



MUST CREDIT: *Good Morning Britain's 1 Million Minutes* campaign launches Thursday 1st December from 6am on ITV1 pledge here [itv.com/1millionminutes](https://www.itv.com/1millionminutes)

**SUSANNA REID, BEN SHEPHARD AND KATE GARRAWAY SHARE
THEIR SUPPORT FOR *GMB'S* AWARD WINNING CAMPAIGN -
NOW IN ITS SEVENTH YEAR**



Susanna: "I'm conscious that sometimes the people on TV are the only company many at home have and that is a big responsibility. So it's really important that we do what we can to help find a way out of their loneliness."

Ben: "I've seen first-hand the difference that individuals and groups can make to people who feel lonely. Watching the transformation of someone who has been helped by being involved in a group or supported by an individual is very special."

Kate: "Very often a smile and a word to check in with people does wonders."

Launching on Thursday 1 December at 6am on ITV1, and continuing throughout the month, the entire *Good Morning Britain* family will be supporting the award-winning social purpose campaign - 1 Million Minutes - which aims to help eradicate loneliness across the UK.

It has never been more important for us to talk about feeling lonely, especially following the acute isolation the cost of living crisis is currently causing millions of people throughout the country.

This year's launch will see a brand new advert and short film aimed at highlighting the pandemic of loneliness, through a surprise celebrity's own directorial lens. And the 1 Million Minutes Awards will

also be returning each week in December, surprising deserving loneliness heroes around the country.

Alongside *GMB* presenters, familiar faces across ITV, celebrities and influencers alike will also get involved and show their support both on air and online, with the show curating bespoke content that will touch all regions across the UK.

Now in its seventh year, the initiative aims to encourage viewers to pledge their time to charities that tackle the issue of loneliness. Since launching in 2016, a staggering 404 million minutes of time have been donated to charities in need of volunteers who can connect with those who feel alone.

As well as supporting ITV's Britain Get Talking campaign, charities involved this year include Alzheimer's Research UK, Alzheimer's Society, Grief Encounter, Re-engage, Royal Voluntary Service, Sands, Home-Start and the Chatty Cafe Scheme.

Susanna Reid, *Good Morning Britain* host said: "I don't want anyone to experience the pain of loneliness, and I fear that as people cut back during this crisis they may become more vulnerable.

"Our entire *GMB* family is proud to support 1 Million Minutes - a campaign that actively seeks to make a difference in tackling loneliness. We hope to encourage the nation to do whatever they can, big or small, to help support those who are suffering from the effects of loneliness and isolation this year."

Neil Thompson, *Good Morning Britain* Editor said: "To be launching our seventh annual 1 Million Minutes campaign is not only a testament to the team's hard work and determination, but the unbridled commitment of our viewers to such an important cause - eradicating loneliness.

"It's something we are proud to dedicate so much time, effort and support to, especially around this time of the year. The role *GMB* plays in helping people feel a little less lonely cannot be underestimated and this year we hope that we can raise even more awareness."

Presenter Q&A

Susanna Reid



What does it mean to you to be an ambassador of such an important public campaign?

Anything that we can do to raise the profile of such an important issue is a great honour.

I'm conscious that sometimes the people on TV are the only company many at home have, especially if they are living on their own, and that is a big responsibility. So it's really important that we do what we can to help find a way out of their loneliness.

What simple remedies have you used or can you advise others to combat loneliness?

There are many amazing helplines for loneliness. My mum became a volunteer of Silver Line - she was inspired by watching 93-year-old Bob Lowe when he appeared on *Good Morning Britain* back in 2014. He talked about the pain of losing his wife to Alzheimer's.

So Silver Line is a really useful tool for those who are older and experiencing loneliness - a wonderful volunteer will call once a week with whom you can share memories, talk about your interests, anything really. That person can become a really vital, treasured friend over the phone.

What is a simple yet effective way to help someone you suspect is suffering from loneliness?

The most important thing that you can do is try to be in contact as much as possible, both virtually and in person. A lot of people use social media as a form of company and it's a really valuable tool, as you can meet some amazing new people online. But trying to extend that to regular phone calls and meeting up with people is also still important to do, if you can.

Considering the impact of the campaign over the past seven years, how do you think it will resonate with viewers this year - given the challenges the nation currently faces in terms of uncertainty with the cost of living crisis?

The cost of living crisis is leading people to make really difficult choices and is perhaps also leading some people to cut back on activities, which means they may see fewer people. Visiting a friend, going for a walk with someone or having a phone call are really important ways to maintain that contact. And even more importantly this year, these activities can be totally free.

Can you share your biggest highlight of the campaign so far, from over the past seven years?

Bond actor Colin Salmon's short film was a really powerful moment last year - it really struck a chord with me. My particular concern is about older people who live on their own, who perhaps get mistakenly neglected as people are naturally absorbed with their busy family lives.

