

"Now I know that there are people who think and care about me..."

Stories of impact



Galsina is from Selydove, Donetsk region. She has taken great pleasure in working for the post office all her life. Aged 68 and with frail health she recalls those years with nostalgia. The kidney and joint disease that followed her diabetes has made it hard for her to move around. After the death of her husband, two cats have been her most loyal companions in an otherwise scary world. "I was not ready for this, I didn't know how to behave. I hope my health doesn't completely let me down. And the pension is barely enough for anything," Galsina says about the new reality that the full-scale invasion has brought. Faced with so many things beyond her control, she finds solace in the regular visits of the HelpAge social care worker: "I realized that they will not leave me all alone. Especially in these dangerous times, **it's important to feel cared for.**" Now Galsina knows what she can do to counter the dangers around her: "The social care worker taught me what do when I hear a hum or a loud explosion. We identified the safest, "two-wall" areas for shelter in my apartment. It gives a sense of security. I don't feel so helpless anymore."



75-year-old **Halyna** lives in Selydove, Donetsk region. Having been active and creative her whole life, the limited mobility from an old spinal trauma has been an adjustment. The HelpAge social care worker that regularly visits her has helped her cope with increasing loneliness as most people have left the village. At the same time, the walker that she received means more independence and safety to move around.

76-year-old **Nataliia** is a picture of resilience. Finding it hard to adjust to life in displacement, she came back to her native Selydove despite the raging war. Nataliia has had a hard life: The tragedy of losing her son severely aggravated her health. Working with HelpAge's social care workers has been a source of hope and support. "Now I don't feel so lonely. **They visit me, provide assistance and moral and information support.** I know I can call them anytime. And of course, I received the walker that is so necessary for me to move around," Nataliia says.



Larisa, 81, lives alone in her home in Zaporizhzhia. Widowed at an early age, she has raised her children and grandchildren all by herself. They have since moved abroad. Having mobility issues after the two strokes she has suffered, life under war is especially challenging for Larisa. "The frontline is very close. I'm worried about the sounds of shelling, explosions, and hits. It's very scary. And because of this, I go out less and less. Even going to the bench in front of my building is a challenge for me," she explains. Having regular visits from social care workers has alleviated some of her anxiety. "As an older person, you sometimes think no one needs you. My children and grandchildren are abroad, I'm all alone here. **Now I know that there are people who think and care about me.**"



Nina, 69, is a resident of Novohrodivka, a village in the Donetsk region that continues to bear the brunt of Russia's full-scale invasion. Nina is not unfamiliar with the war – her family has already suffered in World War II. But despite the hardships, she was able to build a peaceful life with her husband and two sons. Until the war came again. In April 2022, Nina's property was hit by a missile. While she survived miraculously intact, most of what she had worked for her whole life, was destroyed: The missile took out windows and doors and practically split her house in two. Since the death of her husband a few years ago and the departure of her sons to safer areas after the war, Nina lives alone. HelpAge's social care worker's visits have been detrimental to her psychological condition. It's knowing that she will not be left alone and can count on help is what helps her cope with the reality of war, she says.



Community Safe Spaces have become a place where older people engage in various activities, receive psychosocial and information support, have health and creative sessions.