

March 2020

# SupportMatters



Independent  
Age



**Introduce free  
personal care**

natures

ndparents, for ourselves



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

Keeping up  
the pressure

Our free personal care  
campaign continues



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# Welcome

*Thank you for all the ways you support us. You've helped us make a tremendous impact on the lives of the older people we work with.*

2019 was a successful year for Independent Age. The money we raised with your help allowed us to reach out and support more than 1.3 million older people through our volunteering service, information and advice guides, and helpline.

Our helpline alone supported more than 84,000 older people, their families and their carers. One of these people was Stanley, who called our helpline and, with our expert advice, he was able to claim money he was entitled to. Stanley's story shows how even small uplifts to the income of older people can help them feel less isolated. You can read about Stanley on page 7.

We also share the latest news about our campaign for free personal care for over-65s, and we introduce you to two of our fabulous campaigners, Patricia Phipps and Margaret Dangoor.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

**Sally Sheehy**  
Head of Individual Giving & Legacies

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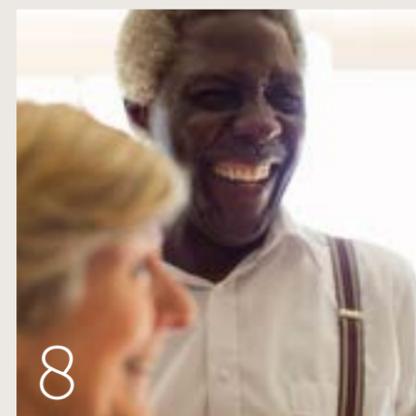
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Challenge yourself to conquer the highest peak in Wales

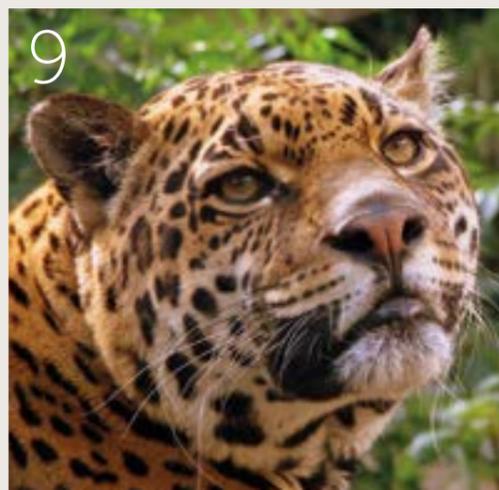
Leaving a legacy in your will – join us at Birmingham Botanical Gardens or Edinburgh Zoo to find out more



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#### Independent Age

18 Avonmore Road  
London W14 8RR

T 020 7605 4200  
E [charity@independentage.org](mailto:charity@independentage.org)  
[www.independentage.org](http://www.independentage.org)  
Helpline 0800 319 6789

Independent Age is the operating name of the Royal United Kingdom Beneficent Association. Registered charity number 210729 (England and Wales) SC047184 (Scotland).

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*The Independent Age petition sends a clear message about how many of us care about this issue.*

Margaret Dangoor

# Keeping up the pressure

Our free personal care campaign continues

*Almost 14,000 people signed our petition, which we delivered to 10 Downing Street.*

Patricia Phipps and Margaret Dangoor are campaigners for change, supporting Independent Age as we challenge the government to address the need for a fairer social care system. Both Patricia and Margaret were proud and eager to deliver our petition to 10 Downing Street.

Patricia has seen first-hand the desperate need for changes to our current social care system. Her widowed mother-in-law had no choice but to sell the home she'd made and lived in for 60 years to move into a care home.

"She wasn't eating properly and was leaving the front door wide open at night," says Patricia. "We knew she needed looking after and would have to move into a care home eventually, but she hated this, the idea of lost independence, wanting to stay in the home where she'd lived with her husband and brought up her children.

With free personal care we wouldn't have had to sell the house when we did and, with people looking after her at home, she could have stayed there as long as possible. Free personal care would be a huge help, especially for older people wanting to stay in their homes. It's so important for charities like Independent Age to campaign on behalf of older people in this way."

Margaret has had a similar first-hand experience, having cared for her husband Eddie for 12 years. She says that towards the end of his life it was costing them around £3,000 a month for support from private care.

"Free personal care should be part of the solution to fix the crisis in social care," she says. "The Independent Age petition sends a clear message about how many of us care about this issue."

