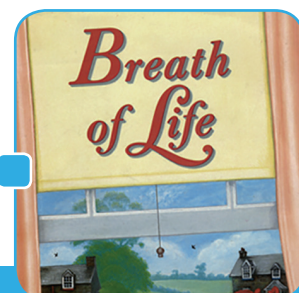


Our History



**Independence
at Home**
Towards Independent Living

1960s

Invalids at Home was founded on 14 October 1965 with the Hon. John Astor, MP for Newbury, as Chair and Enid Hopper as Vice Chair, together with Frederick Horace Bentley.

The charity was set up due largely to the efforts of an amazingly brave woman, Ann Armstrong. As a young woman, wife and mother of two young sons, she unfortunately contracted respiratory polio in October 1955. She was hospitalised and was unable to move any muscle between her neck and her toes or to breathe without the aid of an 'iron lung' machine.

Ann wrote a book 'The Breath of Life' about the horror of lying alone helpless in hospital and the deep pain of being cut off from family life. This was published by the BBC and serialised on Women's Hour.

There was a huge response from members of the public and people paralysed by polio and other diseases and injuries with donations for a campaign to help helpless invalids to live a normal life at home with their families.

Ann began placing articles in many national newspapers and specialist journals. Because of her campaigning zeal and persistence a great many MPs and thousands of people became aware of the demands in money and on the courage and energy of families who wanted to live at home instead of in hospital.

Invalids at Home had the following objects:

'To make grants of money to beneficiaries (patients who are suffering from the effects of chronic illness) who are living at home, to help them in any way towards living normal lives.'

In its early years the charity helped hundreds of people with a disability or long term illness in all kinds of ways both large (providing a light ray board for a paralysed woman without speech enabling her to use a typewriter to write) and small (helping with heating bills). It relied on the dedication and commitment of volunteers.

1970

Lord Jack Ashley, as an MP in the mid 1960's and Patron of Invalids at Home (until his death in 2012), founded the All Party Disablement Group which brought the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act to the statute books in 1970. The Act charged Local Authorities with making proper provision for disabled people in their homes.

1990

Invalids at Home had its 25th anniversary in 1990. Its role had changed over the years. A wide range of special equipment for the disabled had become available from the NHS or Local Authorities.

However, provision varied across the country and funding had to be sought from the charity by people unable to obtain special chairs, beds or wheelchairs.

Over the first 25 years Invalids at Home distributed £750,000 in grants to over 11,000 people of all ages.

The number of grants and beneficiaries increased year on year. David Astor, John Astor's son, took over as Chair of the charity in 1997.

2016 - 2019

Invalids at Home merged with the Chartered Society of Queen's Square (CSQS) in 2006. CSQS was set up over 100 years ago to give financial assistance to needy people suffering from neurological disorders and their families.

The name 'Invalids at Home' was originally chosen by the people that the charity supported. In 2007 the charity adopted a new name- Independence at Home- that was more relevant to its work in the modern day.

The charity grew from strength to strength from 1990 and it was able to fund some staff posts. It was run from staff homes until 2007 when it moved into serviced premises at Congress House, 14 Lyon Road, Harrow, NW London. This move was made possible by the most welcome gift of a legacy.

Independence at Home merged with the Miss Doreen Stanford Trust in 2011 and the Staines Trust in 2016. These mergers increased public benefit and generated a significant contribution to Independence at Home's operating costs.

The most recent acquisition of assets from the Staines Trust also set up a specific fund for the purpose of a establishing a fundraising function to secure the future generation of donated funds for client grants.

Independence at Home has supported over 43,000 beneficiaries with expenditure of £7M over the last 55 years.

Looking forward- there are many challenges ahead for the charity. People with a disability or long term illness are finding it more difficult to obtain public funding for equipment and home adaptations to maintain their independence at home. The needs are increasing with the number of elderly people in the population and the life expectancy of people surviving serious injury or disability.

Independence at Home hopes to be able to increase its grant making and support to keep pace with the needs of society over the next 50 years. We rely on our network of referrers and loyal donors to help us to do this.