



fittleworth

Q3 2021

Reach Out

Hello!

What a busy few months it's been since our last newsletter! It feels like time is just flying by. There's been Freedom Day, some amazing weather, the Olympics, and most importantly the ability to reconnect with family and friends. We hope you have had a good summer.

Here at Fittleworth our phones have been running hot over the past few weeks. With restrictions lifting, orders have increased and with GPs being busier than ever it has sometimes taken longer to get your script. We recognise that you may have experienced a longer waiting time than usual when making a call to our customer service team. For anyone that has experienced a delay, we apologise for this and thank you for your patience. Be reassured though that we are doing all we can to make sure our team

is ready and able to take your call and process your orders. Providing a first class service to you remains our top priority.

On a different note, some of you may be thinking about holidays, either for this coming Christmas or for next year. So this might be a good time to remind you of our World Wide Assist program available to all Fittleworth clients. It provides emergency supplies in over 20+ popular destinations if you accidentally run out.

Well, that's it from me, enjoy the rest of our newsletter. We've got another article from the fabulous Sahara, advice on food, an introduction to our new service for people with spinal cord injuries, and as always, at the back if you'd like to email us with feedback or requests for what should be in the next newsletter.

Fittleworth Editor



What can I wear with an ostomy bag?

The first time I had an ileostomy, in 2007, I threw away all of my clothes. I bought joggers and baggy T-shirts, and I thought that's just how it had to be. I wore my bag over the waistband of my trousers, which obviously limited what I could wear, and all of my tops had to be a certain length so that the bottom didn't poke out.

Clothing wasn't something that the stoma nurse had initially mentioned, and I'd actually just assumed that I couldn't have anything over my stoma. She later revealed that I could have my bag under things, but high waisted options weren't a thing at the time, so actually, the waistband often made my bag stick out more at the top; meaning more baggy tops! I was so uncomfortable with myself and how I looked, so I spent the whole two years feeling that way until I had my stoma reversed.

Looking back, I always think that I should have been proud

Years later, in 2014, I had ileostomy number two. By this point, I knew many other people with IBD and ostomies from online support groups. I knew about the existence of ostomy underwear and waistbands. I did get some, but I rarely actually used them. You might be entitled to some ostomy underwear, waistbands, and support belts on prescription, so do check with your stoma nurse. I mainly stuck to wearing tighter vest tops underneath whatever I was wearing in the colder months. During the summer I wore tights over my bag, or skater style dresses.

My newest stoma was created in 2018. This time around, I've actually just stuck with standard cotton underwear to wear over my bag. I did buy some ostomy underwear, but I found the elasticated waists on some of them quite uncomfortable, and they often pulled me in giving the appearance of belly rolls where there are none. I do know that some people swear by certain brands of ostomy underwear, so it could be the fact that I'm pretty short, so maybe the waistband just sits in the wrong place. Others were just too thick, and made me sweaty.

My daily wear underwear is from M&S. They're full briefs with a soft lace waistband (no rolls), and they cover the majority of my bag and keep it nice and flat. Most importantly, they're super comfortable! I feel like I can literally wear anything I want over them! I regularly wear leggings, which are obviously tight. I just have to be mindful that I may need to empty more when I'm out and about because the bag is squished.

I do feel much more comfortable in high waisted bottoms, simply because the bag has plenty of room then. I find lower waistbands sometimes sit in the wrong place, and output can get stuck at the top of the bag, above the waistband. Same with underwear!

At this point, I don't actually mind my ostomy bag being on show. Everyone I know is aware that it's there, and strangers don't matter. I would happily educate anyone that asked about it, but so far, no one actually has.

There's quite a lot of ostomy underwear, swimwear, and clothing companies now. I can't really personally recommend any, because as mentioned above, I've actually found that M&S full briefs allow me to wear whatever I want, so I haven't needed to try any adapted clothing either. That said, you might find something that really suits you. I would definitely advise just buying one item to try first, as I wasted a lot of money on underwear that I didn't wear. Bag covers are also widely available. I personally like StomaStyle, as Lisa creates the bag covers for your specific bag, so they fit perfectly!

