Report from charity Mental Health Matters highlights challenges faced by rural communities

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The national charity, Mental Health Matters has published a report on the mental health of rural communities.

The report comes just days after the parliamentary debate, *Mental Health: Farming and Agricultural Communities*, which raised the critical issue of loneliness and highlighted several gaps in mental health support.

Mental Health Matters surveyed 120 people living in rural and farming communities across England. Key findings reveal that **96% of people fe**el loneliness was more of a challenge for people living in rural and farming communities, while **62%** of respondents reported difficulties in accessing mental health support.

Charlie Campion, External Affairs and Policy Manager at Mental Health Matters, who led the research, said: “Rural communities face barriers to accessing support, from poor internet access to a lack of public transportation to reach services. These barriers, also recognised in Monday’s parliamentary debate, are significant challenges to people getting the right help”.

The charity is calling for a number of changes, including reinstating the role of Minister for Loneliness, with a focus on tackling isolation, as well as the creation of a Rural Mental Health Expert Reference Group to influence the design of mental health services to meet community needs.

A rural isolation fund is also proposed, to help existing mental health services overcome the logistical challenges of working in remote areas through grant funding.

To read the full report, visit mhm.org.uk/rural-mental-health

Mental Health Matters is a third sector organisation providing a wide range of support to people with mental health needs offering a welcoming, safe, comfortable, non-judgmental, and non-clinical environment. Learn more: www.mhm.org.uk

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