

**Forward**

**Midlothian**

**Disabled People**

[www.forwardmid.org.uk](http://www.forwardmid.org.uk)



**Equality - Diversity - Inclusion**

## Winter Newsletter 2022

Welcome to YOUR annual winter newsletter from Forward Mid. The newsletters aim is to support you to keep well, be safe, be as active as you can and stay in touch with family, friends as well as what's happening in your community.



This newsletter is full of information on what support is available for disabled people during winter – for many the most challenging season of the year. Inside you'll find out about local organisations that can give you practical help – from saving money on your energy bills to keeping your home and bank balance safe. There are tips on how you can look after your own physical and mental health as well as how you can help yourself and your neighbours with an extensive list of emergency contact numbers.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of winter is keeping in contact with people regularly and safely, feeling the warmth that a good conversation can have. Bad weather can put paid to physically meeting people but, inside Forward Mid's Winter newsletter you'll find options that can overcome this barrier.

We wish you a healthy and safe winter. Be as active as you can be. Keep talking. Take advantage of the support that is available. Take care.

### Inside

<b>Dalkeith CAB Energy Project.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Preparing for Winter.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Winter in the Community.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Warm spaces.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Tips for keeping well.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Chair Exercise Workout.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Keeping Affordably Warm this Winter.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Extra Cash In your pocket.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Warm Home Discount Scheme.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>HcL Dial-A-Ride and Dial-A-Bus.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Severe Weather.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Winter Information.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>A message from Midlothian Council.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>After the Snow Comes the Thaw.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Forward Mid Disabled People's Directory.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Dalkeith &amp; Penicuik CAB.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>New ways to see your GP.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Sing it loud.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Jingle and Mingle.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Volunteer Midlothian – Connect Online.....</b>	<b>20</b>

# Dalkeith CAB Energy Project

Dalkeith CAB is a charity embedded in the local community with a dedicated team ready to assist with all your energy concerns. We offer free training and advice to consumers and front-line workers on: -

- Advocating on your behalf with your energy supplier over bills, tariffs and debt
- Getting the best tariff and / or switching suppliers
- Managing emergency situations and providing emergency funds
- Accessing grants for low income households such as the Warm Home Discount [conditions apply] – applications open now!
- Assisting with complaints
- Accessing grants for green energy solutions
- Accessing grants to pay off energy debt

We recently assisted a client with an application for Warm Home Discount and on checking her entitlement to benefits, found that she was missing out on Pension Credit, Council Tax Reduction and her Housing Benefit had been wrongly assessed by Midlothian Council for years. Getting pension credit also entitled her to a free TV license.



## Preparing for Winter

Steps you can take to get ready for winter. Just make a household plan and collect together the items for an emergency kit that may be essential for you and your family.

It is time to think about winter-proofing your home. Do you know what action to take if a water pipe bursts? Do you know where your stop valve is and how to turn it off? Do you know how to turn your electricity supply off at the mains?

If cold weather is forecast, and during a cold snap, keep your heating on at a low temperature to help prevent pipes from freezing.

Making your home energy efficient will make it cheaper and quicker to heat during cold weather. For further information, please call the Scottish Government's Home Energy Scotland Helpline on ☎ 0800 512 012.

Remember to check the terms of your household insurance policies to find out what cover you have for risks such as flood or storm damage or for the costs of temporary accommodation if your home is not habitable. Consider taking out insurance if you don't currently have any.

It is also important to not only prepare your home, but to prepare your body for winter! Preventative measures can be taken to avoid colds and flu. People aged over 65 years or those who have a medical condition can check with their local medical practice to get advice on a seasonal flu vaccination.

Keep a supply of remedies at home. Paracetamol, ibuprofen or aspirin all help to reduce raised temperatures and relieve the aches and pains associated with coughs, colds and flu. Many cold and flu remedies already contain paracetamol, ibuprofen or aspirin. Using several products together can be very dangerous and can lead to an overdose. Products are labelled to indicate their contents, so always check before using them. If you do have a cough, cold or flu, drink plenty of water or other non-alcoholic liquids to replace the fluids lost after sweating. Keep warm and rest as much as you can.

It is best to periodically check that the medicines in your home are up-to-date. This is why it is important to keep them in their original containers. Always follow the instructions on the box or label. If you are unsure about taking any medicines, consult with your doctor or pharmacist first. To combat the cold, layers of thin clothing are far more effective than one thick layer. Choose

clothes made of wool, cotton or fleecy synthetic fibres. Remember to wear a hat when outdoors and ensure you wear footwear with a good grip.

During the holiday season, most GP practices will be closed on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> December 2022 and on 2<sup>nd</sup> until 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2023.

Most pharmacies will also be closed during the holidays. Please refer to the NHS24 website, [www.nhsinform.scot/scotlands-service-directory/pharmacies](http://www.nhsinform.scot/scotlands-service-directory/pharmacies) for opening times.

Remember to order and collect any repeat prescriptions you may require in sufficient time prior to the holidays. Hospital Accident and Emergency services (A&E) are for emergency and urgent situations only. A&E is not an alternative to G.P.s. Please don't go to A&E if your doctor can't see you immediately or when your surgery is closed.



