



# Loneliness in girls and young women

December 2018

In November 2018, Girlguiding and research company Kantar TNS surveyed just over 1,000 girls and young women aged 7-21 about the effect loneliness had on their lives. Respondents came from across the UK, and some, but not all, were Girlguiding members.

## Results

According to our survey, loneliness is a significant problem for many girls and young women. Being online and comparing themselves to others was one of the main factors leading to their loneliness.

Almost a quarter of girls and young women (23%) aged 7-21 said they're lonely most or all of the time. Young women aged 17-21 are the most likely to suffer, with 48% saying they feel lonely all or most of the time.

A third (33%) of girls and young women aged 7-21 said they believed being online had an impact on their loneliness levels. This rose to over half (55%) of 17-21-year-olds.

When asked what they thought the impact of feeling lonely was on girls' lives, respondents said:

- Feeling less confident (69%)
- Feeling less happy (67%)
- Spending more time alone (50%)
- Making work/school harder for girls (37%)
- Doing fewer activities such as sport (25%)

The girls and young women surveyed also gave their thoughts on the best ways to combat loneliness:

- Talking to friends (72%)
- Being around their pets (52%)
- Being part of a youth group such as Girlguiding (43%)
- Going outdoors and being in nature (34%)
- Being online and using social media (27%)

'This survey shows that loneliness is an important issue facing girls and young women. Even girls who regularly see their peers can still feel lonely if friends go out without their knowledge and they then see images on social media. This can cause girls to feel lonely and isolated. It can be a part of bullying and lead to confidence issues as girls may feel there's something wrong with them and they're not the same as everyone else. I agree with the survey that joining a group like Girlguiding can help to combat loneliness because they get to meet people who share the same interests as them. Knowing you have something in common with other people can really help to end loneliness and boost your self-esteem.' Kate, Advocate, 18

# About Girlguiding

Girlguiding is the leading charity for girls and young women in the UK, with almost 500,000 members. Thanks to the dedication and support of 100,000 amazing volunteers, we are active in every part of the UK, giving girls and young women a space where they can be themselves, have fun, build brilliant friendships, gain valuable life skills and make a positive difference to their lives and their communities. We build girls' confidence and raise their aspirations. We give them the chance to discover their full potential and encourage them to be a powerful force for good. We give them a space to have fun. We run *Rainbows* (4-7 years), *Brownies* (7-10 years), *Guides* (10-14 years) and *Rangers* (14-18 years).



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@Girlguiding

17-19 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 0PT  
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