



IA UPDATE



May 2025

Welcome

Just a month on from our Information Day and we're already planning the next! Read on for more details about our 70th anniversary event, and please save the date. We'll release more information as soon as we can.

Our May round-up covers events from around the network, volunteering news and more. Don't forget, we love hearing from you too so please get in touch, whether it's to share your story, give us feedback or let us know about your events: marketing@iasupport.org

Plans for IA Information Day, 25 April 2026

Preparations are under way for the charity's 70th anniversary milestone next year, which will be officially celebrated at our Information Day on Saturday 25 April, following the AGM on 24 April (for company law members and board members only).

We're creating yet another packed programme for this special platinum anniversary, so watch this space! You can, of course, expect to be entertained and enlightened by subject matter experts on the topics that matter most.

Once the day's workshops and presentations are complete, we invite you to join us for our celebratory evening entertainment. Don't miss the chance to don your best bib and tucker for our black-tie gala dinner and live music!



Information Day 2026 will be held at Chesford Grange Hotel, Chesford Bridge, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2LD.

The historic manor house hotel is close to a host of attractions to help you make the most of your stay, including castles in Kenilworth and Warwick; Shakespearean theatre, history and heritage in Stratford-upon-Avon; museums, shopping and cathedrals in Coventry, not to mention miles of beautiful countryside to explore.

Date: AGM (for company law members and board members only): Friday 24 April, time tbc; Information Day: Saturday 25 April, time tbc.

Booking: Please spread the word and save the date(s) for now. We will release more details as soon as we can, and keep you informed through our usual channels, online and in print.

Information Day 2025 presentation videos ready to view

If you joined us for IA's Information Day in Manchester, you'll remember our brilliant line-up of speakers on the main stage. As in previous years, we recorded these presentations to share with those who were unable to attend, and are pleased to say the presentations are now ready to view on our website and YouTube channel:

Parastomal Hernia (Dominic Slade): https://youtu.be/Srz_zK-8EWs

Medication Matters (Uchu Meade): <https://youtu.be/8n0HJwuByH8>

Advancing SCN Services (Natasha Rolls): <https://youtu.be/mP7jcovJ8Pc>

Intestinal Failure – Building a National Service (Gordon Carlson): <https://youtu.be/u06dDNvFZT0>

Q&A including downloadable transcript: <https://youtu.be/eVRol8qCN9g>

Official reopening of Ruth Astles Centre at Birmingham's Heartlands Hospital



Birmingham IA members gathered alongside colorectal nurse specialists at Heartlands Hospital on 13 May to celebrate the reopening of the Ruth Astles Centre, a dedicated hub for local ostomists and internal pouch patients.

The nurses dealt bravely last year with the news that they were being moved from the original site within the hospital, which had been created thanks to the legacy of Birmingham IA member Ruth Astles. In her will, Ruth left specific instructions for a dedicated stoma care space to be built, and the project was overseen by the late Mary Cotterill, a stoma nurse who cared for Ruth and who was committed to IA.

When the staff were forced to move into alternative accommodation at the hospital, the SCN team sprang into action and created a warm, welcoming space where ostomists can be treated with privacy.

Birmingham group's former chair Mike Jameson did the honours of cutting the red ribbon, and the occasion saw plenty of cake, coffee and smiles, and a few tearful moments during speeches.

A positive future lies ahead in this new location, with the knowledge that the nursing team have done Ruth and Mary proud.



Birmingham IA Information Day

Birmingham IA's annual Information Day took place at the city's Conference & Events Centre near New Street station on 17 May, bringing together healthcare professionals, subject matter experts and product representatives to provide holistic advice and support to attendees. The event, sponsored by Fittleworth, was live streamed.



There was much to learn during the programme of talks presented by Dietitian Sophie Turigel, Business Psychologist Sam Wilkinson Lee, IA trustee Scott Clifford, Pharmacist Uchu Meade and Colorectal Surgeon Melissa Cunha. The audience showed their appreciation for topics such as working with a disability, counselling, medicine, and nutrition, by posing some interesting questions for the experts after each talk.

Information Day wouldn't be complete without a raffle, and winners were generously gifted deluxe hampers, courtesy of Moonpig (shown above). Birmingham IA's former chair Mike Jameson commented that they were the best prizes the group had ever received.

If attendees have yet to provide feedback about the event, please contact the organiser: maggie.butler@iasupport.org or call 07764 942467.

Save the date: Pouch Information Day, 20 September 2025

This year's Pouch Information Day will be held on Saturday 20 September at the Novotel, Broad Street, Birmingham B1 2HT. The event will run from 10am (coffee and registration from 9am) until 4pm and cover 'all things pouch'.

Join us to ask any burning questions you have in an informal setting, and to discuss observations and experiences with fellow 'pouchies' and would-be pouchies, surgeons and nurses. We'll also be assisted on the day by a dietitian, a psychologist, and pharmacist. Visit pouch.iasupport.org/pouchday25 to book your place.

