

In touch

The latest news, tips and stories
from Independent Age



advice and support for older age
**Independent
Age**

June 2017 | Issue 25

**100in10
challenge**
**Johnny
brings Blitz
spirit to our
fundraising
launch**

New office in Newcastle

Tips on choosing a new home

ITV show on older drivers

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Do you want to receive this newsletter by email or on audio CD?

Please let us know at services.admin@independentage.org or call 020 7605 4255.

Join our Readers' Panel

Our Readers' Panel is an opportunity to have your say about our public information. Anyone can join – you don't have to be an expert – and your involvement will help us to make sure that what we produce is relevant and useful to older people and their families.

You can sign up online at independentage.org/readers-panel or contact our Helpline for more details (0800 319 6789, advice@independentage.org).



Johnny brings Blitz spirit to 100in10

We launched our new fundraising challenge, 100in10, in May at an Essex assault course. Event ambassador Johnny Ringwood explains why he signed up.

East Ender Johnny Ringwood says his recipe for a long, happy retirement has three ingredients: "Chuck away the remote control, get an uncomfortable chair, and don't switch your engine off."

At 81, he still volunteers at his local gym, giving helpful pointers and encouraging others. "They see this old boy keeping fit and think, 'If he can do it, I can too.'"

"When you get to my age it's easy to sit indoors and not get out"

Johnny was delighted to help launch our new sporty fundraising challenge, 100in10. He told the crowd, "Most of you who took part in the assault course today

can run and jump over obstacles, but when you get to my age it's easy to sit indoors and not get out."

In fact, the former merchant navy seaman spends nine hours in the gym every week, swimming and weight training.

Johnny's current fitness levels are a world away from his childhood during the war. Living under constant bombardment from enemy bombs and surviving on meagre rations, he became so thin that he was sent to a residential school for malnourished children.

This experience helped him to appreciate his health. "Just remember that you are special and loved by others," he told participants at the launch. "Get yourselves fit and well to live a long and healthy life to be able to return that love."



Johnny with the other participants

100in10 challenges participants to walk, run, swim or cycle 100km over 10 weeks. To find out more, visit www.independentage.org or call Daniel on 020 7605 4274.

New Chair, Jo, wants more recognition for older people



We have recently appointed a new Chair of Trustees for Independent Age. Jo Cleary will succeed Dame Diana Brittan, who is to step down from the post after eight years.

Jo, who brings a wealth of experience in health and social care, says, "Independent Age is a fantastic organisation and I would like to thank Dame Diana Brittan for passing on an outstanding legacy on which to build. I'm passionate that older people must be recognised for their ongoing contribution to society and that everyone can continue to lead the lives they want to live as they get older."

"I've been inspired by meeting our staff and volunteers,

many of whom are younger and who share this positive vision. They care deeply that you are not always valued for your contribution and wisdom. I want to address this and make sure we put you at the heart of everything we do and that we design future services together. I look forward to working with you to achieve this positive change in the weeks and months ahead."

Manifesto is sent to all new MPs

In May, just before the General Election, we put together a manifesto for a better future for older people and sent it to all those standing to be an MP. The manifesto sets out our vision for the future, emphasising the need, in particular, for a health and care system that's fit for purpose.

It's available to read on our website at www.independentage.org or you can order a copy by calling Beth on 020 7605 4262.



Older drivers steer new TV show

We're putting together an information guide to launch alongside a brand new ITV programme about older drivers.

The show aims to challenge perceptions of older people on the road by following them through a driving assessment. It also explores how they feel about driving in later life.

Independent Age staff attended the filming of the show to talk to those who feature in it about their



experiences. Our free new guide, which we have put together with their support, will help people stay safe behind the wheel as they get older.

The ITV programme, along with our new free guide, will launch in August. You will be able to order the guide then by calling 0800 319 6789 or visiting www.independentage.org

Poor health is top reason for moving house

Almost half of older people say declining health would make them think about moving house – while 1 in 3 say nothing would ever make them move. This is according to a poll we commissioned of over 2,000 people aged 65 and over.

The poll, which helped promote our new guides, **Choosing where to live** and **Getting help at home**, revealed that struggling with gardening and house maintenance are also common reasons for moving.

Janet Morrison, Chief Executive of Independent Age, said, "You don't necessarily have to move home just because you're older, but it's really important that you're thinking about whether your home is still right for you. It's never too early to start thinking about what you might need in the future, so that you're prepared if a crisis hits. Getting advice about your options is a good place to start, even if you don't need to change anything yet."

Turn to page 4 for our top tips for making sure your home is right for you.

