

Act on Promotion of Policy for Loneliness and Isolation

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Chapter I General Provisions

(Purpose)

Article 1 The purpose of this Act is, taking into account the severity of issues concerning persons who are in a state whereby they are suffering mental or physical harm as a result of experiencing loneliness in their daily or social life, or becoming isolated from the society, due to the diminution in their interaction with the society and others resulting from the changes in the society (hereinafter referred to as “state of loneliness and isolation”), to promote comprehensive measures on policies for loneliness and isolation in conjunction with measures introduced under other related laws by, among other things, defining the basic principles, the responsibilities of the national government, etc., and the measure underpinnings in relation to the prevention of the state of loneliness and isolation, swift and appropriate support to persons who are in a state of loneliness and isolation, and other actions helpful for freeing from the state of loneliness and isolation (hereinafter referred to as “policies for loneliness and isolation”) as well as establishing the Headquarters for Promotion of Measures for Loneliness and Isolation.

(Basic Principles)

Article 2 Policies for loneliness and isolation must be pursued by treating the matters listed below as basic principles.

- (i) It is important to promote policies for loneliness and isolation in all areas of the society based on the recognition that the issues concerning persons who are in a state of loneliness and isolation is a problem for the society as a whole in light of the fact that any person can potentially be in a state of loneliness and isolation at any point in life and that the issues concerning persons who are in a state of loneliness and isolation due to changes in the society are severe.
- (ii) Continuous support must be provided based on the viewpoint of, and in response to the individual circumstances of, persons who are in a state of loneliness and isolation and their family members, etc. (hereinafter referred to as “concerned parties, etc.”) in light of the fact that there are diverse causes for, and diverse forms of, the state of loneliness and isolation.
- (iii) Necessary support to the concerned parties, etc. must be provided with the aim of enabling them to free themselves from their state of loneliness and isolation and lead a smooth daily life as well as social life, by interacting with the society and others in accordance with their wishes.

(Responsibility of the National Government)

Article 3 The national government is responsible for devising and implementing measures on policies for loneliness and isolation, pursuant to the basic principles specified in the preceding Article (referred to as

“basic principles” in the following Article and Article 6).

(Responsibility of Local Governments)

Article 4 Each local government is responsible for devising and implementing measures on policies for loneliness and isolation which reflect the circumstances of the concerned parties, etc. within its territory, in coordination with the national government and other local governments, pursuant to the basic principles.

(Efforts of Japanese Citizens and Organizations)

Article 5 Japanese citizens and organizations are to endeavor to develop their interest in and understanding of persons who are in a state of loneliness and isolation and to cooperate with the measures on policies for loneliness and isolation which the national government and the local governments implement.

(Coordination and Cooperation among Relevant Parties)

Article 6 The national government, the local governments, those who aid the concerned parties, etc., local residents, and other relevant parties are to endeavor to coordinate and cooperate with each other, with a view to realizing the basic principles.

(Legislative Measures)

Article 7 The government must take such legislative or fiscal measures and other measures as are necessary to implement its measures on policies for loneliness and isolation.

Chapter II Measures on Policy for Loneliness and Isolation

(Priority Plan on Measures for Loneliness and Isolation)

Article 8 (1) The Headquarters for Promotion of Measures for Loneliness and Isolation must produce a priority plan to facilitate the promotion of the measures on policies for loneliness and Isolation (referred to as “priority plan on measures for loneliness and isolation” in the remainder of this Article, and in Article 21, paragraph (1), item (i)).

- (2) The priority plan on measures for loneliness and isolation must provide for the following matters:
 - (i) the basic plan of action concerning the measures on policies for loneliness and isolation;
 - (ii) the measures to be taken comprehensively and systematically by the government in relation to the policies for loneliness and isolation; and
 - (iii) in addition to those in the preceding two items, such other matters as are necessary to comprehensively and systematically promote the measures on policies for loneliness and isolation.
- (3) As a general rule, measures specified in the priority plan on measures for loneliness and isolation must be accompanied by specific objectives to be attained by such measures and the time frame for their attainment.
- (4) The Headquarters for Promotion of Measures for Loneliness and Isolation must, once it has produced the priority plan on measures for loneliness and isolation in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (1) above, publish it without delay. The same applies where the said plan is amended.
- (5) The Headquarters for Promotion of Measures for Loneliness and Isolation must, at suitable junctures, investigate the status of the attainment of the objectives specified in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (3), and publish the outcome of such investigation without delay.

(Promotion of Understanding by Japanese Citizens and Organizations)

Article 9 The national government and the local governments are, in relation to the policies for loneliness

and isolation, to endeavor to proactively undertake such awareness-raising activities as are necessary to engage the interests of a broad cross section of Japanese citizens and organizations and secure their understanding and cooperation and to contribute to the voluntary activities in which the diverse members of the society participate.

