



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **More than a third of young Britons say they are lonely. Two London founders think the fix is the room they are already standing in.**

*FirstMove launches today with VibeZone, a consent-first social layer for venues and live events, backed by Google for Startups and Microsoft for Startups.*

LONDON, 8 April 2026. The latest figures from the Office for National Statistics show that more than a quarter of adults in Great Britain feel lonely often, always or some of the time. Among 16 to 29 year olds, the figure rises to more than a third, making them the loneliest age group in the country by self-report. The Department for Education has reached a similar conclusion about life on campus, where its own research on student loneliness found the problem is now one of the defining experiences of university life. The Community Life Survey tells the same story from a different angle: support networks are thinning, and the people who feel most cut off are often the ones surrounded by the largest crowds.

These findings sit alongside last year's report from the World Health Organization Commission on Social Connection, which concluded that loneliness affects roughly one in six people globally and is linked to more than 871,000 deaths a year. The Commission named adolescents and young adults as the demographic most at risk.

Jahmai Enime and Promise Ekoriko, two Royal Holloway graduates, think they understand why the existing fixes are not working. Their answer is counterintuitive: build a piece of social technology whose entire purpose is to get you to put the phone down.

Their company, FirstMove, launches today. It is a member of both Google for Startups and Microsoft for Startups, two of the most competitive early-stage programmes in the technology industry.

*"We are not competing for screen time. Every other social app wants you scrolling. We want you to put the phone down, walk over and say hello. That is the entire point of FirstMove. The technology should disappear the moment it has done its job."*

**Jahmai Enime, Co-founder and CEO, FirstMove**

### **The paradox: more connected, more alone**

FirstMove exists because the data on digital connection has stopped lining up with the data on actual human wellbeing. UK 16 to 29 year olds are the most digitally connected generation in British history. They are also, on the ONS measure, the loneliest. Time spent on social platforms has risen steadily for a decade. Time spent in face-to-face social interaction has gone the other way. The correlation between heavy social media use and self-reported loneliness, particularly among under-30s, is now one of the most consistent findings in UK public health research.

*"People share intimate details with AI chatbots and ignore the 500 potential connections they walk past every day. That is not a technology problem. That is a*



*design problem. Social apps optimise for engagement. We are optimising for the opposite.”*

**Promise Ekoriko, Co-founder and CTO, FirstMove**

### **How VibeZone works**

FirstMove is built around a proprietary geofencing layer called the VibeZone. It only switches on when a guest is physically inside a participating venue, festival, conference or campus. There is no feed. No followers. No algorithm pushing strangers in front of strangers. Walk in, and the room becomes briefly social. Walk out, and your profile disappears.

Inside the VibeZone, every interaction is governed by what the founders call the 3-Way Handshake. Three deliberate steps of mutual agreement before anyone can be contacted.

Knock. One person quietly signals interest in connecting. No names, no photos, nothing public.

Challenge. The other person has to actively respond and verify intent through a context-specific prompt. This is the layer that stops spam, bots and unwanted approaches.

Connect. Only then does a short, time-limited chat open, designed to do one thing: help the two of them find each other in the room.

When the event ends, the chat ends. Profiles reset. Nothing is retained. What remains is the memory of an actual conversation with an actual human.

### **Privacy as architecture**

In 2026, privacy is table stakes. FirstMove takes it further. Every identity on the platform is ephemeral by design and resets after each event. There is no permanent profile to optimise, no social graph to mine, no long-term digital footprint to exploit.

*“Consent has to be the default, not a setting buried five menus deep. If a platform allows an unsolicited message, it has already failed the person on the receiving end. We decided very early that nothing happens on FirstMove unless both people have actively said yes. That is not a marketing line. It is how the product is engineered.”*

**Jahmai Enime, Co-founder and CEO, FirstMove**

### **A B2B tool, not a consumer dating app**

FirstMove sells to venues and event organisers, not to individual users. Guests never pay. The company positions itself as social infrastructure for the live economy: a layer that operators can switch on for a single night, a season or a permanent residency. Early conversations are focused on independent music venues, members clubs, conference organisers and university student unions, all sectors where the cost of a guest feeling alone is measured in lost repeat visits.

*“Every event organiser wants to know whether their attendees actually connected, and whether first-time guests became returning ones. We give operators that visibility*



*without compromising user privacy. It is an engagement layer that respects the people inside it.”*

**Promise Ekoriko, Co-founder and CTO, FirstMove**

### **Why now**

The timing is deliberate. The WHO has placed social connection on the global health agenda for the first time. The ONS is publishing British loneliness data on a regular cadence. The Department for Education is briefing on the cost of student isolation. The cultural mood is moving in the same direction. Gen Z is increasingly phone-shy in social settings, and the backlash against performative feeds is real and visible. The live events sector, meanwhile, is under sustained pressure to justify the price of a ticket and the trip into town. Operators are looking for reasons for guests to stay longer, return sooner and bring a friend. FirstMove is betting that the missing ingredient is not another loyalty scheme. It is the chance of meeting someone.

### **About the founders**

Jahmai Enime, Co-founder and CEO, is a cybersecurity architect with over a decade of experience designing secure systems at enterprise scale. A graduate of Royal Holloway, University of London, he brings a security-first mindset to social technology, treating consent and privacy as foundational architecture rather than features to be added later.

Promise Ekoriko, Co-founder and CTO, is a technologist and previous founder, also a Royal Holloway graduate in Computer Science. He leads product and engineering at FirstMove and has shipped products across consumer and B2B verticals.

### **Availability**

FirstMove is available from today. Venues and event organisers can request a VibeZone activation at [firstmove.live](https://firstmove.live).

### **About FirstMove**

FirstMove is a London-based social infrastructure company building consent-first connection technology for the live events economy. Its proprietary VibeZone activates only inside participating venues, and its 3-Way Handshake protocol ensures every interaction is mutual, ephemeral and safe. FirstMove is a member of Google for Startups and Microsoft for Startups. Real events. Real people. Real connection.

### **Notes to editors**

ONS loneliness figures are drawn from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey, Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain ([ons.gov.uk](https://ons.gov.uk)).

WHO global figures are drawn from the report of the WHO Commission on Social Connection, From loneliness to social connection, published 30 June 2025 ([who.int](https://who.int)).

UK student loneliness research is published by the Department for Education at [gov.uk](https://gov.uk). The Community Life Survey 2024/25 loneliness and support networks release is also available at [gov.uk](https://gov.uk).



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