Information and advice

Choosing where to live

Moving home can be a difficult and emotional decision. Our new guide can help you think about your priorities and weigh up the pros and cons of different housing choices, so you make the best decision for you. Here are some options.

Downsizing

Moving to a smaller property may mean lower running costs, less housework and maintenance, and a home that's more suitable for your needs – for example, one without stairs. However, a smaller property isn't necessarily cheaper, and may not have space for all your possessions.

Moving in with family

This can be a good option but think carefully about how it will work – could it create tension? How much support can your family realistically give you? Will you have less space and privacy? Be clear about financial arrangements from the start, even if it seems awkward to discuss this.

Sheltered housing

If you're relatively independent but want a smaller or adapted home and reassurance that help is available in an

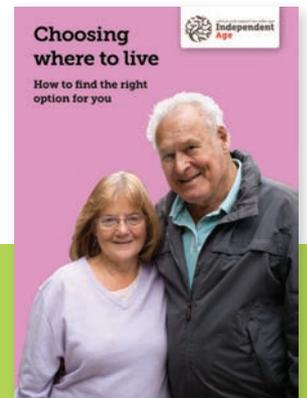


emergency, sheltered housing may be a good choice. It is usually a group of self-contained flats designed for older people, with access to communal facilities such as a laundry room or guest flat. There's usually a warden responsible for looking after the building and making sure you're safe. However, service charges can be high and there's often a waiting list.

Sharing your home

Special homeshare schemes (0151 227 3499, homeshareuk.org) match older people with someone who can provide company, reassurance and simple support. It can't replace help with personal care, but will give you someone on hand to keep an eye on you.

You can order our free guide, **Choosing where to live**, at www.independentage.org/choosing-where-to-live or by calling 0800 319 6789.



Getting help at home

Whether you want some support to care for yourself or just a bit of help with household chores, help is available.

Help with shopping

If you'd like to do your own shopping but find it hard to get around, Shopmobility lends scooters and wheelchairs to people to use in shops – although there may be a small charge. Check if there's one near you (**01933 229644**, nfsuk.org). Also, all the large supermarkets and many other shops offer online shopping now and some offer telephone ordering, so it's worth asking what's available.

Help with the garden

The charity Thrive supports people with disabilities to carry on gardening. Contact them for advice and information (**0118 988 5688**, carryongardening.org.uk). If you'd rather employ a gardener, see if your local garden centre can recommend someone, or if your local Age UK offers a paid-for gardening service (**0800 169 6565**, ageuk.org.uk/about-us/local-partners).



Help to get around your home

If you're having problems with the stairs or your bathroom, it may be worth looking into what adaptations could be made to make your home more suitable. Changes like installing grab rails, a stairlift, or a wet room, could make a world of difference. Contact your local council for a care needs assessment to get started.

Help with personal care

Carers can help you to look after yourself in your own home, whether you need long-term support or a bit of extra help after a hospital stay. Contact your local council to arrange a care needs assessment in order to find out what help would benefit you.



You can order our free guide, **Getting help at home**, at www.independentage.org/getting-help-at-home or by calling **0800 319 6789**.

Getting involved

Our Newcastle office is officially open!

On Friday, 21 April, Chi Onwurah, MP for Newcastle upon Tyne Central, officially opened our Newcastle office, surrounded by staff, local volunteers, and professionals from other organisations. Our Chair of Trustees, Dame Diana Brittan, who has recently retired, also attended.

After cutting the ribbon, Chi reflected on the great community spirit in the North East, and also talked about the growing issue of loneliness among older people. She said, "Loneliness is a growing problem in our society and I'm delighted that Independent Age will be continuing to work in our area to tackle it."

After speeches, guests mingled over a buffet lunch. One attendee, Alistair, from the charity Dementia



Chi Onwurah MP with Dame Diana Brittan

Care, told us, "I'm really pleased to see Independent Age increasing its presence in Newcastle and the North East... It's vital that older people have access to the services Independent Age offers to keep older people connected in later life."

The office is one of two we have opened to support our growth across the country – the other is in Glasgow. We hope both offices will serve as welcome bases for our volunteers and help to raise our profile.



Chi opens the new office with staff, volunteers and guests

Marathon marvels cross the finish line

Three brave women completed the London Marathon in April, raising an incredible £6,000 for Independent Age between them. We asked them about their experiences.

Cathy: "I ran to celebrate my 70th birthday"

"Running my first marathon was all part of my plan for my 70th birthday. Running for Independent Age appealed to me because of my mum's situation – she's 92 and still living in her own home, which is really important to her.

