

Building Connections

An **NSPCC** service

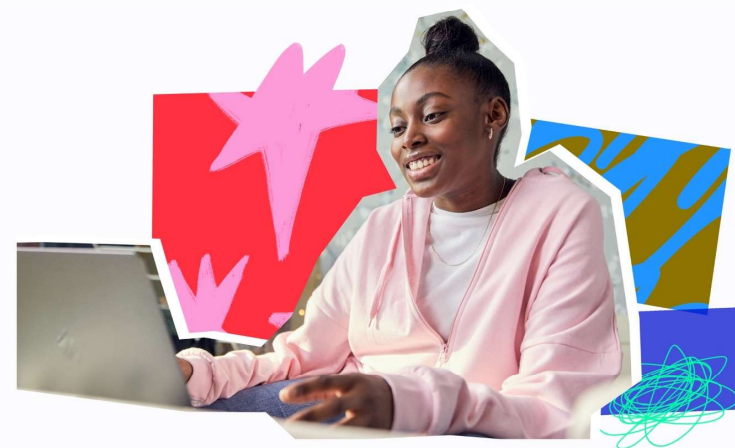


Build SUPPORT. Build CONFIDENCE. Build CONNECTIONS.

What is Building Connections?

Building Connections is an NSPCC Service that was launched in October 2023 empowering young people to tackle loneliness. Building Connections has been developed to help young people cope.

- For young people loneliness can be caused by changes, particularly those caused by shifting relationships.
- 65% of secondary school students said they didn't feel equipped to cope with loneliness in a recent survey.
- Research suggests many young people struggle with loneliness, often using risky and potentially dangerous coping strategies.
- Our goal is for every child to have a strong network around them, meaning they're able to share their highs and lows with a supportive group. The Building Connections Service works with young people who don't feel they have this kind of support.



Context

Building Connections is an online service for people aged 9-19 who are experiencing loneliness.

The service is available Monday-Friday (8am – 8pm) and across 11 sessions, participants work through a seven-step programme with a befriender.

Each Building Connections session gives the young person tools that can support them and help them develop resilience and coping techniques.

A young person will work with a befriender, who will support them to find their way through loneliness.

Referring agencies will be advised when a young person completes their sessions, but it would be up to the young person to share anything from the sessions.



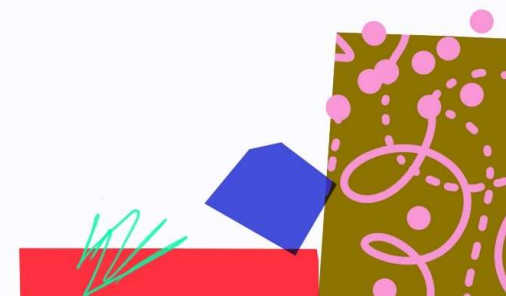
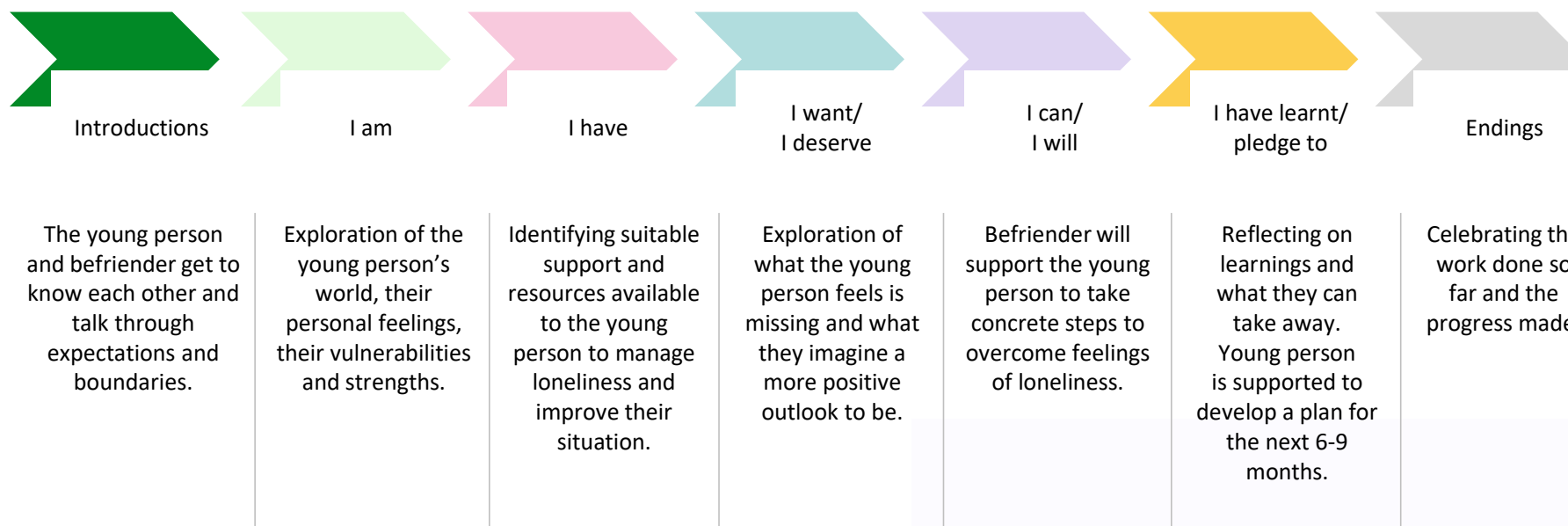
Benefits

