**Why are loneliness and isolation important in the health needs of LGBT+ individuals?** The Health Needs Assessment research found that LGBT+ people are much more likely than others to feel isolated and/or lonely. These feelings were exacerbated by the COVID pandemic.

 **What is loneliness and isolation?** Loneliness is a feeling of being alone or separated from others. Isolation is a lack of social contacts and having few people that you interact with regularly.

Being lonely can have negative impacts on mental and physical health.

**What were the findings in relation to loneliness and isolation?** 73% of respondents had experienced feeling isolated from family and friends. 38% had felt lonely all of the time or often in the two week period prior to completing the survey. This contrasts starkly to the findings of the Scottish Health survey which found that 19% had felt lonely in the previous two weeks.

**1**

**2**

**3**

**Were there any trends in the data around loneliness and isolation?** Loneliness and isolation were most common among trans and non-binary people with a majority of those groups reporting they had felt lonely all of the time or often in the two week period prior to completing the survey.

**How can we reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation among the LGBT+ community in Ayrshire & Arran?** The findings of the Health Needs Assessment show the importance of LGBT+ friendly spaces. Visual signs in our premises (including staff wearing the Pride badge) will help demonstrate that it is an LGBT+ friendly space.

We have also been promoting events held by LEAP Sports (who provide LGBT+ friendly events) to members of our LGBT+ Staff Network and the wider LGBT+ population through our Twitter account. These events provide opportunities for socialising that are not focused on alcohol.

**What areas were rated positively for LGBT+ friendly spaces?** Those who lived in large towns or cities were more likely to rate their area positively for LGBT+ friendly spaces (36%) than those living in suburban areas or small towns (17%) or rural areas or small villages (16%). This is concerning for citizens of Ayrshire & Arran given the geographical nature of the region.

Feelings of loneliness and isolation were exacerbated during the COVID pandemic as many LGBT+ friendly spaces were forced to temporarily close during lockdowns.

**6**

**4**

**7**

**What factors contribute to feelings of loneliness and isolation?** Many respondents attributed loneliness and isolation to a lack of LGBT+ friendly spaces for socialising – particularly anywhere not focusing on alcohol.

**5**