With your support, Independent Age will continue to campaign for policy changes and for the government to provide free personal care for over-65s, allowing them to stay in their own homes for as long as possible. Help with daily tasks like washing and dressing should be available for those people who need it. Care costs in later life should not swallow up life savings or force homeowners to sell up at an especially vulnerable time in their lives. ■



**Join us!**

This is something we all want: the ability to feel independent for as long as our health allows. Your donations and campaigning are helping us keep up the fight for vulnerable older people now and in the future.

To keep up to date with our campaigns, sign up to the campaigns mailing list so you receive updates on our campaigns and ensure your voice is heard by the decision makers. You can sign up at [independentage.org/campaign-signup](https://independentage.org/campaign-signup) to find out more.

# Call me!

How your donations are ensuring support is just a phone call away

**Heather Dickson** tells us about her role as an adviser and how over-65s are benefiting when they call the freephone number.

**H**eather is just one of our advisers who over-65s can call to get advice on a range of subjects, such as money, physical and mental health, and care.

"The staff working on the Independent Age helpline are the loveliest people I've met, but importantly, everyone cares," says Heather.

When Heather's grandmother was first diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, she lived in her own home. However, as her condition worsened, she moved in with Heather who became her carer, meaning Heather had to pause her nursing studies away from home because she wanted to spend as much time as possible with her grandmother. Over the same period, Heather started work in an assessment unit at a care home, establishing whether people were well enough to live independently again. It was during her time at the care home that Heather was injured

while helping a resident and found out her injury meant she could no longer pursue nursing as a career. Soon after, her grandmother died aged 79.

Devastated but undeterred, she sought out a new career and with luck found the perfect role at Independent Age. Having worked on the more practical side as a carer, she'd never considered the positive impact a single phone call could have for someone. "I'm speaking to everybody else's granddads and grannies, helping them with their queries and questions, and love knowing that I can brighten someone's day."

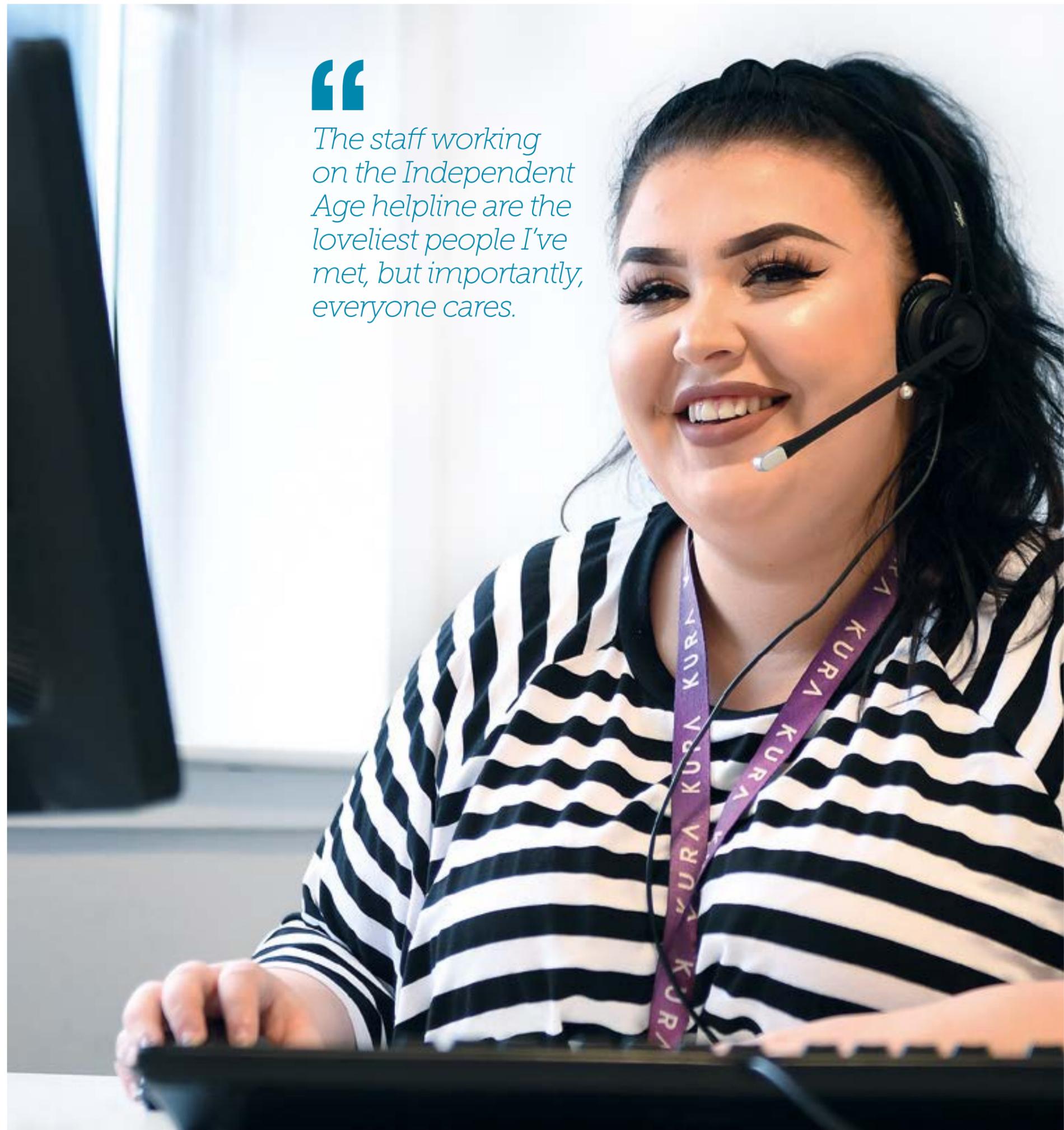
When her mum initially heard about the job, she even said: "Your gran sent that job to you", truly believing that her grandmother knew what she would like and that this would be something she would love.

