

Mental Health Awareness Week: Jayn's story

May 2024

Sanctuary Supported Living's retirement communities and supported housing services are proud to support Mental Health Awareness Week (13-19 May), highlighting the importance of good mental health for all. To mark this year's Mental Health Awareness Week, Baird



Lodge resident Jayn has shared what life is like for her since moving to a retirement community, and how she keeps her mind and body active.

In 2017, 70-year-old Jayn semi-retired and moved from London to Littleport, near Ely in Cambridgeshire, to be closer to family. After fully retiring, she then moved to Sanctuary Supported Living's Baird Lodge in late 2022, where she has now lived for over 18 months. Baird Lodge provides one-bedroom apartments with onsite facilities for people aged 55+, and those with long-term care needs.

Jayn has now fully settled into the place she calls her forever home. As well as seeing friends and catching up with her neighbours at Baird Lodge, she has a busy social life, and enjoys spending time with her grandsons, who visit her new home regularly. She is also a big fan of the dance group Diversity, and in particular, the leader, Ashley Banjo, as she admires his positive 'See it, Believe it, Achieve it' approach to life. She has already seen the group perform twice before, and will be watching them again this year.

This year's theme for Mental Health Awareness Week, which is run by the Mental Health Foundation, is 'movement: moving more for our mental health' and Jayn is a great example of how



keeping active, whether it's taking a small moment for movement, or achieving a bigger fitness goal, can give both your mind and your body a boost.

Since the start of 2021, she has walked two miles a day, at least six days a week, stepping out for around half an hour a day, come rain or shine, and she feels that - combined with having a home that meets her needs and where she never feels alone - it has done wonders for both her physical and mental health.

Not only that, but she is determined keep pushing herself, doing what she loves, and living life to the fullest - including piloting a light aircraft and a glider, and recently doing an indoor skydive for her 70th birthday. She has always loved flying, and she has also been in a helicopter, a microlight, and a hot air balloon, as well as parascending, which involves flying with a parachute.

Jayn has also started playing an active role in her new community. Sanctuary encourages residents to get involved in services and have input into how they're run – this includes the 'Family and Friends Test'. By being a Family and Friends Test assessor, Jayn gets to visit other services, meet other residents and members of staff, and report back on what's going well, and where there are areas for improvement. When she's not busy getting out and about, meeting new people, or defying gravity, Jayn enjoys relaxing at home with her guilty pleasure – a box set of Grey's Anatomy!

Jayn says: "Since moving here, I've felt very safe and supported. The staff are very professional and it's great to be part of such a lovely, friendly community – everyone made me feel very welcome when I moved in and there's always someone to talk to, so it's never lonely. Living in a retirement community means that I can live as independently as I want and keep being active. I can have easy contact with others, while knowing that I have a home that will also be suitable for me in the long-term, where I can get support later on, if I need it.

Continued...



NEWS story



My family and friends mean the world to me, and it's nice to be closer to them, and be able to go out and enjoy the local area together, but I always look forward to coming back to Baird Lodge, and I feel very fortunate to call it home."

As well as retirement communities, Sanctuary Supported Living also provides accommodation with personalised support for people with learning or physical disabilities, mental health needs, and homeless young people and adults. To find out more about Sanctuary Supported Living's services, see the latest news or find a service near you.

