

Welsh Government Minister joins #DontDanceAlone campaign to help tackle loneliness in Swansea

The local radio station The Wave and Swansea Sound's #DontDanceAlone campaign was launched in 2017 to raise awareness of the older generation, shining a light on the devastating effects loneliness has and to encourage and promote intergenerational relationships through dance.

Its 2018 campaign was launched on October 7, leading to the first official #DontDanceAlone Week from November 12 to November 18.

During the week, community groups, schools and businesses are being encouraged to host or create their own events, where older members of the community can attend and participate with younger members of the community.

The Minister visited Birchgrove Primary School in the Swansea Valley for a day of World War Two-themed activities, including a tea dance party with the pupils and grandparents/local older residents of the community.

He then visited St Nicholas on the Hill and St Jude's Church in Swansea, where he joined a community-led event where older and younger members of the community came together to dance.

The Welsh Government is currently consulting on its plans to tackle loneliness and social isolation across Wales. Around 17% of people in Wales – 440,000 people – reported being lonely in 2016-17.

The consultation will last for 12 weeks (until 15 January 2019) and the consultation document is available on the Welsh Government's website.

Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

“There is a growing awareness of the problem of loneliness and unwanted social isolation across Wales and the UK as a whole. We know from research that loneliness can have a serious impact on our health – which could be the equivalent of smoking 15 cigarettes a day. That's why as a Welsh Government, we've said tackling loneliness and unwanted social isolation is a national priority for us.

“So it's crucial we do what we can to bring communities together. I'm delighted to have been in Swansea today to lend my support to the fantastic #DontDanceAlone campaign being run by The Wave and Swansea Sound. It's proving to be a real hit, bringing young and old together to enjoy tea and dance. This is exactly the kind of thing I want to see more of across Wales.

“In Wales, we have a proud tradition of close-knit communities coming together to provide that strong sense of togetherness. Let’s all do what we can to rekindle that spirit in our communities – in every village, town and city across the country. Together, we must tackle loneliness and isolation.”