Colin's film focused on a widower who used to visit the allotment with his late wife and was reluctant to do so after her sad passing. However, once he made that first step to go back, he was surrounded by all of his friends there who were so happy to welcome his return.

My mum has an allotment and there is a community of support there for a lot of people, and it becomes a family.

How can people participate/ volunteer in this year's campaign?

The purpose of the 1 Million Minutes campaign is for people to donate their time rather than money to the charities supporting the initiative this year. So far we've had 404 million minutes donated since 2016, but as always we need your help for even more minutes to be donated.

Ben Shephard



What does it mean to you to be an ambassador of such an important public campaign?

I'm hugely proud to be involved in this campaign. I've seen first-hand the difference that individuals and groups can make to people who feel lonely. Watching the transformation of someone who has been helped by being involved in a group or supported by an individual is very special.

What simple remedies have you used or can you advise others to combat loneliness?

I've learned the importance of not just thinking about doing something, but really actioning it. If I think about a friend who I haven't contacted or spoken to for a while, I make sure I organise to speak to them or message them, just to let them know I'm thinking about them. The simplest of actions can have the biggest impact.

What is a simple yet effective way to help someone you suspect is suffering from loneliness?

What I do is reach out - a message, a phone call, stopping by for a cup of tea. None of it is complicated but as I say, the simplest actions can have the biggest impact.

Considering the impact of the campaign over the past seven years, how do you think it will resonate with viewers this year - given the challenges the nation currently faces in terms of uncertainty with the cost of living crisis?

Campaigns like this have never been more important. The most valuable asset we have is our time. The wonderful thing about our campaign is we aren't asking for money, which as we know is in short supply for many right now. We are asking for something much more valuable, that's people's time.

What we've learnt too is that the benefits people who donate their minutes receive far outweighed the sacrifice of their time. It's a win win!

Can you share your biggest highlight of the campaign so far, from over the past seven years?

There have been so many individuals, but the film we made for last year's campaign *Bobs Back* directed by Colin Salmon had such a huge impact and beautifully captured the essence of the campaign.

How can people participate/ volunteer in this year's campaign?

To watch *GMB*, hear about the charities we are supporting and take a moment to pledge some minutes. I promise that the benefit you get from volunteering will far outweigh the commitment involved, and you might just change or save someone's life.

Kate Garraway



What does it mean to you to be an ambassador of such an important public campaign?

It's a wonderful thing to be part of 1 Million Minutes because I think loneliness is something that plights the lives of hundreds and thousands of people across the UK.

The campaign has also made us even more aware of just how important it is to support those who are lonely. 1 Million Minutes allows us to meet the most extraordinary people doing really wonderful things to help those in their community.

The volunteers that get involved get as much out of it as those who are being helped. It's a really lovely, life-affirming thing to be a part of.

What is a simple yet effective way to help someone you suspect is suffering from loneliness?

Just chatting to people. Very often a smile and a word to check in with people does wonders.

We're all busy and caught up in our own lives, but you might feel that you can spare a few minutes. Getting involved in something like this to help others is often a great way of combating your own loneliness, and indeed making new friends and expanding your own life too.

This campaign is so great because it gives people the opportunity to donate time in a manageable way.

Can you share your biggest highlight of the campaign so far, from over the past seven years?

It's just a lovely feeling that we've brought people together.

I find that I get very emotional when older people who've had full lives and perhaps because of health or the loss of a partner, find themselves on their own. So it's nice when you see young people donate their time. They get so much knowledge and wisdom out of the time they spend with the older generation. And hopefully, the older person has felt that they've not only been able to ease their loneliness but also had some purpose - it's just that lovely intergenerational sharing of experience, which is a really wonderful thing.

Considering the impact of the campaign over the past seven years, how do you think it will resonate with viewers this year - given the challenges the nation currently faces in terms of uncertainty with the cost of living crisis?

The year we started the campaign we were all overwhelmed and delighted with the reaction from our viewers, it was just fantastic. We really sensed that we'd hit on a need that we could fulfil.

Now we have such a severe cost of living crisis, people perhaps haven't got the money to do some of the things they would've done before to alleviate some of the loneliness or isolation they might be feeling. So I'm hoping that people in the midst of this will realise that actually having the people you love around you, even when money is tight, is the most important thing.

Also, with Christmas in mind - Christmas is one of those wonderful times of the year, we all love it but it does also heighten your emotions. And for people that are on their own, it can feel like every advert on the TV suggests that everyone else is having the most wonderful time, with bucket loads of friends and family. And of course, that isn't always the case but that thought can make people feel even more isolated.

What an incredible thing to give others the gift of time. It doesn't cost a penny to promise your time to somebody, but it's the most valuable thing.

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