



Independence[®] at Home

Towards Independent Living



Independence at Home is a UK grant-making charity helping people living with disabilities or long-term illness.

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What we do

Independence at Home is a UK grant-making charity with a fascinating 60-year history.

We award modest grants to people in financial need who are living with disabilities or long-term illness.

The purpose of our grants is to enable people to live independently at home – improving well-being, maintaining active living, and reducing isolation.

Independence at Home grants benefit people by enabling the purchase of specialist equipment, home adaptations, and other items to improve mobility, safety, comfort, dignity, and quality of life at home.

We accept grant applications from our network of Referrers – health and social care professionals, recognised community advice agencies, and charities.

Referrers can find more information and our online grant application form on the Independence at Home website:

www.independenceathome.org.uk



Our impact

In 2024/25, Independence at Home awarded 1,320 grants totalling £536,742.

Here are just a few examples of the positive impacts of our grants on people's lives.

"The mobility scooter has made a huge difference. My client is now able to access local shops and the community with his wife, and he says he feels more confident and less trapped. Before, he was limited by how far he could walk with his sticks."

48-year-old man living with osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis and Sjogren's syndrome who was experiencing fatigue and reduced mobility.

"The through-floor lift has made it possible for this youngster to access the first floor of the family home with some independence, taking some of the pressure off his parents. Can't thank you enough for your help."

Five-year-old boy with the rare genetic condition Acardi-Goutières syndrome needing full support with personal care, physical needs, and communication. The local authority assessed the family as eligible for the adaptation, but the 20% contribution they required from the family was completely out of reach for them.

"The portable folding ramp is really helping my client to increase her level of independence and well-being, and she no

longer feels so isolated. She keeps the ramp in her car so that she can now visit places which haven't been accessible in the past. Thank you so much."

59-year-old woman with spina bifida, scoliosis and lymphoedema who is a full-time wheelchair user determined not to become housebound and isolated.

"Thank you so much for helping my Mum to get a proper disability chair. It has made a huge difference for us as she is not always sat in bed."

70-year-old woman who had a stroke and needed a riser-recliner chair to be able to sit and then stand again independently at home.

These examples remind us that each grant award is about so much more than just the equipment or adaptation itself.



1960s

Doris Page was a young mother who contracted respiratory poliomyelitis in October 1955. It left her unable to move any muscle between her neck and her toes and she relied on an 'iron lung' to breathe. She spent hours isolated in hospital, separated from her husband and two young sons. Writing as 'Ann Armstrong' with the help of a 'Possum' typewriter – operated by the merest twitch or flicker of an active muscle – she wrote the book 'Breath of Life' (published by the BBC and serialised on Woman's Hour) about the torment of lying helpless in hospital and the deep pain of being cut off from family life. In 1962, she wrote 'The Cost of Polio', an article which featured on the Manchester Guardian's women's page.

There was a huge response from the public – some even sent donations for a campaign to help people in similar circumstances. People became aware of the cost of polio – not just the demands on finances, but the courage, love, and mental and physical energy needed from the families of those who simply wished to live independently at home.



The Hon. John Astor, MP for Newbury, was one of those inspired to take action. This resulted in the founding of a charity on 14 October 1965 under the name *Invalids at Home*.

John Astor MP became Chair of the new charity; Enid Hopper, the Managing Director of Gamages department store in London, took on the role of Vice-Chair, and the third founding Trustee was Frederick Horace Bentley. Their shared aim was to make grants of money to help chronically sick patients live normal lives at home. In its early years, the charity, relying totally on the dedication and commitment of volunteers, helped hundreds of people with a disability or long-term illness. In 1968, Doris Page was awarded the MBE for her campaigning and journalism.

1970

Lord Jack Ashley, as an MP in the mid 1960's, co-founded the All-Party Disablement Group which brought the Chronically Sick and Disabled Person's Act to the statute books in 1970. The



Act charged Local Authorities with making proper provision for disabled people in their homes. Lord Ashley served as Patron of the charity from 2000 until his death in 2012.

1990

Invalids at Home marked its 25th Anniversary in 1990. Its role had evolved as a wider range of specialist equipment had become available for disabled people from the NHS and Local Authorities. However, provision varied across the country, so people needed grant support to afford the cost of the specialist chairs, beds or wheelchairs which enabled them to live at home. Over the first 25 years, *Invalids at Home* distributed £750,000 in grants to over 11,000 people of all ages, with the number of grants and beneficiaries increasing year-on-year.

Growing from strength to strength, the charity was able to fund some staff posts. In 1997, David Astor, John Astor's son, took over as Chair of the charity.



