

# UKRI Loneliness and Social Isolation in Mental Health research network



**Introduction  
to the Network  
& Plus Projects  
Funding Call**

UK Research  
and Innovation

**13 November 2019**

**Dr Alexandra Pitman**

Co-lead of Loneliness & Social Isolation in Mental Health research network  
Associate Professor, UCL Division of Psychiatry, University College London

# Loneliness & Social Isolation in Mental Health research network: who are we?

- academics, policy-makers
- people with lived experience of loneliness, social isolation and mental illness
- voluntary sector organisations, practitioners
- Led by:
  - Professor Sonia Johnson, UCL Division of Psychiatry
  - Dr Alexandra Pitman, UCL Division of Psychiatry
- 10 co-investigators: University of Birmingham, LSE, Royal College of Music, UCL, University of Northumbria

cognitive  
neuroscience

user-led interventions

historical  
perspective

philosophy

lived experience

digital  
technologies

built environment

social science

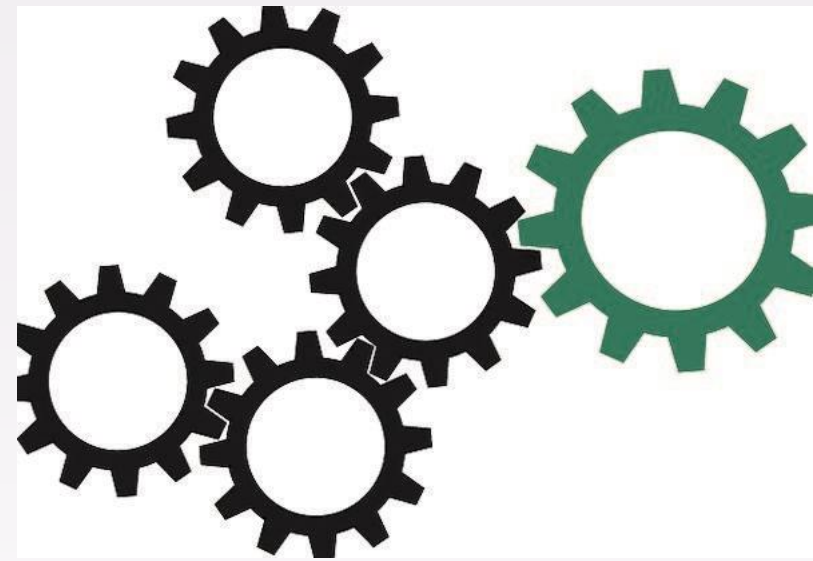
clinical  
psychology

arts interventions

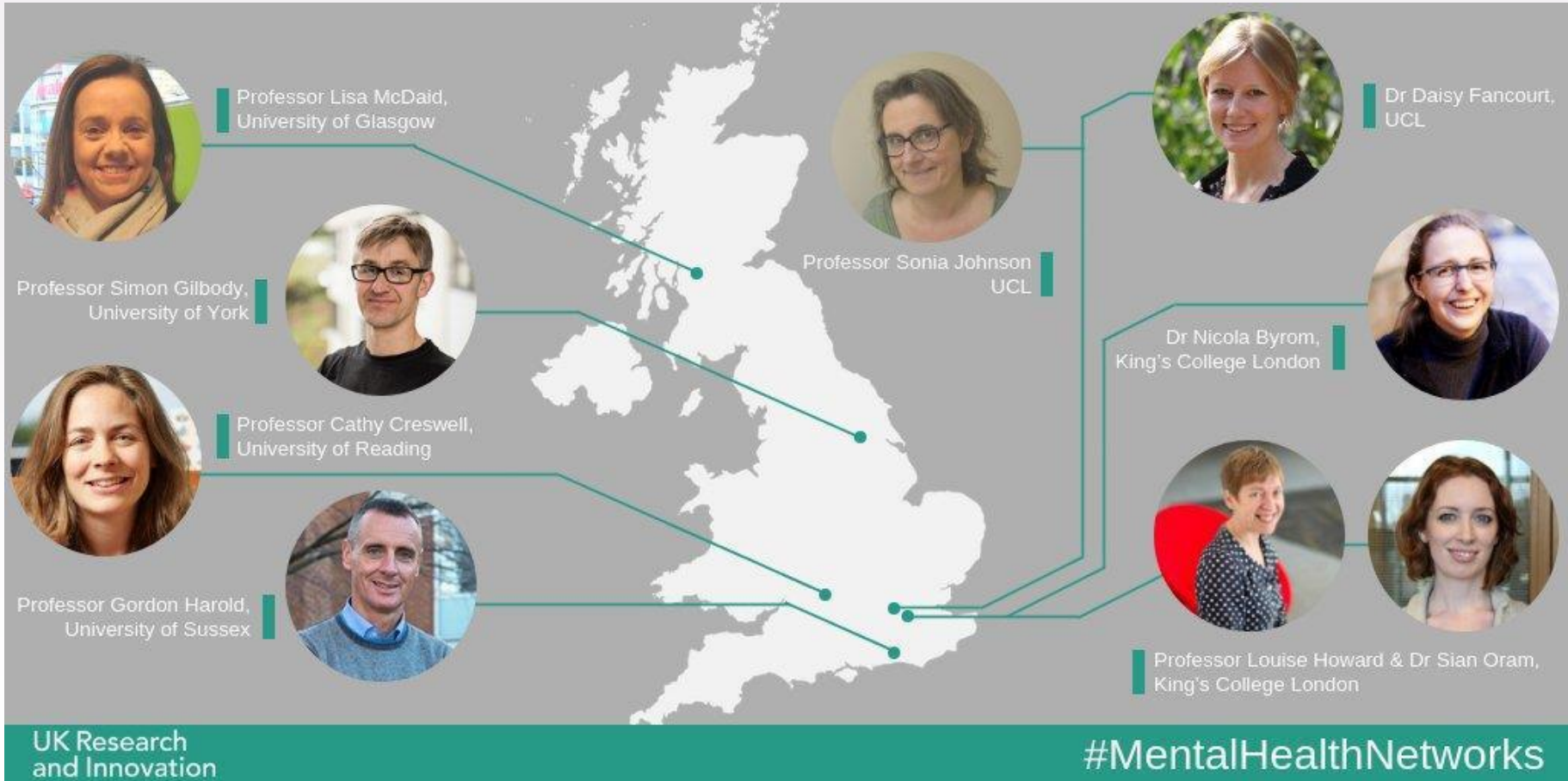
epidemiology

## Co-Production Group

- chaired by Dr Sarah Carr
- meet 6 weekly
- approx 20 members