- Provides a service to young people who are experiencing or struggling with the impact of loneliness and poor relationships
- Provides early intervention to young people who may be experiencing these feelings, which sometimes lead to other severe mental health needs like anxiety, low self-esteem, etc.
- Provides a service that supports resilience and confidence building in young people who are not confident in accessing mental health services



What we offer

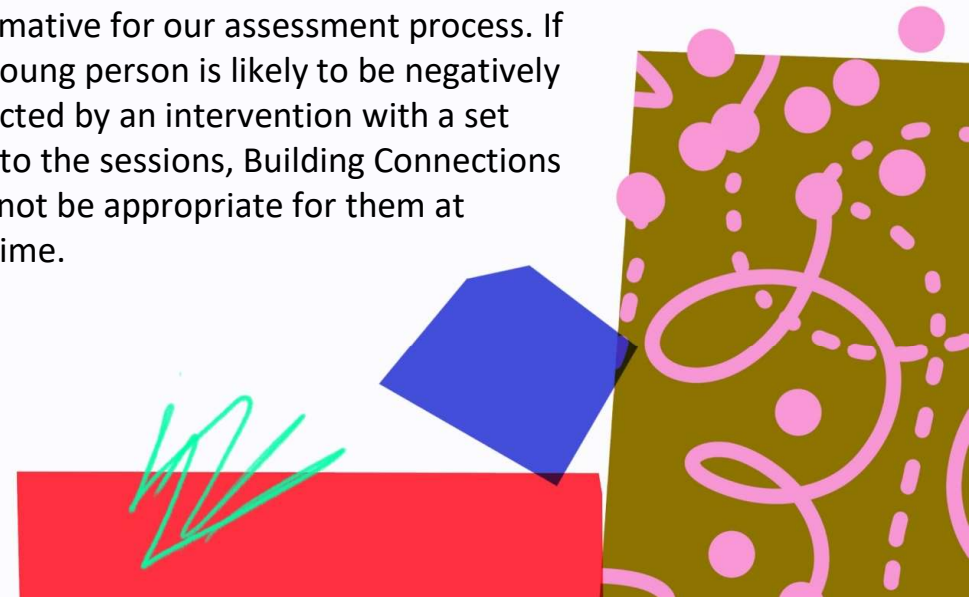
Across 11 online sessions, young people participate in a seven-step programme and each session will be 40-60 minutes long:



Suitability for Service

The team needs to be able to evidence that each young person is struggling with the impact of loneliness to a degree that is observable or has an impact on their lived experience. Any information on each of these concerns would help assess a young person's suitability:

- **Transitional periods** - such as moving to a new school or geographical area or may have recently been resettled. Or they may be currently struggling with school avoidance or refusal.
- **Emotional Health** - such as stress, low self-esteem, social anxiety, low mood or social isolation.
- **Friendship issues** - struggling to make friends or maintain relationships with peers, Similarly, this young person may have a friendship group but struggle with a lack of connection to the people they view as their friends.
- **Bullying** - either online or in a face-to-face setting, and needs support in recognising dysfunction or inequality within their existing relationships
- **Sense of otherness** - The young person may experience a sense of otherness, due to how peers have reacted to their sexual or gender identity, race, religion or a combination of other protected characteristics.
- **Attachment concerns** - ability to cope with endings is informative for our assessment process. If the young person is likely to be negatively impacted by an intervention with a set limit to the sessions, Building Connections may not be appropriate for them at this time.