The only thing that **really** matters is that you are comfortable.

Some companies to check out:

CUI wear

Comfizz

Vanilla Blush

White Rose Collection

Chums

Aura Clothing

I Am Denim



Sahara Fleetwood-Beresford

Spinal Cord Injury and The Power of Peers

Spinal cord injury can have a devastating effect on one's life. The benefits of being able to connect with and learn from others who share similar circumstances are immeasurable.

There are spinal cord injury survivors who have already faced the uncertainties you face and the challenges you meet every day. They are willing to share what they've learned in hopes of making your own transition to a life with an SCI as smooth as possible. Yes – doctors, nurses and therapists do some of this work, too. But the power of a peer mentor with whom you can connect is that you both see the world through the eyes of someone who's life has been forever altered by spinal cord injury.

Because peer mentors have been through what you are going through, they are good listeners. They understand the difficulties you face physically and emotionally. They empathise with the anger or frustration you may be experiencing because they've been there, too. In sharing their own experiences, a peer mentor can help you learn how to confront your own feelings, emotions and difficulties in the critical time after your injury has occurred.

Living your own healthiest life, even with a spinal cord injury, is key to your happiness and longevity. However, as a new spinal cord injury sufferer, you may not have been informed how or where to remain active with your unique condition. Again, leaning on their own knowledge and experience, a peer mentor can help you find exercise facilities, guide you through doctor recommended exercises or even introduce you to activities such as tennis, basketball or other sports that you may not have thought possible due to your injury.

One thing to bear in mind is that every peer mentor or peer mentoring relationship is different. Some may be solely in person. Others may be over the phone or online. Others yet may be a mixture of all three. The important thing is to connect with a peer mentor with whom you feel "a good fit". In addition to finding a mentor who is reliable, trustworthy and knowledgeable, you should seek someone who encourages your active participation in the relationship and understands the importance of you setting goals as part of your rehabilitation process.

Call 0800 373 858 or visit kmtnavigator.co.uk for more information

Reaching Dreams

Navigator™ Patient Support Service from Fittleworth offers personal assistance and resources all from one website

1:1 support from a trained, personal Navigator,* who

- Helps people with an SCI navigate to the life they want to live
- Provides interaction with a caring, discreet expert
- Focuses on quality of life, providing guidance, needed tools, and solutions

Access to a Navigator Resource Hub

- Educational and motivational articles and blogs on topics from work to sexuality
- Peer-to-peer support; therapy and counseling resources; home modification resources; sources of financial support; and much more