- includes network co-ordinators & network leads
- advising on network meetings & projects
- presentations/co-facilitation at events
- conducting qualitative interview study
- advising on Plus Projects

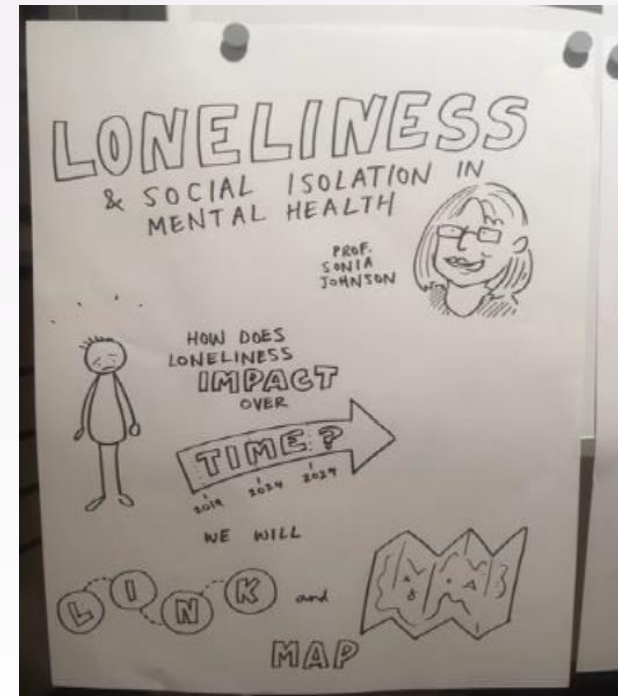


# Funding announced 2018



## 8 networks: each with Plus Project calls

- [@MARCH](#)
- [@TRIUMPHnetwork](#)
- [@UCL\\_Loneliness](#)
- [@VAMHN](#)
- [@NetworkSmarten](#)
- [@EmergingMindsUK](#)
- [@CTGNetworkUK](#)
- [@enurturenetwork](#)



# Friends House launch Dec 2019



*Anne Rogers*  
*Faye Bound Alberti*  
*Essi Viding*  
*Sarah Carr*

## Network co-ordinators



- Mary Birken & Ellie Pearce
- Network co-ordinators
- overseeing the Plus Projects funding calls

[M.Birken@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:M.Birken@ucl.ac.uk)

[Ellie.Pearce@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:Ellie.Pearce@ucl.ac.uk)



# STAGE 1: MAPPING THE EVIDENCE

- Review of reviews
  - associations between loneliness/social isolation and mental health problems
  - interventions to address loneliness/social isolation mental health problems
- Seminars and workshops
- Growing the network, particularly ECRs



Add your thoughts to the tree

How do you experience loneliness?

