

Press Release
For immediate release

Cringe at the thought of joining a group?

Age UK Exeter is on the look-out for people aged over 50 who don't like joining groups as the charity is interested in helping broaden the social networks of 'non-joiners'.

Since October they have been interviewing Exeter residents and gathering perspectives as part of a unique project to explore possible alternatives to groups for people who prefer other ways of connecting.

Project worker, Chloe Burrow, said "The reasons for not liking groups are as varied as the individuals themselves. It's not as simple as introvert/extrovert or being antisocial it's simply an individual preference. Everybody is different!"

It would seem that the time is ripe for interest in this area. The University of Exeter is partnering with Age UK Exeter to find participants who are 'non-joiners' to interview for their own study. University Researcher, Avelie Stuart, said "There's a lot of attention in the media and in research at the moment on the health and wellbeing benefits of social activity groups. However not everyone likes joining groups, and we would like people's help in understanding why."

Age UK Exeter's Chief Exec, Martyn Rogers, said "This project is really interesting as so much about combatting loneliness and isolation tends to be groups based, but what do you do if you're not a 'group person'? We hope to uncover new ways of connecting people that work for them".

Early perspectives look set to result in trial runs of such schemes as a platonic matchmaking service, bus pass jaunts and opportunities to meet people through a shared love of dogs.

If you are interested in helping Age UK Exeter broaden the range of social opportunities open to older people in Exeter by talking about your own experiences then please get in touch with Chloe Burrow by calling 01392 202092.

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Notes:

URL for the project page on the AgeUK Exeter website:
<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/exeter/about-us/news/articles/2018/group-alternatives/>