(Support for Counselling)

Article 10 The national government and the local governments are to endeavor to take such measures as are necessary to encourage the local governments, those who aid the concerned parties, etc., local residents, and other relevant parties to provide the required information, advice, and other assistance in response to requests made by the concerned parties, etc.

(Facilitating Dialogue)

Article 11 The national government and the local governments are, in light of the fact that mutual coordination and collaboration between the national government, local governments, those who aid the concerned parties, etc., local residents, and other relevant parties can facilitate the effective promotion of the measures on policies for loneliness and isolation, to endeavor to take such measures as are necessary to encourage dialogues and other forms of mutual coordination and collaboration between such parties.

(Securing Talent)

Article 12 The national government and the local governments are to endeavor to take such measures as are necessary to recruit, train, and develop persons who aid the concerned parties, etc.

(Support for Local Governments and Those Who Aid Concerned Parties, etc.)

Article 13 The national government is to endeavor to provide information and take such other measures as are necessary to support the measures implemented by the local governments in relation to the measures on policies for loneliness and isolation and the activities pursued by those who aid concerned parties, etc. in relation to policies for loneliness and isolation.

(Promotion of Research Studies)

Article 14 The national government is to endeavor to promote research studies on the actual conditions of persons who are in a state of loneliness and isolation, and such other research studies as are necessary to devise its measures on policies for loneliness and isolation.

(Local Council on Measures for Loneliness and Isolation)

Article 15 (1) Each local government is, in order to facilitate the coordination and collaboration necessary in the promotion of policies for loneliness and isolation, to endeavor to establish, on its own or jointly with others, a local council on measures for loneliness and isolation (hereinafter referred to as “local council”) which comprises agencies and organizations that are involved in the assistance provided to concerned parties, etc. (referred to as “assistance” in the remainder of this paragraph, the following Article, and Article 17, paragraph (2)), persons who work in professions that are relevant to assistance, and other relevant parties (referred to as “relevant agencies, etc.” in paragraph (2) of the following Article, and Article 21, paragraph (2)).

(2) The head of the local government must, once the local council has been established, issue public notice to that effect in accordance with the provisions of Cabinet Office Order.

(Administration of the Local Council)

Article 16 (1) Each local council shall, in order to attain the objectives set out in paragraph (1) of the preceding Article, exchange the necessary information and hold discussions regarding the particulars of assistance.

(2) The relevant agencies, etc. that comprise the local council (referred to as “member agencies, etc.” in the following paragraph and the following Article) shall provide assistance in accordance with the outcome of the discussion referred to in the preceding paragraph.

(3) The local council may require the member agencies, etc. to provide information or express their opinion on the concerned parties, etc. who are the target of assistance, or otherwise provide the necessary cooperation, if the local council considers this to be necessary to facilitate the exchange of information or the discussions prescribed in paragraph (1) or if the local council considers this to be necessary when requested by any of the member agencies, etc. in relation to the provision of assistance by the other member agencies, etc.

(The Local Council’s Policies for Loneliness and Isolation Coordinating Agency)

Article 17 (1) The head of each local government which has established a local council may nominate, from among its member agencies, etc., a single agency or organization to act as the agency which coordinates their policies for loneliness and isolation (referred to as “coordinating agency” in the following paragraph and following Article).

(2) The coordinating agency shall manage the administrative affairs of the local council as well as facilitate the liaison and coordination among the member agencies, etc., for example by tracking the status of assistance provided by member agencies, etc., and, if necessary, combining the assistance provided by different member agencies, etc., as prescribed by the local council so that necessary assistance is appropriately provided.

(Duty of Confidentiality)

Article 18 None of the persons who are or were involved in the administration of a local council (including any administration performed in relation to its coordinating agency; hereinafter the same applies in this Article) must not, without a justifiable reason, divulge any of the secrets that came to that person’s knowledge in connection with the administration of the local council.

(Matters Reserved to the Local Council)

Article 19 In addition to matters that are provided for in Article 15 through the preceding Article, matters necessary for the organization and operation of each local council shall be determined by the local council.

Chapter III Headquarters for Promotion of Measures for Loneliness and Isolation

(Establishment)

Article 20 The Headquarters for Promotion of Measures for Loneliness and Isolation (hereinafter referred to as “headquarters”) is to be established within the Cabinet Office as a special agency.

(Functions under the Jurisdiction)

Article 21

(1) The headquarters shall take charge of the following functions:

- (i) The production of the priority plan on measures for loneliness and isolation, and the promotion of its implementation; and
- (ii) in addition to those in the preceding item, deliberation of important matters relating to policies for loneliness and isolation.

(2) The headquarters shall, in order to pursue the matters referred to in item (i) of the preceding paragraph, consult one or more local governments, local councils, or relevant agencies, etc., as necessary.