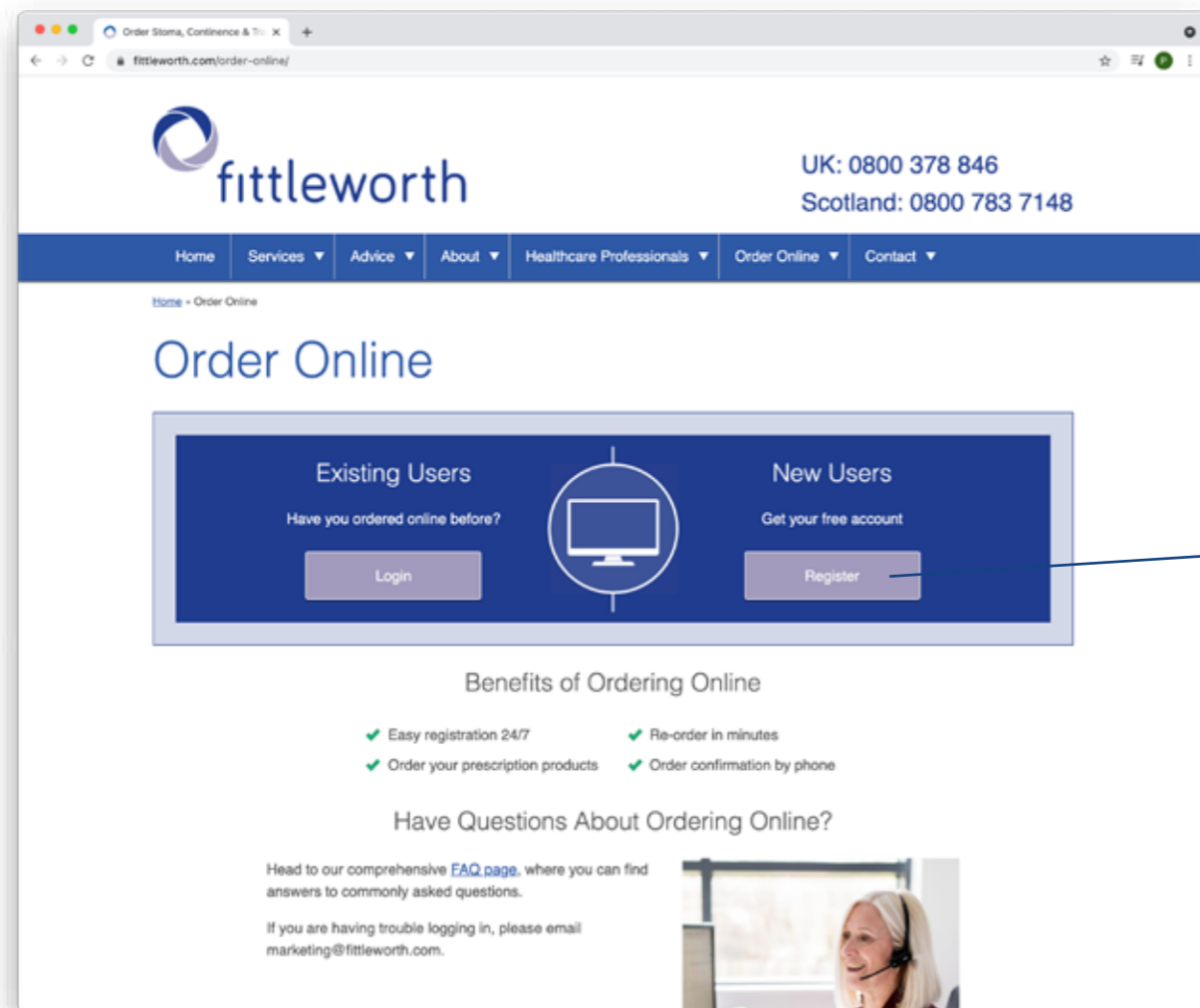
Call 0800 373 858 or visit kmtnavigator.co.uk for more information

*Available to Fittleworth customers only.



Ordering Online, an easy guide

Visit
www.fittleworth.com/order-online



[Click here to register](#)

Top tips

1. If you forget your password and reset or register, make sure you check your "Spam" for the email
2. Your user name will be your email address
3. If you can't find a product or one is missing email supportme@fittleworth.com
4. We have a great FAQ page, visit for more top tips!
www.fittleworth.com/order-online/ordering-online-faqs

Events coming up around the country

1st – 30th September

Colostomy UK are going to 'Step up for stomas' this September and they'd love you to join them! You're inviting you to walk, run, jog, skip, roll, crawl or hop 160,000 steps in the month of September to help you get more active, and to raise funds to help Colostomy UK to better support ostomates and those who care for them.

Sign up at: <https://www.colostomyuk.org/active-ostomates/step-up-for-stomas/>

Empowering **your journey** with a stoma!



I N V I T A T I O N

Agenda:

- Everyday hints & tips
- Nutritional advice
- Exercise for Healthy You
- My ostomy journey – Liam Manning
- My ostomy gave me POWER – Gill Castle



Register TODAY to secure your place

2pm
4th September



2pm
16th September



6pm
9th September



2pm
25th September



We hope you can join us

Secure Start

Together with
 Hollister |  dansac

Colostomy UK are going to
'Step up for stomas' this
September and we'd love
you to join us!