I found the experience on the day a bit mind-blowing, to be honest. I've never run anything quite on this scale before. And all the supporters and charities calling out your name feels amazing. I would be more than delighted to do more for Independent Age in the future."



Lucy: "The last five miles were really hard"

"I care for my 84-year-old father-in-law, who we moved to Cornwall two years ago. He can't do very much for himself so we have a family rota



and I sort out all his finances and his care. I wanted to run for Independent Age because his experience has made me realise how hard it is for those people who haven't got family to help them out.

The last 10 miles were hard and then the last five miles were *really* hard. I just wanted to stop as my legs were just solid at that point. I ran a lot faster than I'd expected to. I was spurred on by all the cheering, people calling my name and giving me 'high fives'... It was brilliant!"

Hannah: "The day was really emotional"

"I lost my grandfather quite some time ago and I think a lot more could have been done for him. We're all going to be old one day and we need to help people to stay independent for as long as possible. The befriending service in particular is amazing and that's part of the reason why I chose to run for Independent Age.

I found the experience on the day really emotional - and crossing the finish line was wonderful! All my friends and family came down to support me."



Your say

In the last issue we asked you what you thought of our new-look In Touch. We were delighted to receive lots of lovely letters and emails. Here's a selection:



I received my copy of the new format In Touch this morning and was very impressed with the new layout, colour etc. It has always been very informative and remains so and it's very handy when I need some advice.

I am very lucky in that I have two daughters only three miles away so loneliness is not a problem, but the articles in the magazine show how important contact with others is when you do not have someone to talk to. Congratulations and keep up your wonderful work.

Kitty, County Durham

I had a lovely surprise when I visited my husband in the care home. He had the new colour In Touch open in front of him with his glasses on. He has very little motivation so I was so pleased to see he was taking an interest in the magazine. I think the lovely, happy picture of Bill attracted him... Yes, the colour In touch is definitely a winner.

June, Somerset

Thank you for the recent letter from Independent Age enclosing the new-look In Touch magazine. I thought the publication was most attractive, what a lovely picture Bill made! The topics were most interesting and helpful, both the size and format making it easy to read, and comfortable to hold as well. Thank you for the magazine and for your continued support.

Jennifer, Cumbria

I read your piece on loneliness. It must be awful to feel lonely. I feel so lucky to have wonderful neighbours, friends and relations to keep me happy and sane. The In Touch is a good help and well read. I love it.

John, Nottinghamshire

Love the new look. Great presentation and very, very readable! Even smelled nice. Well done!

Howard, Norfolk

My comment is, well done! The format is easy on the eye and the content interesting. It is a pleasure being a recipient of such a publication.

Rachel, Yorkshire

Thank you so much for the magazine. What a lovely photo of Bill. The new In Touch is most impressive, clear, concise and informative (not just because I am in it!)

Richard, Dorset, Bill's volunteer



The question for the next issue is:

How do you feel about your home? Is it still suitable for your needs or do you feel you would be better off moving?

Let us know by emailing comms@independentage.org or writing to: **Communications Team, Independent Age, 18 Avonmore Road, London, W14 8RR.** We'd love to hear from you.

We will print a selection of the messages we receive. Feel free to include a photo of yourself, but please don't send a precious photo in the post just in case it gets lost en route.

Do you pay for your own care?

We're looking for people who fund their own care and may be willing to be interviewed about the benefits and challenges they face.

If this is you, please email an outline of your circumstances to comms@independentage.org or write to: **Communications Team, Independent Age, 18 Avonmore Road, London W14 8RR.**

Free advice for older people, their families and carers

Our Helpline

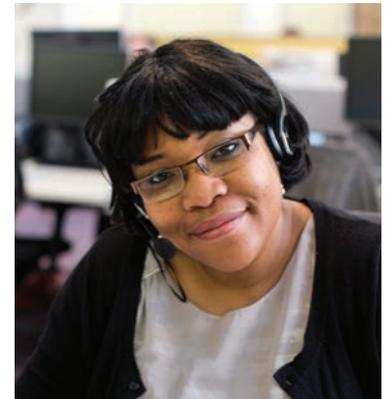
We give free, confidential advice over the telephone on care and support, money and benefits, and health and mobility.

Call our freephone line on

0800 319 6789

Monday to Friday, 8am-8pm. Weekends and bank holidays, 9am-5pm.

You can also email us at advice@independentage.org



Our advice guides

Our practical, jargon-free advice guides give you the information you need to get the most out of older age.



To order your free advice guides, call **0800 319 6789**
or visit www.independentage.org



advice and support for older age

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