



# Policy and Influencing Strategy

2025 TO 2030





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## Introduction

Aging presents many challenges which can lead to loneliness and social isolation, including the loss of loved ones, physical and cognitive decline, and reduced mobility. Loneliness is a serious problem, contributing to poor mental and physical health outcomes, including depression, anxiety, and increased mortality [1, 2].

Re-engage is committed to improving the lives of people aged 75 and over by fostering life-enhancing social connections at a time when their social circles are diminishing. Through our policy and influencing strategy Re-engage will work to:

- Raise awareness of loneliness and social isolation;
- Amplify the voices of older people in decision making;
- Advocate for policies that work to reduce social isolation and loneliness;
- Influence policy and decision-makers.

Our vision is a world where no one is ever too old to make friends and enjoy social interaction. By collaborating with stakeholders, we aim to drive systemic change that promotes social inclusion, not only for our beneficiaries but also for the wider 75 and over population. Re-engage's policy activities will work to improve access to the resources and support older people need, to stay connected and active within their communities.

This strategy outlines Re-engage's five year approach to tackling social isolation and loneliness among people aged 75 and over through targeted policy and influencing activities. It lays out our three core strategic goals, each supported by clear objectives and actionable steps. The strategy has been shaped by the valuable insights and feedback of the older people we support, our volunteers and staff members. Through this plan, we aim to create meaningful change in the lives of older people.

# Policy and influencing strategic goals

During the next five years we want to:



**Represent and amplify the voices of older people in decision-making and policy.** Becoming the recognised, trusted, authoritative voice of people aged 75 and over in the UK.



**Support policy and influencing work that will achieve the greatest impact for older people experiencing social isolation and loneliness.** Building connections and working collaboratively in the policy and influencing space.



**Launch a focused campaign centred on an issue that matters most to the older people we support.** The link between loneliness and access to General Practitioners.

## Strategic Goal One

**Represent and amplify the voices of older people in decision-making and policy.** Becoming the recognised, trusted, authoritative voice of people aged 75 and over in the UK.

As an organisation, Re-engage have historically worked to amplify the voices of older people through our impact and research work; our policy stream will build upon this, understanding the opinions of our older people on policy issues, and ensuring their voices are heard by decision-makers.

Re-engage have established pathways through which we regularly collect our older people's opinions on a range of topics. We will now work to expand these, understanding our beneficiaries' attitudes towards specific policy goals. We are determined to provide opportunities for older people to voice their opinions on systemic issues that exacerbate their social isolation and loneliness. We believe all decisions should be informed by the people they will impact, and our older people have told us they feel the government does not consider their needs in decision making, nor care about the disproportionately negative impacts government policies may have. With our policy and influencing work we will work to understand the opinions of our older people in great depth, in order to represent their opinions accurately and work towards positive change in policy making.

# Strategic Goal One Objectives

1

Leverage Re-engage's research to drive impactful policy work, establishing the organisation as a leading authority on loneliness and social isolation among people aged 75 and over, while increasing public awareness of the urgent need to address these issues later in life.

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2

Develop ways to effectively distribute information on our policy and influencing work, becoming a channel through which our older people and volunteers can stay informed, share their opinions on and influence the policies affecting them.

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3

Work to ensure we are inclusive and the voices we work to amplify are diverse

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## Strategic Goal Two

**Support policy and influencing work that will achieve the greatest impact for older people experiencing social isolation and loneliness.** Building connections and working collaboratively in the policy and influencing space.

Re-engage has previously involved itself in a number of activities to improve the lives of older people, such as supporting other organisations' campaigns, and joining advisory and All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs). We have existing strong connections with the Campaign to End Loneliness that we will build on through our membership of their advisory group and the new All Party Parliamentary Group on Tackling Loneliness and Connecting Communities. We aim to build upon this by establishing new partnerships in loneliness and social isolation policy and influencing work.

We will horizon scan to identify opportunities to support and engage with key players in the social isolation and loneliness policy space, boosting their work through our established communication channels, whilst building relationships that will benefit us as we begin to launch our own policy and influencing work.

We will engage in meaningful collaborations to ensure the success of innovative policy work that delivers clear change, improving the lives of older people experiencing social isolation and loneliness.

# Strategic Goal Two Objectives

- 1 Map stakeholders at a national level. Supporting the policy work of organisations dedicated to ending social isolation and loneliness among older people.

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- 2 Maximize opportunities to network in policy and influencing spaces.

## Strategic Goal Three

**Launch a focused campaign centred on an issue that matters most to the older people we support: the link between loneliness and access to general practitioners.**

In order to establish Re-engage as a change-maker in the social isolation and loneliness field, we must launch our work with a developed topic that is important to our older people. To be successful we must have buy-in from our key stakeholders. Consequently, the launch topic has been derived from input from all Re-engage staff, our older people, and our regional volunteer advisory groups.

This policy and influencing strategy outlines the launch topic but not the timeline. We will continue to develop our topic and launch plans with the input of staff members across departments through our policy working group, ensuring our work is in the best interest of not only our older people but also our staff and volunteers.



## Priority three goals

1 Develop a public affairs strategy to ensure the successful launch of our policy and influencing work.

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2 Work with stakeholders to understand their current experience with general practitioners and identify the changes they believe will help them to reduce and prevent loneliness.

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3 Understand the political climate, opinions and policies around access to general practitioners, and the relationship between this and loneliness and social isolation in older people.

# Our underpinning principles

Our underpinning principles align with our growth plan and set out how we will deliver this ambitious policy and influencing strategy over the next five years.

## **1. Older people living with isolation and loneliness at the centre of our policy and influencing work**

The most central part of this research strategy is that it is user-centred and driven by the voices of older people who are experiencing social isolation and loneliness. Addressing the needs and priorities of people aged 75 and over and experiencing isolation and loneliness, is our primary focus.

## **2. Reviewing our policy and influencing strategy in line with our growth plan**

Our policy and influencing strategy will be partially reviewed every year and then fully in a five-year cycle. However, in the event of any significant policy, guidance or research development, an earlier review may be considered. A review will include an evaluation of how the strategy aligns with the Reengage growth plan. Any proposed changes will be agreed by our policy working group and our senior leadership team.

## **3. Building a multi-disciplinary older person's loneliness and social isolation policy and influencing community**

We will build connections with stakeholders across a range of disciplines and work with experts in the field to keep abreast of the latest work in the field, supporting and leading on projects where appropriate.

**4. Recognise the limitations of our work and continue to aim to diversify our inputs in line with our growth plan.**

We must work to ensure input into our policy and influencing work is diversified in line with our growth plan. We will recognise the limitations of consultations with our beneficiaries and consider external research when working towards promoting change for diverse older people across the UK.

## Conclusion

This policy and influencing strategy sets out our commitment to drive lasting, systemic change for older adults aged 75 and over. By combining evidence-based policy work, with meaningful engagement of the public and key stakeholders - and by continuing to deliver vital services - we will work towards our mission to end social isolation and loneliness among older people.

## References:

- [1] Cacioppo, J. T., & Cacioppo, S. (2018). Loneliness and Social Isolation as Risk Factors for Mortality. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 13(2), 230-249.
  
- [2] Hawton, K., et al. (2013). The Influence of Loneliness on Mental and Physical Health: A Review of the Literature. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 74(6), 1270-1278.