By answering these and the following:  
What other words describe loneliness?  
Does it hurt and if?  
And how do you cope with loneliness?  
How does it relate to being alone?  
How is it connected with other experiences?

## STAGE 2: PLUS PROJECTS

- commissioning projects
- total Plus Projects fund: £500,000
  - First funding call: **Pathways**
  - individual projects of up to £30,000
  - deadline **31st January 2020**
  - Second funding call: **Interventions** - **not yet open**
- seminars and workshops
- growing the network

## What we are looking for

- “high quality research that looks at understanding what the **experience** of loneliness and social isolation is like for **individuals with mental health problems**, and what the **nature of the relationship** is between loneliness/isolation and mental health problems.”

## Plus project priorities

- projects that bring together multiple academic disciplines
- projects that take cross-sector approaches eg with third sector and practitioner partners.
- projects addressing hard to reach groups
- projects that pave the way for subsequent larger-scale cross-disciplinary work (eg grants)
- projects led by ECRs
- projects led by lived experience researchers
- all projects to incorporate the perspective of people with relevant lived experience

## Priority themes

- How does loneliness and/or social isolation relate to mental health problems in **high risk groups** such as young people, ethnic minorities, refugees and asylum seekers, people with disabilities and their carers, and new parents, and seldom heard groups?
- What roles do **identity and stigma** play in how loneliness and/or social isolation relates to mental health problems?

## Further priority themes

- What role do **individual/psychological, social and environmental factors** play in the association between loneliness and/or social isolation and mental health problems?
- What role do **confiding relationships** play in the pathway between loneliness and/or social isolation and mental health problems?
- What can **longitudinal datasets** tell us about the associations between loneliness, social isolation and mental health problems in different groups?



# Network Funding Call

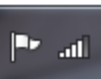
The network is planning two Plus Projects Funding Calls. Our first funding call is now open.

## Network Plus Project Funding Call #1: Pathways

**This funding call is now open. The closing date for applications is Friday 31st January 2020 at 5pm.**

### The purpose of this funding call

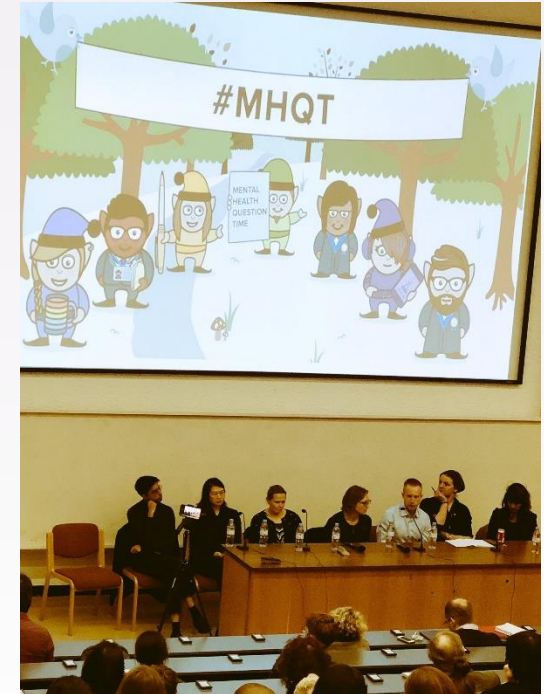
In this first funding call we will commission high quality research that looks at understanding what the experience of loneliness and social isolation is like for individuals with mental health problems, and what the nature of the relationship is between loneliness/isolation and mental health problems. We strongly encourage interdisciplinary and cross-sector approaches that incorporate third sector, practitioner and particularly lived experience perspectives. We welcome applications led by Early Career Researchers (see FAQs for more details) and will fund at least two projects led by lived experience researchers (across the two funding calls).





# STAGE 3: DISSEMINATION

- dissemination events
- legacy and sustainability
- grant applications



## Further information

- <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/psychiatry/research/epidemiology-and-applied-clinical-research-department/loneliness-and-social-isolation>
- Twitter @UCL\_Loneliness
- #loneliness #MHLoneliness
- Mental Elf #BeyondTheRoom
- monthly newsletter
- Email network co-ordinators:  
[m.birken@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:m.birken@ucl.ac.uk)  
[ellie.pearce@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ellie.pearce@ucl.ac.uk)