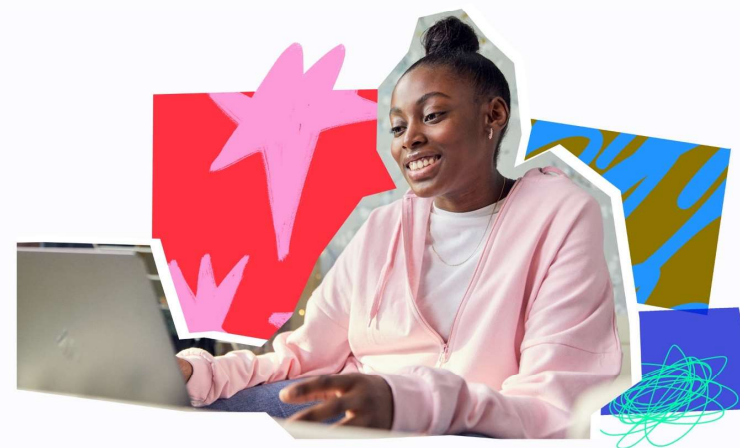


Accessibility and Technology

We aim to make the Building Connections Service as accessible as possible for every young person.

The more information that can be provided about any additional needs (such as learning or physical disabilities, health needs, language needs), the better we can assess and ensure that the Building Connections Service is suitably accessible.

Each young person will need an email address that they can access for the duration of their sessions and access to a suitable electronic device for the duration of their sessions.



Safeguarding

The safety and wellbeing of a child is of paramount importance.

Should a safeguarding concern and/or a child welfare issue be identified by a member of the Building Connections staff involved in the delivery of the Service, **the NSPCC will have a responsibility to take appropriate action to safeguard the young person.**

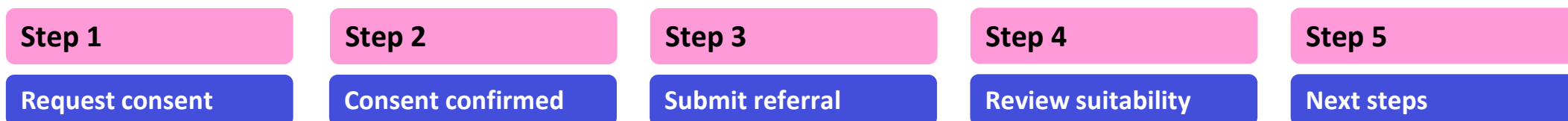
- Where appropriate, the parent(s)/carer's or those with parental responsibility will be informed that a referral has been made, unless to do so would put the child at further risk of harm or where this might prejudice the detection of a crime
- The referring agencies will be informed that a referral has been made

The NSPCC is authorised by statute to take action to protect children and act independently if necessary to ensure the safety of children.



Referral In Process

There are 5 steps to making a referral to the Building Connections Service

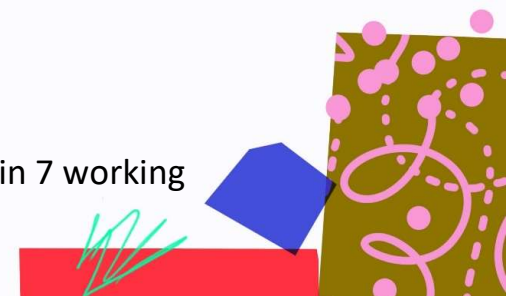


To start the process, a professional must:

- Speak with the young person and, if appropriate, their caregivers about this service. Confirm that to move forward, they will need to confirm their consent.
- Send the appropriate email template to give the young person and/or their parent/carer the link to the online consent form.
- When the young person and/or their parent/carer have completed the consent form, all parties will automatically be notified and given a unique reference code. This will allow the professional to complete the online 'request for service' form which the NSPCC will then assess

What happens next:

- The NSPCC will review the information provided within the request for service form and let you know within 7 working days whether they believe the service is suitable for a young person



Further Information

You can find out more about the Building Connections Service by visiting <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/services/building-connections>

On this site, you will be able to access:

- [Request for Service form](#)
- Email template to send to young people, parents/carers with links for consent forms
- Leaflet about the service for children and young people
- A4 posters about the service that you can display

Any Questions?



buildingconnections@nspcc.org.uk