Fundraiser Ellie Scrivens makes every step count for IA

In April, Ellie Scrivens walked and ran 300 miles to raise money for IA, and was thrilled to have smashed her target, raising £580 to date. Ellie said: “IA funded me to have clinical Pilates sessions before my operation to help me strengthen my core and recover quicker. They also provided me with loads of information. They are truly wonderful and do so much for many others!” **Ellie’s Just Giving page is still live if you wish to donate.**



Bruce Willoughby

Pouch power: GP Bruce Willoughby runs from Land’s End to John O’Groats to raise funds for IA

The best of luck and a huge thank you to Dr Bruce Willoughby, the North Yorkshire GP who lives with an internal pouch and is bravely taking on a huge sponsored challenge to raise funds for IA.

On 31 May, 55-year-old Bruce will be setting off from Land’s End to run to John O’Groats (the LEJOG ultramarathon), covering the 1,031-mile distance at an average of 33 miles per day with just one rest day a week. The 31 running days will see him cross England, Wales and Scotland, covering major sections of Britain’s most famous long-distance paths including the South West Coast Path, Wye Valley Walk, Offa’s Dyke, Clyde Walkway, the entirety of the West Highland Way and the Great Glen Way.

But what sets Bruce apart isn’t just the scale of the challenge – it’s that he’ll be doing it with an internal pouch, following the life-saving operation that removed his colon when he was just 26. Bruce said: “I’ve rarely spoken about my pouch, even to colleagues. But I’ve realised that having a pouch is my superpower – it’s made me more empathetic, more resilient, and now, more determined than ever to prove that nothing has to hold you back.”

If you'd like to sponsor Bruce, please visit: www.justgiving.com/team/brucelepetitjog

Organisers, left to right: Sharon, Andrea and Carmen



Birmingham Children’s Hospital fashion show

On 17 May, Birmingham Children’s Hospital (BCH) became a fashion hub for a day, when ostomate patients took to the catwalk to showcase a range of fun, adaptive designs specially created by a team of talented volunteers from industry and the local community. The children themselves steered the styling, with the central theme being the 1980s, reimagining the bold outfits of the era.



Mrs Andrea Jester, Consultant Plastic Surgeon at BCH, organised the show with fashion consultants Carmen Burkett and Sharon Concannon. Andrea said: “At the hospital, we recognised that children with certain disabilities or body changes are not able to buy fashionable clothing on the high street, so we created this show to give our patients the opportunity to not only wear but help create their own designs: high end fashion with a twist.”

A garment-fitting day in April was a chance for the children to try on their outfits and have any alterations made before the big day. Twelve-year-old ostomate Evie-Rose, poster girl for the event, said she was confident about the show – her second time on the catwalk – and “very happy” with her choice.

The show was held in aid of the hospital's charity and has raised £12,000 to date. The event hosted a number of ostomy-related exhibitors and provided an opportunity for children, parents and guardians to come together, with some 20 children aged five to 18 strutting their stuff. Other contributors included groups who work with children with disabilities in performing arts.





IA Group News from Roy Bustin, Group Relationship Lead

It's been a pleasure to be able to meet virtually with members across the UK over the last few weeks. We've been busy hosting online meetings for members in Greater London West, East London & South Essex, South East London & West Kent, Avon, Cornwall and South Yorkshire. Thank you to everybody involved in these conversations. We have such a supportive and caring community at IA, and I think these meetings really showed just how important it is to be able to connect with each other.

Good progress is being made to recruit new volunteers in areas where we have had dormant groups. I am looking forward to working with them so that we can deliver more regular activities in local communities. Look out for further updates from your local group in due course.

Next week marks Volunteers' Week (2-8 June) and we will be hosting an online volunteer network meeting at 12.30pm on Monday 2 June. All current volunteers are welcome. We will also be holding in-person meetings for members in North London, Kent and Sussex throughout the week.

Finally, we will be having another 'Introduction to Volunteering with IA' session online at 7pm on 5 June. This session is suitable for anybody who isn't currently volunteering with us but would like to find out more.

We've had some good feedback following the launch of our Volunteering in Action project and thank you to those groups that have been involved in making an impact locally. Check out the upcoming actions below to see how you can get involved.

Volunteering in Action: plans for June/July

In recent communication with IA groups, we set out plans to work more closely with our group network and encourage volunteers to take specific actions throughout the year in order to help us better connect with members and communities across the UK. These actions are designed to be flexible, with a variable time commitment to suit your personal circumstances.

You may choose to get involved with all the actions, or select one(s) you have a particular interest in.

National Patient Participation Week

31 May to 6 June 2025

This is an annual event that aims to raise awareness about the value of patient participation and engagement in healthcare.

The action: To contact a Patient Participation Group in your group's area and send literature about IA's One2One Support offer.

Volunteers' Week

2 – 8 June 2025

This is a great opportunity to promote the value of volunteering and raise awareness of IA locally. There is also the potential to recruit new volunteers to your group.

The action: To reach out to your local Volunteer Centre/ CVS to see what events are happening during the week. Aim to attend at least one event. You can find details of your local organisation using this [map](#).



Thank You Day

6 July 2025

This is a special occasion to express gratitude and appreciation towards the people who have made a difference in our lives. It's a day to celebrate the goodness of humanity and to acknowledge the efforts and contributions of those around us.

The action: To say "thank you"! We want to know who your group is thanking, whether it be those on the committee, group members, friends, family, colleagues or healthcare professionals. We will then share your comments on the day through our social media channels.