## Winter in the Community

In recent years severe winter weather struck quickly leaving some people vulnerable. A little planning now can help keep people warm and safe this winter.

Identify family or neighbours who may need an extra helping hand if severe weather strikes. Have their 'phone numbers to hand, and offer to help with grocery shopping or other essential tasks.

Equally if you think you may feel isolated or alone during a patch of bad weather, equip yourself with a few useful local contact numbers - a neighbour who can help, the local minister or your local community council.

Be a good neighbour and clear paths of ice and snow during cold weather if you are able to do so. A helping hand with this can make all the difference for people who may be unable to clear their own paths or who need to use local paths to access services.

Communities throughout the country are being urged to follow Scottish Water's winter code - a set of simple steps you can take to protect your pipes. Be prepared and heat, insulate and protect your home. Download the Scottish Water winter poster to display in your local community to help people know where to find more winter information and advice.

Your community can get ready for winter by agreeing what you, your neighbours and your colleagues can do on your own and collectively to minimise the effects of winter weather where you live and work.

You can volunteer to help others during winter by contacting Volunteer Midlothian ☎ 0131 660 1216. Midlothian Council will do all they can to keep essential services running during periods of severe weather. However, severe weather may cause some changes to routine local services, such as the temporary closure of schools, changes to refuse collections and a greater emphasis on gritting and route clearance. Information about local services is kept up to date on Midlothian Council's website, so it's important to check with them for the latest information and advice during



severe weather.

Although not exhaustive, here is a list of items you may wish to consider storing in case of bad weather when you may not be able to leave your home. It is also worth considering supplies you may need in case of a power cut:

- ☺ Canned/no-cook food (bread, crackers, dried fruits);
- ☺ Drinking water and bottled water;
- ☺ Non-electric can opener;
- ☺ Prescription drugs and other medicine;
- ☺ First-aid kit;
- ☺ Rock-salt to melt ice on walkways;
- ☺ Flashlight and extra batteries;
- ☺ Battery-powered radio or wind up radio;
- ☺ Fully charged mobile phone, traditional plug-in phones will continue to work;
- ☺ Any pet food required;
- ☺ Long life or powdered milk;
- ☺ Books and magazines;
- ☺ Crosswords and puzzles;
- ☺ Emergency contact list
- ☺ Battery-powered lamps or lanterns (To prevent the risk of fire, avoid using candles);
- ☺ Blankets and extra clothes should your heating not work;
- ☺ Juice and enhanced waters in boxes and plastic bottles;
- ☺ Supply of unused cat litter or bag of sand to add traction on walkways;

## Warm spaces

### **Bilston**

Bilston Community Hub, Seafield Road  
Mondays: 2pm to 8pm (free wifi).

### **Bonnyrigg**

Cockpen Church Hall, Dundas Street  
Tuesdays from 22 November, 10am until noon.

Hot drinks and snacks at no cost. Come along for some warmth, refreshments, and company. If you bring a thermos flask, it can be filled for you to take home.

### **Mayfield and Easthouses**

Mayfield and Easthouses Church, 2 Bogwood Road  
Wednesdays: 10am to 12pm.

Cafe (£1.50 unlimited tea and coffee)

Thursdays: 12pm to 2pm.

Men's group (free, donation basket for anyone who can afford to donate)

Last Tuesday of each month: 12pm to 2pm.

Friendship lunch

### **Rosewell**

Rosewell Church Hall, Carnethie Street  
Wednesdays from 10am until noon.

Hot drinks and snacks at no cost. Come along for some warmth, refreshments, and company. If you bring a thermos flask, it can be filled for you to take home.

### **Penicuik**

Food Fact Friends, 42 John Street

Monday to Friday: 10am to 3pm with free hot soup, something to eat, tea and coffee.

Saturday: 11am to 1pm with free tea and coffee and something to eat.

St James the Less, 23 Broomhill Road, Penicuik, EH26 9EE,

Tuesdays: 10am to 12pm.

Tea and coffee and biscuits, free. Free wifi TV or other online entertainment.

Penicuik Storehouse, 22 High Street  
Monday to Saturday: 9.30am to 5.30pm.  
Sunday 10.30am to 3pm.  
Café and community group meeting space.  
Roslin  
Roslin Church, Penicuik Road  
Wednesdays: 10.30am to 12pm.  
Coffee morning and a blether. Free food and drinks.

Roslyn Bowling Club, 108 Main Street  
Wednesdays: 2.30pm to 4.30pm.  
Coffee, chat and games. Free food and drinks.



If more warm spaces become available the details will be found on [www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200301/cost\\_of\\_living/645/support\\_coping\\_with\\_rising\\_living\\_costs/4](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200301/cost_of_living/645/support_coping_with_rising_living_costs/4)

## Tips for keeping well

As we are still living in uncertain times due to the ongoing Covid pandemic and winter on its way. It's fundamentally vital we look after ourselves, especially. The Forward Mid team is acutely aware of our lives being unsettled and also living with various medical issues and just day to day stresses of life. Therefore, it's essential we take time out of the day to be mindful and listen to our bodies.