Heather describes the best thing about her job as being the connection she makes with the people who call the helpline. It brings back fond memories of her close relationship with her late grandmother. ■

**i** Thanks to your donations, our helpline is open six days a week, Mondays to Fridays 8.30am to 6.30pm, and Saturdays 9am to 1pm. Over-65s can call **0800 319 6789** or email [advice@independentage.org](mailto:advice@independentage.org). Visit [independentage.org/get-support/call-helpline](https://www.independentage.org/get-support/call-helpline) to find out more.

“

The staff working on the Independent Age helpline are the loveliest people I've met, but importantly, everyone cares.



“

*It's always been important for me to stay independent.*



## Recharging my life

The power of good advice

*Stanley called our helpline and received life-changing advice, allowing him to regain the freedom to leave his flat on his terms – lifting his feelings of despair.*

“When I looked at my electric wheelchair in the corner of the room, all I felt was frustration. I'd see that the weather was nice, my wheelchair sat there not being used and my only option was to struggle to get to the supermarket on the bus. I've just spent so much time worrying about the money it will cost to run and I dreaded charging it, because my electricity bill would go up and I just couldn't afford it.

Now things are completely different. I can go all the way to the supermarket in my wheelchair, straight from my front door into the shop and out again, and I don't have to worry about a thing.

