reported by GLA 10



### Adults living in single person households

A relatively high percentage of residents in Hammersmith & Fulham live alone. These residents may be of higher risk of social isolation and/or loneliness.



Source: Census 2011

➤ Further analysis using council tax records on single occupant payments is recommended

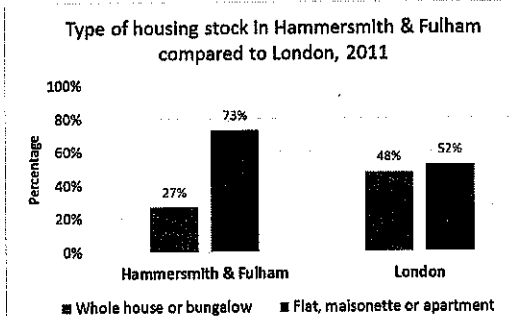
11



### The built environment can create barriers to social inclusion

The built environment influences physical access to family and friends, health services, community centres, shops and all the other places and spaces that enable individuals to build and maintain their social relationships. Poor transport links can create barriers to social inclusion. Safe public spaces, with pavements to walk on and lighting, are also part of the physical infrastructure that helps people to maintain social connections.

A large (almost half) proportion of the borough housing stock is flats without a ground floor entrance. Lack of accessibility may increase social isolation. However, representatives of voluntary sector organisations engaged in the Housing JSNA highlighted that too often it is assumed that people with disabilities wish to be on the ground floor; for some this will lead to a greater sense of vulnerability.



Source: Census 2011

12