Social Isolation: A Contextual Overview

**Socio-economic Drivers**
- Age
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Immigration status/
  Proficiency in English
- Educational attainment/
  Employment/
  Occupational status
- Income

**Demographic and family change**
- People living longer
- More people living alone
- Divorce rates rising nationally
- Greater mobility – families/relatives more likely to live apart
- Fewer people in caring roles than previously
- Immigration and migration

**Access to wider community/ neighbourhoods**
- Positive – Availability of social capital, for example, access to sports, recreational, faith, cultural groups and voluntary sector organisations active in local community
- Negative – A lack of community cohesion and community assets, or lack of awareness about what’s available locally

**Local economy**
- Availability of local jobs
- Relationships to family, friends, peers etc
- Connectivity and social networks. Preferences for type of contact can differ according to age etc, ie.
- either face to face, or through social media – Twitter/Facebook etc

**Access to technology**
- Internet and social media
- Technology can have both positive and negative effects in terms of tackling social isolation

**Genetics/hereditary factors**
- Overall health/mobility
- Personality
- Confidence
- Personal resilience
- Cultural background
- Faith

**Relationships to family, friends, peers etc**
- Connectivity and social networks
- Preferences for type of contact can differ according to age etc, ie.
- either face to face, or through social media – Twitter/Facebook etc

**National housing, planning and transport policies**
- Will impact on local development, sustainability of communities etc

**Media influences**
- Age discrimination, negative stereotypes
- Social/media attitudes towards drugs and alcohol
- Fear of crime more prevalent than actual crime

**POLITICAL CLIMATE**
- Greater emphasis on individual responsibility, personalisation agenda etc

**ECONOMIC CONTEXT**
- Ongoing cuts to public sector budgets
- Job creation and regeneration
- Rising energy costs

**WELFARE REFORM**
- Introduction of ‘universal credit’ Restrictions on housing benefit entitlement

**LOCAL GEOGRAPHY AND CONDITION OF LOCAL ENVIRONMENT**
- Is neighbourhood flat or hilly?
- Condition/accessibility of pavements, benches, loos etc

**ACCESS TO LOCAL SHOPS, FACILITIES AND SERVICES**
- Distance and accessibility of local shops, facilities and services

**ACCESS TO PUBLIC OR PRIVATE TRANSPORT**
- Have own transport?
- Distance/accessibility to public transport, frequency of service etc
- Traffic levels
- Fewer social connections in communities with heavy traffic levels

**LIFE COURSE TRANSITIONS**
- Early home/school experiences (ie. bullying at school)
- Adolescence
- Moving to a new area
- Unemployment/redundancy
- Teenage pregnancy
- Single parent
- Relationship breakdown/divorce
- Financial pressures
- Depression/mental ill-health
- Long term limiting health condition/disability
- Retirement
- Being a carer for partner/relative
- Death of partner/spouse
- Homelessness/living in temporary accommodation
- Living alone

**Access to technology**
- Internet and social media
- Technology can have both positive and negative effects in terms of tackling social isolation

**Genetics/hereditary factors**
- Overall health/mobility
- Personality
- Confidence
- Personal resilience
- Cultural background
- Faith

**Relationships to family, friends, peers etc**
- Connectivity and social networks
- Preferences for type of contact can differ according to age etc, ie.
- either face to face, or through social media – Twitter/Facebook etc

**National housing, planning and transport policies**
- Will impact on local development, sustainability of communities etc

**Media influences**
- Age discrimination, negative stereotypes
- Social/media attitudes towards drugs and alcohol
- Fear of crime more prevalent than actual crime

Dave Clarke and Liz McDougall. Bristol City Council.
For further information contact health@bristol.gov.uk