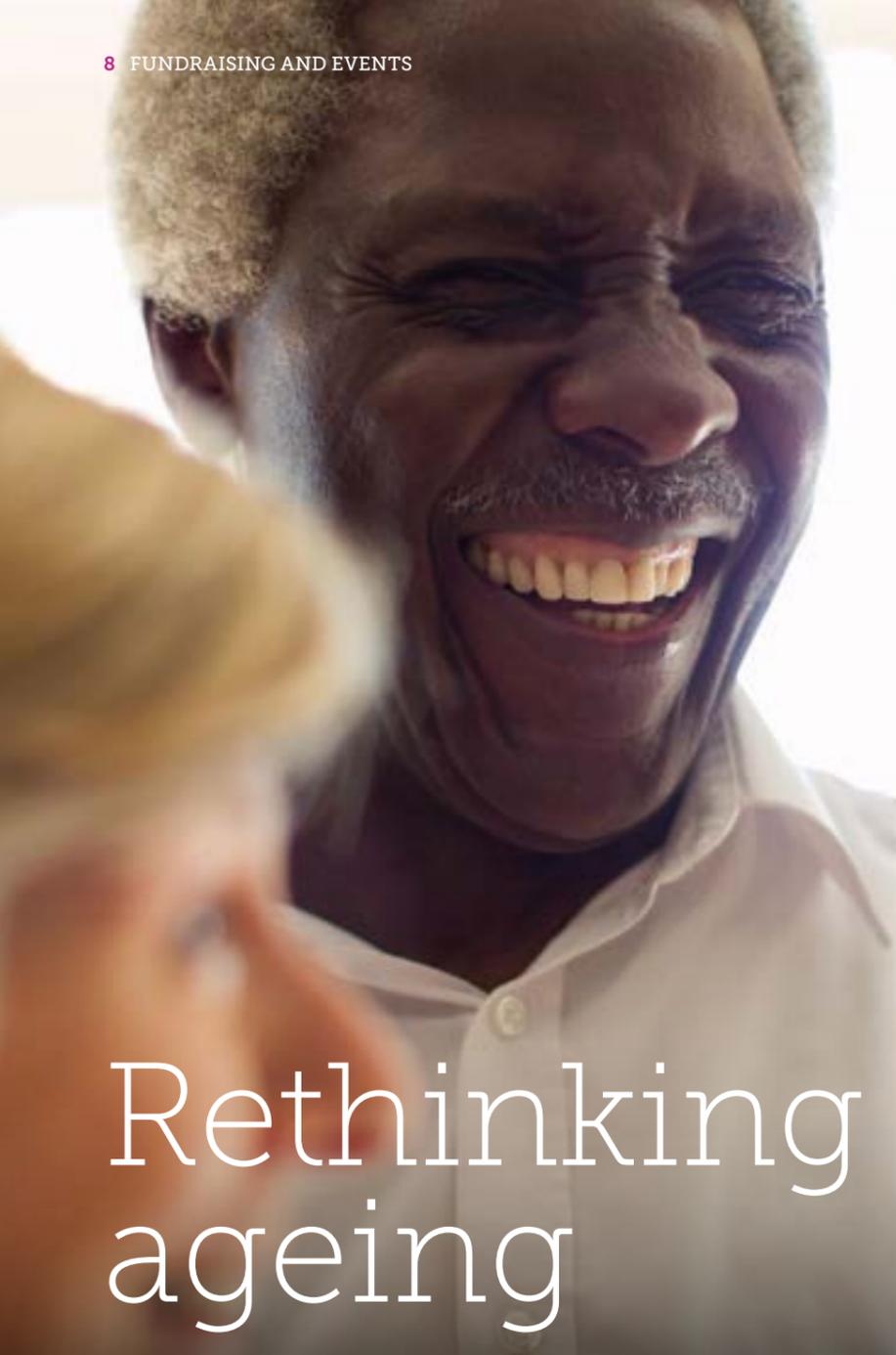
I'm 88, I used to be really healthy. When I was 60, I was going to the gym and exercising like a man of 40, but when your health tapers away all of a sudden, it makes you feel like a failure.

I had to have all sorts of tests and examinations done, where no one seemed to be able to tell me what was going on. When I finally found out, there was actually quite a lot wrong with me: I had bowel cancer and I still live with heart and lung problems. When you've been healthy all your life, it's difficult to come to terms with it all.

It's always been important for me to stay independent. Luckily, I heard about Independent Age and was able to speak to a helpline adviser. He asked me a lot of questions and told me I might be eligible for Attendance Allowance. When I applied I found out I could get another £58 a week – and I was paying too much council tax and not getting enough housing benefit!

Then I received a £480 lump sum – a refund for the extra housing benefit I'd paid. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw that letter. All of this comes to a considerable amount of money and it's no exaggeration to say that it's changed my life. Now I'm saving up for a better chair. This one's okay and can get me around, but a newer one would give me a bit more speed. It will be 'get out of my way – Stan's coming through!'

I have a lot of blessings in my life and you've done wonders for me. I hope you raise a lot more money so your helpline can help other people too. ■



# Rethinking ageing

*It's time to value everyone's contribution, whatever their age.*

“  
*Let's start a revolution and turn age on its head.*”

These are unprecedented times. Birth rates are falling and more of us are living longer than ever before. And, the challenges this huge demographic shift brings to our society will only continue to intensify.

Our NHS and care services cannot cope, and inequality and poverty in later life are on the rise. Many people today live in fear of a future that will bring only age discrimination, loneliness and a lack of support.

The NHS and wider public services simply aren't designed to cater to

the needs of people living longer. These services are failing those who are most vulnerable.

If someone has contributed through National Insurance and tax all their working life, surely it's wrong to deny them the help they need to get out of the house or enjoy a cooked meal in later life?

One of the biggest problems is that older people are viewed as a burden, rather than an untapped asset. We're ignoring a vast resource of skills, knowledge and expertise because of outdated prejudices that judge ability purely by age.

