

## **Joint Message from Loneliness Ministers' Meeting (17<sup>th</sup> June, 2021)**

We, the Minister for Loneliness in the UK and the Minister for Loneliness and Isolation in Japan, held our first online meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021 during Loneliness Awareness Week in the UK.

The UK and Japan firmly believe that tackling loneliness is an important international challenge. The UK launched its first national strategy for tackling loneliness in 2018 and publishes an annual report every year. Japan has recently appointed its first minister in charge of loneliness and isolation, and is now trying to gain a better understanding of the nature of this important issue and to develop policy responses. Today, we face severe challenges posed by the global prevalence of COVID-19, and this has deepened our common understanding that “connecting” people is key to tackling loneliness.

The UK and Japan jointly lead the global community on this agenda by sharing our knowledge and experience through close dialogue. We recognise that loneliness could happen to anyone and are determined that the stigma of loneliness must be overcome. Connecting family, friends, neighbours and supporters within our communities is a vital step to overcome loneliness, and our policies must support this.

With this in mind, we have agreed to strengthen our bilateral cooperation on tackling loneliness, particularly in the following three ways.

### **1. Regular meetings between the UK and Japan**

The UK and Japan will hold meetings on a regular basis at both ministerial and administrative levels in order to share our experience and pursue further cooperation.

### **2. Sharing knowledge on loneliness measures and policy**

Establishing appropriate measures to combat loneliness at a national level is important. Both countries will share data and information on how loneliness is affecting their citizens, their policy and measurement approaches, and the learning shared between government, academics and other stakeholders.

### **3. Raising awareness in the UK and Japan, and within the global community**

The UK and Japan will work to increase global awareness of loneliness, always informed by the views of people who have experienced loneliness.

Baroness Barran  
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UK

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