(Membership)

Article 22 The headquarters shall comprise the chairperson of the Headquarters for Promotion of Measures for Loneliness and Isolation, the deputy chairperson of the Headquarters for Promotion of Measures for Loneliness and Isolation, and members of the Headquarters for Promotion of Measures for Loneliness and Isolation.

(Chairperson of the Headquarters for Promotion of Measures for Loneliness and Isolation)

Article 23 (1) The chairperson of the Headquarters for Promotion of Measures for Loneliness and Isolation (hereinafter referred to as “chairperson”) shall act as the head of the headquarters, and the Prime Minister shall act as the chairperson.

(2) The chairperson shall take overall control of the functions of the headquarters, and direct and supervise the staff of the headquarters.

(Deputy Chairperson of the Headquarters for Promotion of Measures for Loneliness and Isolation)

Article 24 (1) The posts of deputy chairperson of the Headquarters for Promotion of Measures for Loneliness and Isolation (referred to as “deputy chairperson” in the following paragraph and paragraph (2) of the following Article) shall be created within the headquarters, and shall be filled by the Chief Cabinet Secretary and a minister of state for a special mission prescribed under Article 9, paragraph (1) of the Act for Establishment of the Cabinet Office (Act No. 89 of 1999) who, pursuant to an order given under the provisions of the same paragraph, handles the functions related to the matters prescribed under Article 4, paragraph (1), item (xxxiv) of the same Act and the relevant functions prescribed under paragraph (3) of the same Article.

(2) The deputy chairpersons shall assist the duties of the chairperson.

(Members of the Headquarters for Promotion of Measures for Loneliness and Isolation)

Article 25 (1) The headquarters shall be staffed by members of the Headquarters for Promotion of Measures for Loneliness and Isolation (referred to as “members of the headquarters” in the following paragraph).

(2) The following persons shall serve as members of the headquarters:

- (i) Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications;
- (ii) Minister of Justice;
- (iii) Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology;
- (iv) Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare;
- (v) Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries;
- (vi) Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism;
- (vii) Minister of the Environment; and
- (viii) in addition to those in the preceding items, those who are nominated by the Prime Minister from among the ministers of state other than those who serve as the chairperson or the deputy chairperson.

(Request to Submit Documents)

Article 26 (1) The headquarters may require the heads of the relevant administrative organs to submit documents, express their opinions, provide explanations, or otherwise provide the necessary cooperation, if the headquarters considers this to be necessary in order to fulfill its functions.

(2) The headquarters may request persons other than those who are prescribed under the preceding paragraph to provide the necessary cooperation, if the headquarters considers there to be a particular need to do so in order to fulfill its functions.

(Delegation to Cabinet Order)

Article 27 In addition to those provided for in Article 20 through the preceding Article, necessary matters

concerning the organization and operation of the headquarters shall be specified by Cabinet Order.

Chapter IV Penal Provisions

Article 28 Any person who violates the provisions of Article 18 shall be punished by detention for one year or less, or a fine of 500,000 yen or less.

Supplementary Provisions

(Effective Date)

Article 1 This Act comes into effect as of April 1, 2024.

(Transitional Measure)

Article 2 Where the provisions of Article 28 are to be applied up to the day before the effective date of the Act Partially Amending the Penal Code (Act No. 67 of 2022) (referred to as the “Penal Code effective date” in the remainder of this Article), the reference to “detention” in the same Article shall be read as “imprisonment.” This will also be the case where the provisions of the same Article are to be applied in relation to acts that are committed prior to the Penal Code effective date.

(Review)

Article 3 Once five years have passed after this Act has come into effect, the government shall, taking into account the status of the implementation of this Act and other relevant factors, review the state of the policies for loneliness and isolation and, if it finds there to be a need to do so, take such measures as are necessary based on the outcome of the review.

(Partial Amendment of the Act for Establishment of the Cabinet Office)

Article 4 The Act for Establishment of the Cabinet Office is partially amended as follows.

The following item is added in Article 4, paragraph (1).

(xxxiv) Matters relating to the basic policy to facilitate the promotion of policies for loneliness and isolation (as prescribed in Article 1 of the Act on Promotion of Policy for Loneliness and Isolation (Act No. 45 of 2023); the same applies in paragraph (3), item (xxvii)-5).

The following two items are added after Article 4, paragraph (3), item (xxvii)-3.

(xxvii)-4 Those relating to the production and promotion of the priority plan on measures for loneliness and isolation (as prescribed in Article 8, paragraph (1) of the Act on Promotion of Policy for Loneliness and Isolation).

(xxvii)-5 In addition to those in the preceding item, those relating to the planning, design, and execution of functions relating to the promotion of policies for loneliness and isolation which do not fall under the jurisdiction of other ministries.

In the table found at Article 40, paragraph (3), the following row is inserted after the row containing the entry relating Council for the Promotion of Private Finance Initiatives.

Headquarters for Promotion of Measures for Loneliness and Isolation	Act on Promotion of Policy for Loneliness and Isolation
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