A simple guide to RSN online spreadsheets - A look at social isolation

Loneliness can be damaging both for physical and mental wellbeing. As such it is important to consider ways in which loneliness and social isolation can be minimised.
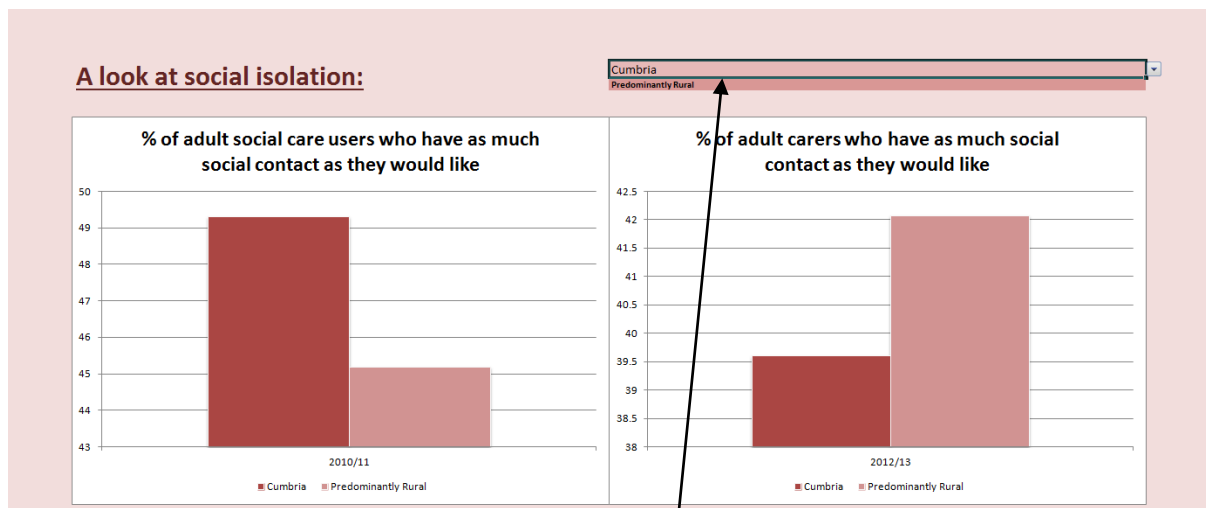
The Guardian newspaper published 'Fourteen ways councils can help combat loneliness' (14/04/2014) - Fourteen ways councils can help combat loneliness | Local Leaders Network | Guardian Professional

Some of the ideas put forward through the article were:

- Councils could team up with partner organisations such as community and faith groups, the voluntary sector, or private sector organisations.
- Leisure centres could be used as a way to bring people together and promote healthy living. (In addition to this idea, it seems logical that local libraries are ideally placed to provide space in which people who are suffering from isolation can regularly meet. In this case, it is the purpose and enjoyment of reading that is the catalyst for social interaction, where as leisure centres provide the purpose of physical activity.)
- Environment has a big impact on wellbeing and loneliness. (What spaces such as leisure centres, libraries, parks, are available and how accessible are they.)
- A personal response is needed since loneliness is a very personal state and feeling.
- Shared experiences and interests are great catalysts for social inclusion.
- Technology can be fantastic for keeping contact where distance or accessibility is an issue, however, not having access to the required technology is equally prohibitive where social interaction is regularly taking place via this medium.
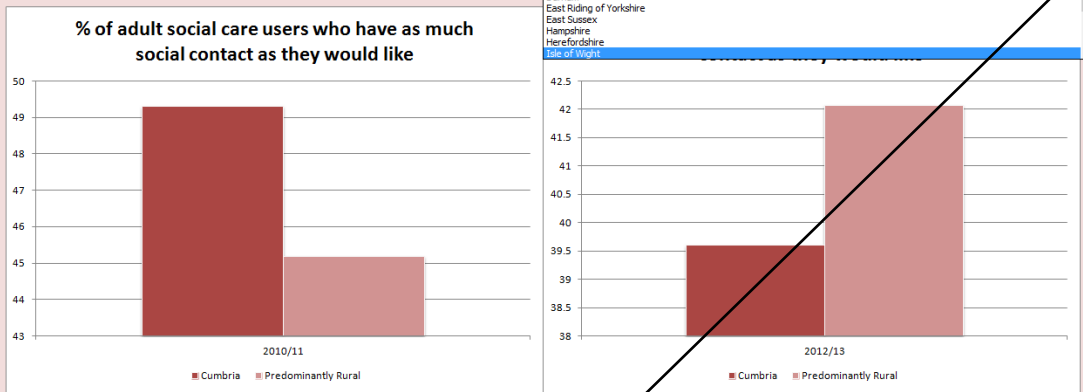
With these ideas in mind, the attached spreadsheet analysis looks at social isolation for both social care users and providers in your area, compared to the rural average.

To use the analysis, please follow these simple steps.

Select the cell containing an authority name with your mouse, and a grey square will appear to the right of it.

A look at social isolation:

% of adult social care users who have as much social contact as they would like

Clicking on the grey square then reveals the full list of authorities to select from.

Beneath the authority name is the rural classification of the chosen authority, which is then used to populate the comparative figures in the bar charts.

All data has come from Public Health Outcomes Framework data, generated 02/04/2014. Due to data quality issues, this analysis is provided purely for a light touch assessment of the possible situation in your area and should not be used as evidence of the absolute situation.

I hope this helps and the spreadsheet provides a useful snapshot of the situation in your area. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact dan.worth@sparse.gov.uk