



Communities that Care Initiative learns from Campaign to End Loneliness

Andy Nazer, Campaign Manager at the Campaign to End Loneliness spoke to over 40 people representing 20 communities both in person and online at the latest Communities that Care Networking meeting.

These meetings, part of Reform Judaism's Communities that Care initiative, are an opportunity to plan and shape the future focus of the initiative and give a space for communities to share inspiring practice and learn from each other.

The initiative gives communities the opportunity to revolutionise welfare provision- for all ages and all needs.

Andy Nazer identified some of the causes of loneliness and spoke about the negative impact of loneliness on health and well-being. He also highlighted the work being done by the Jo Cox Commission to address some common misconceptions and breakdown the stigma of loneliness.

Karen Kaye, Immediate Past Chair of Glasgow Reform Synagogue participated via video link. She said: "This was a welcome opportunity to establish connections and exchange ideas with professionals and volunteers from other Reform communities. I look forward to hearing more about how we, as individual communities, can learn from the benefit of shared experiences and work together to recognise and respond to individual needs appropriately."

Joan Arnold, West London Synagogue board member said: "I found the exchange of ideas for helping to combat loneliness really helpful. I left the meeting with some useful strategies to try to include in our practice at WLS".

David Fox of Thanet and District Reform Synagogue said: "I found the session extremely powerful and it convinced me that we can be doing more to link

those suffering the effects of loneliness with those who want to reach out to them. In particular, I was struck by how much of the younger age groups want to help.”

Rabbi Miriam Berger of Finchley Reform Synagogue and the initiative steering team said: “The statistics nationally are shocking but our members are at a huge advantage by being part of a community. Now our task is to ensure we bring those from the margins into the centre of our concerns. The task may feel too big especially for our ageing communities but perhaps it was best said by our sage Rabbi Tarfon, “it is not our duty to complete the task” yet every phone call, visit, opportunity for companionship goes somewhere to making a difference for somebody. “

Possible topics for the next stage of the initiative including volunteering, joining a wider national campaign on this issue, creating a robust care system and learning from good practice and successes in our communities.

Small teams will work on these topics and feed into the initiative’s programme at [Chagigah, Reform Judaism's Biennial celebration](#) in June.

Before then, the next opportunity to engage with these important issues is Reform Judaism’s [Combatting Loneliness and Isolation Conference](#) on 22 March. Kindly hosted by West London Synagogue, it is a fantastic chance to learn about local and nationwide initiatives taking place to combat loneliness and isolation including practical workshops to take back to your communities.