2006–2007

In 2006, *Invalids at Home* merged with the *Chartered Society of Queen Square* (CSQS). CSQS had been set up more than 100 years previously to give financial assistance to people in need who were living with neurological conditions, and to their families. Originally run from staff homes, in 2007, the charity moved to serviced premises at Congress House, 14 Lyon Road, Harrow,

in North-West London – a move made possible by the most welcome gift of a legacy. The charity's office remains here today.

The name *Invalids at Home* was originally chosen by the people who the charity supported. In 2007, the charity adopted a new name – *Independence at Home* – that was more relevant to its work in the modern era.

2011–2020

In 2011, *Independence at Home* was invited to merge with the *Miss Doreen Stanford Trust*, and, in 2016, with the *Staines Trust*. These mergers increased public benefit and generated a significant contribution to help cover operating costs. Assets from the Staines Trust set up a specific fund to establish a fundraising function to raise donations towards beneficiary grants.

Independence at Home marked its 50th Anniversary in 2015, having supported more than 40,000 people with grant awards totalling some £6million. Our current Patron, The Rt Hon. the Lord Astor of Hever PC DL, was pleased to welcome guests to a special reception at the House of Lords to mark the occasion.

Since then, the charity has negotiated the challenges of the Covid pandemic and moved from paper/postal grant applications to an online system. This strategic change improved efficiency and enabled staff to



manage their work remotely. This meant that, in turn, even during those extremely challenging times, grant applications could be reviewed and assessed in a timely manner, enabling weekly grant awards to continue uninterrupted.

2025

In January 2025, *Independence at Home* merged with *Equipment for Independent Living* after an approach by its Trustees. This charity had a remarkable 253-year history of its own, with demonstrably similar objectives. Just as with previous mergers, funds are now retained and managed as

a named Endowment Fund, enabling the *Equipment for Independent Living* mission to continue.

Sixty Years On

Sixty years on, the charity originally founded in response to Doris Page's tireless campaigning still enables disabled people and those with a long-term illness to live independently at home. **By providing grants for equipment that has practical, positive and immediate impact, the charity is fulfilling a vital role helping to secure greater independence and freedom for people to live life in the way they want.**

Our future

Looking ahead

There are many challenges ahead. People living with 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. Indeed, the needs are increasing with the growing number of older people in the population and with longer life expectancy for people surviving serious injury or disability.

Transforming lives

Since Independence at Home was founded in 1965, grant awards have totalled £9.5 million. We have helped more than 50,000 adults and children to live as independently as possible and to maintain their links with their family, friends, and their local community.

Research shows that life costs you more if you are disabled – in 2025, some £1,010 per month more, on average, for households with at least one disabled adult or child. And now, with the on-going cost-of-living crisis, coupled with the long-term impacts of the Covid pandemic, disabled people are being disadvantaged even more.

Focusing on individual needs

Our beneficiaries are people of all ages and ethnicities, from every nation and region of the UK. They are living with disability, long-term illness, and the multiple conditions of ageing. They are also in financial need and find it extremely challenging to obtain essential equipment or home adaptations to enable them to live independently at home. Whilst technology continues to advance, the increasing cost of specialist disability equipment often leaves this frustratingly out of reach of the people for whom it is intended.

Faced with multiple barriers to independent living, and having failed to secure what they need from statutory sources, our beneficiaries find themselves falling through gaps in service provision. In these situations, Independence at Home grants can make a positive, practical, and often life-changing difference.



Please support us

"I am writing to thank you for the very generous grant award from Independence at Home towards this life-changing piece of equipment. Since my Tri-ride arrived and was added to my wheelchair, I have been able to access places I haven't been able to visit since I sustained my spinal injury six years ago. I have been able to go to the beach, join my friends on dog walks, go to the supermarket independently, explore local nature reserves with my partner and even go on trips further afield! This piece of equipment has given me back my freedom and independence, and I finally feel like me again."



Individuals, companies, charitable trusts and foundations support the charity each year. We are enormously grateful to them, and very much hope that our efforts will continue to benefit from such generous support.

Independence at Home does not receive any government or statutory funding. Our running costs are covered by an endowment fund. This means that, unless designated otherwise by the funder, every penny in donations goes directly to supporting individuals in financial need. However, the charity can only sustain and grow the current level of individual grants if we can raise funds from new sources.

Recognising that the costs of specialist equipment continue to increase, and that the needs continue to grow, **please do consider making a donation to mark our 60th Anniversary Year.**

We know that a little help can go a very long way!

Independence at Home

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9am to 5pm (Mon–Thurs)



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