There are 160,000 people living with a stoma in the UK and we're asking you to take a step for every single one of them.

You could complete the challenge by walking, running, hopping or even swimming, not only will it help you get more active but you'll also be raising funds to help us better support ostomates and those who care for them.

For more details or to sign up visit :

<https://www.colostomyuk.org/active-ostomates/step-up-for-stomas/>



This **September**

We are a national charity that SUPPORTS and EMPOWERS people living with a stoma.
Call our stoma helpline for advice: **0800 328 4257**

What We Offer Complimentary Items



Disposable Bags
(Included in every order)



Dry Wipes, for use with soap and water
(Included in every order)



Fittleworth Wet Wipes



Wash Bag



Small Wash Bag



Toilet Card



100ml Hand Sanitising Gel



Fittleworth Mirror



Radar Key

Call volume update from Customer Service

As lockdown restrictions are changing across the UK this month, we wanted to advise you of how Fittleworth is working to provide you with the service and support you need.

As restrictions have been easing in the last few months we have been experiencing more calls to our Customer Service Team than ever before. On some days we have seen similar numbers to Christmas Eve (when we tend to get the highest number of calls from our clients). As you and others start to head out more often and demand for supplies increases, we are looking to ensure that you have the products you need, when you need them.

The increased COVID-19 infection rates seen across the UK has also at times had an impact on our Customer Service as we ensure that our Advisors are allowed to self-isolate should they receive NHS App notifications.

With this in mind we want to give you the option to request a call back should you experience our phone lines being busier than usual. You can now:

1. Email us at caring@fittleworth.com
2. Message us on Facebook @FittleworthMedical

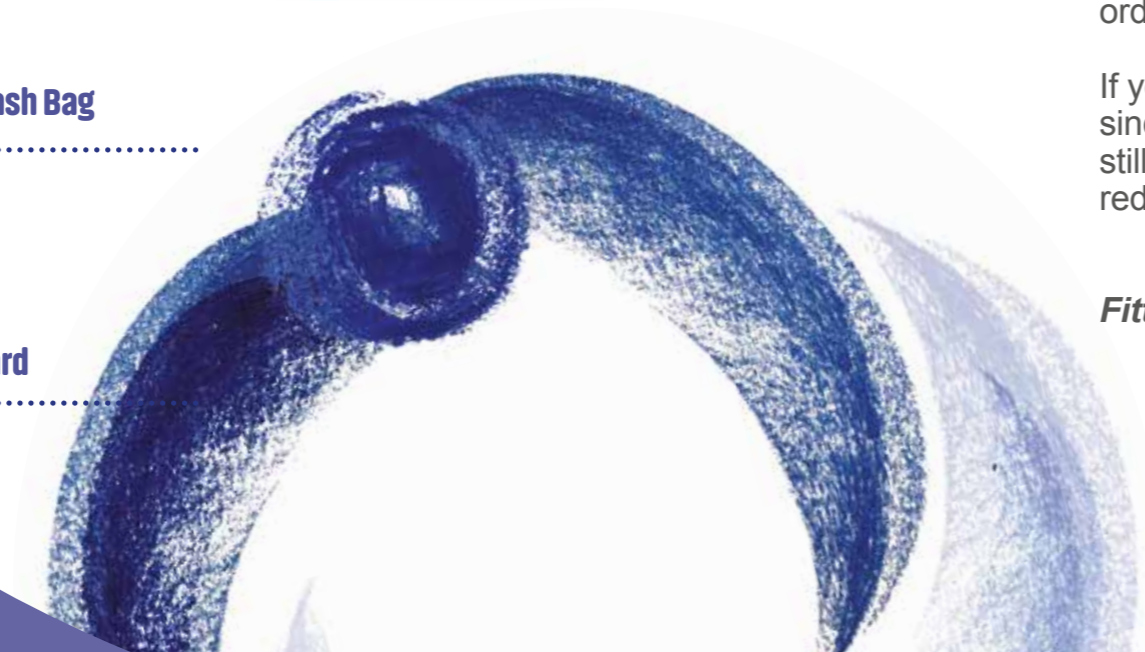
Please leave us a contact number and reason for your call and we will call you back as soon as possible.

