

Why the UK Just Appointed a Minister for Loneliness

January 22, 2018

There's a new minister in the United Kingdom, and the position's theme song might as well be The Beatles' hit song "Eleanor Rigby," which implores the public to "look at all the lonely people."

More than 9 million people in the United Kingdom report that they often or always feel lonely, according to a December 2017 report from the [Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness](#). This report prompted U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May to appoint politician Tracey Crouch as the new minister of loneliness yesterday (Jan. 17), [according to The New York Times](#).

In doing so, the government is acknowledging years of research showing that loneliness can be detrimental to people's health.

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If you're already sick with a cold, loneliness may make it worse, a [2017 study found](#). Feeling isolated can also have grave consequences: Loneliness was linked to a 26 percent increased likelihood of dying earlier, compared with people who weren't lonely, according to a 2015 meta-analysis in the [journal Perspectives on Psychological Science](#).