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.

Invalids at Home had the following objects:

“To make grants of money to beneficiaries 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.

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.

Invalids at Home distributed £750,000 in grants to over 11,000 people of all ages.

Lord Jack Ashley, as an MP in the mid 1960’s and Patron of Invalids at Home (until his death in 2013), 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.

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.

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 Lynx Road, Harrow, NW London. This move was made possible by the most welcome gift of a legacy.

In 2016 Independence 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.

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.

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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.