We know how frustrating it can be waiting in a queue on the phone, so this will be a helpful way for you to ensure you get a resolution quickly.

In addition to this, with extra orders being requested, the pressure on your GP is now increasing. With this in mind we encourage you to place your orders a little earlier with us. An extra week's notice will give your GP and us the time to ensure you get your order on the date you need it.

If you have been experiencing a slightly longer call waiting time please accept our sincere apologies and gratitude for your patience. Please also be assured, we are still very secure in our supply of stock and ability to deliver. We look forward to calls reducing to normal levels as client orders level out.

Fittleworth Customer Services



Make your voice heard

Become an Independent Age campaigner



By becoming an Independent Age campaigner, you join a community of people who are working together to create a better society for older people. Suzanne, one of our valued campaigners, explains our campaigning much better than I ever could:



Independent Age gives you lots of different ways of campaigning. It can be as simple as sending an email or signing a petition or you can be more involved. You have the choice to be as involved as you want to be, they've got real breadth in their community.

Suzanne

As Suzanne says, our job is to offer our amazing campaigners all the tools they need so that together, we can create change for older people. Our campaigns currently focus on bereavement support, poverty in later life and access to treatment. Together, we focus on these key issues to help create a better society for older people. Whether it's taking part in our online actions like signing a petition and writing to your MP or campaigning in your community, there are so many ways that you can get involved and help create a better society for older people.

Sign up to be an Independent Age campaigner here:
campaigns.independentage.org/signup-fw



Independent Age is a national older people's charity and one of Fittleworth's charity partners. Campaigns Officer Ollie Steadman explains why you should join our campaigns community.

At Independent Age, we campaign so that we all have the opportunity to grow older with dignity, choice and purpose. As a campaigns community of more than 15,000 people we work to improve the systems that older people and their families rely on. We share our stories and experiences directly with decision makers and speak out about the issues that matter to us.



Would you be interested in participating in MS research?

Sign up by emailing us at supportme@fittleworth.com

facebook

Having a stoma is a life changing event no one can prepare you for.

The good news is you're not alone and so, Fittleworth has set up a private Facebook group with only other ostomates. A safe place to ask questions, share your thoughts or just watch what others have to say.

Visit our Fittleworth Facebook page today - [@Fittleworthmedical](#)



simple steps Event

Day-to-day life with a stoma presents many challenges, but exercise doesn't have to be one of them.

The Simple Steps program was designed to support re-building core strength & mobility.

We are excited to offer a limited number of places to ostomates who would like to attend a personalised tuition by an accredited physiotherapist.

Venue: Champneys Forest Mere (Liphook, Hampshire)
Date: 23rd September
Time: 11am - 3.30pm

Lunch and refreshments will be provided on the day from the Fittleworth Ostomates Kitchen recipes

BOOK NOW

for free by emailing supportme@fittleworth.com or call **07887 627534**

LIMITED SPACES

Follow us on Twitter & Facebook:



Share your thoughts

We always want to ensure we're bringing you useful and interesting information. If you have any feedback on our latest newsletter that you'd like to share, or thoughts about what you'd like to see included in the next, let us know at supportme@fittleworth.com.



Can we help?

Please let us know if there is anything we can do to support you. If there is something urgent, here's how you can get hold of us:

Contact Customer Service now on freephone

UK: **0800 378 846**

Scotland: **0800 783 7148**

Lines open

Monday to Friday, 8am-8pm

Saturday, 9am-1pm

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caring@fittleworth.com

www.fittleworth.com

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@FittleworthMed



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