Being able to contribute to society should be based on the desire and ability of each individual, whatever their age. Through reskilling and lifelong learning, combined with greater flexibility and equality in jobs, we need to find ways to support people to continue contributing into their later years, on their own terms.

It's up to all of us to see the value in ageing. The big issues affecting older people are the same affecting all generations – money, housing, transport, health, discrimination and loneliness. We face similar problems, so let's fight the same causes, together.

As one of the wealthiest nations on the planet, let's be judged by how we support each other at every stage of life. Let's start a revolution and turn age on its head. ■



## EVENTS



20 June 2020

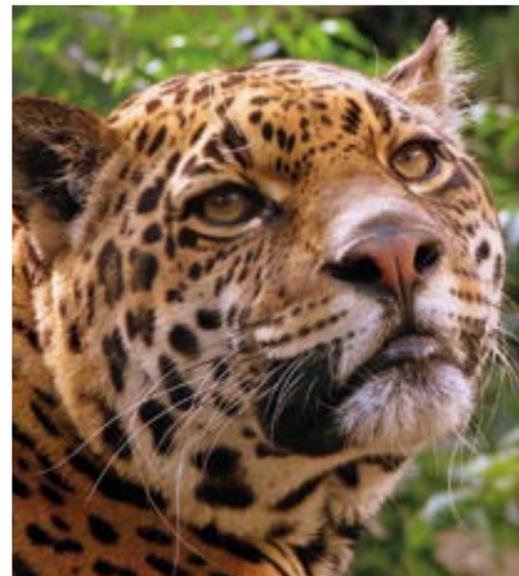
### Why not conquer the highest peak in Wales?

It's a challenge by day but even more of an achievement by night: our Snowdon Night Hike is one not to miss. Standing at the summit by moonlight will be an unforgettable, once-in-a-lifetime experience. As you descend, you'll see the sunrise from the mountain slopes and witness the spectacular landscape of Snowdonia opening up before your eyes.



Our base for this challenge is a friendly hotel at the foot of Snowdon, which makes for a comfortable, sociable start to the challenge. After a late, energy-fuelling dinner and a full briefing, you will set off with marshals and lit markers along the route to help navigate our ascent and descent. At the end of the hike, the group will gather back in the warmth of the hotel to mark the achievement with a big celebration breakfast! Join as an individual or as a team. Places are currently available with a £35 registration fee and £300 minimum sponsorship per person.

Go to [independentage.org](https://independentage.org) to register for your place or email [events@independentage.org](mailto:events@independentage.org) for more details.



## Legacy Events

21 April 2020

The Birmingham Botanical Gardens

19 May 2020

Edinburgh Zoo



At our Legacy Events, you'll hear all about what we're doing to tackle the problems that thousands of older people face today, particularly the isolation and loneliness that blight so many lives. Our speakers include one of our volunteers, a service user, as well as Independent Age staff (Morgan Vine, Samantha Reid and a member of the Wellbeing team).

Your generous support for our work shows that you care deeply about how older people are treated in our society. That's why we'd love you to join us for this important event. And you're welcome to bring a guest, too.

One of the most important topics at our event will be how to fund vital services for older people in the years ahead. We will show you just how important gifts in wills are to our work, and the many life-changing projects that these extra special gifts make possible.

To register your interest for these or any future events, please call **020 7605 4223** or email [supporters@independentage.org](mailto:supporters@independentage.org)



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**Friday Flutter**  
Independent Age  
**Lottery**

£1 could win a fortune every week!

26

FROM JUST  
**£1**  
A WEEK

2

# £1 could turn into £20,000 every Friday!

Having a little flutter in the **Friday Flutter Independent Age Lottery** can be incredibly rewarding.

Not only could you win up to **£20,000** every Friday, you'll also be helping to transform the lives of older people across the UK.

**It's definitely worth a flutter!**

**2nd Prize**  
**£1,000**  
if you match 5 numbers

**1st Prize**  
**£20,000**  
if you match 6 numbers

10 guaranteed prizes of a  
**£25**  
M&S voucher

**Play now at**  
[weeklylottery.org.uk/independentage](http://weeklylottery.org.uk/independentage)  
or call our Lottery Helpline on **0330 002 0057**

For full terms and conditions, please visit [weeklylottery.org.uk/independentage](http://weeklylottery.org.uk/independentage) or call the Lottery Helpline on 0330 002 0057. Registered Charity number 210729 (England & Wales), SC047184 (Scotland).



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