A form of relaxation can take place in ten minutes and discovering a technique or method you find useful. This can be sitting with our eyes closed and practicing breathing techniques or listen to a guided meditation, music, massage techniques or anything you may discover that helps you.

Forward Mid have put together some valuable links as a guide to get started. Remembering one persons relaxation type can be altogether different to another. YouTube delivers lots of videos and can be overwhelming, so we have entered some recommendations: to search for:-

- ▶ Relaxing sounds
- ▶ Relaxing sleep music
- ▶ Mindful breathing meditation (5 minutes)
- ▶ Progressive muscle relaxation
- ▶ 5 – minute meditation you can do anywhere
- ▶ Daily calm 10 minute mindfulness meditation/be present

### WAYS TO WORK AROUND WINTER TIREDNESS

Do you find it harder to get out of bed when the mornings are darker and the temperature drops?

You may feel more tired and sluggish, you are not alone!!

Here are 5 tips to help prevent this with some easy solutions persons, and that's OK.

### LET THE LIGHT IN

We need at least 15 minutes a day of sun light and over the winter months we can become more tired and this can effect your sleep cycle. Lack of sun light means the brain produces more of the hormone called melatonin, which makes you more sleepy. To prevent this happening let as much sun light in. Open curtains and blinds to get as much natural light in.

### GOOD SLEEP

Sleep is such an important part for our bodies to do the things it needs to do while we sleep, so good sleep hygiene is so important. During the winter feeling sleepier does not mean we should



sleep more as it can have the opposite effect and we feel more sluggish during the day. Aim for eight hours of sleep a night if possible and a bedtime routine is so important as you train the body to recognize a sleep routine. Try to go to bed at the same time and get up at the same time every day. Good sleep hygiene can include having your sleeping space comfortable, warm bedding and having the TV off will help. More information [www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/sleep-hygiene](http://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/sleep-hygiene)

## **EXERCISE**

This will be the last thing on your mind in the winter months, but doing some form of activity will boost your energy levels and mood and will help with any sleep problems. Just trying to be mobile will help. It could mean going a walk out in the fresh air or some seated exercise. Yoga or some muscle stretches will give you a boost and make you feel good and you have achieved a task in your daily routine. Its what works for you.

## **RELAX**

With just normal daily pressures of life combined with the winter months this can contribute to feeling stressed and this can effect how tired you are and cause you to feel fatigued. There is no magic cure but we can do things to reduce it. Relaxation, breathing, yoga or mindfulness are just some things you can add into your day to help you keep calm and feel more relaxed.

## **EATING THE RIGHT FOODS**

Getting the right diet daily will have a massive impact on how you feel also. During the winter months it can become easy to ditch the salads and fill up on starchy foods, but if you try and include fruits and vegetables in your winter comfort meals, it will increase your energy. Putting together a weekly meal plan and shopping list will give you that feel good factor of what you are eating and you want to enjoy what you eat.

## **FAMILY TIME OR FRIENDS TIME**

Back when all this started we were subjected to lockdown and forced to spend time indoors, We could merely telephone a friend or arrange a zoom call. This is the time to return to what we initiated. We got into a place of trying new things with the family. It could have been cooking together, doing some form of exercise or merely enjoying a movie together. Having that quality time with people that we would ordinarily be with but in a cheerful way. More so in the present circumstances we should try maintaining the things we enjoy or try new things. We all need that support because of the upcoming dreary months. We don't comprehend what our future will provide, everything is still so uncertain. Enjoying good mental health and trying to complete just one task you set a day will urge you to feel good. Look after yourself be kind to others and we will gather with you when it is safe to do so.

 [www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing/stress/breathing-and-relaxation-exercises-for-stress](http://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing/stress/breathing-and-relaxation-exercises-for-stress)

This gives a broad spectrum of different techniques, including:- a description of why do these, how often, preparation, breathing, simple exercise, quick muscle relaxation and cued relaxation.

 [www.healthdirect.gov.au/relaxation](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au/relaxation)

Relaxation and mental health. How relaxation can improve mental health. Techniques used and ways to include relaxation into your life.

 [www.painconcern.org.uk](http://www.painconcern.org.uk)

Explanation of stress, pain and relaxation. Why relaxation is so important for people with chronic pain. What techniques they use. Breathing techniques and a step by step guide for muscular relaxation.

There is so many different techniques for relaxation and mindfulness but here is the 3 most common types used for relaxation.

## **BREATHING – PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION-MINDFULNESS**

# Chair Exercise Workout.

There are 6 exercises shown below. Start with a couple and build up as your strength and balance improves. Start by repeating each exercise 5 times and build up to 10 – or more if you feel steady, balanced and able.

If you are prone to pain, start slowly with only a few repetitions of exercise and build up slowly as you get stronger.

It is important to keep moving throughout the day. Limit your time sitting down, even if it's just walking from the back to the front of the house a few times each hour.

Don't listen to the news all day. Play some music that makes you smile and exercise to the music.

Regularly doing these strength and balance exercises will reduce your risk factors for having a fall. If you have a fall it is very easy to lose your confidence in doing everyday activities and that, in turn, has a knock on effect on your level of function and independence.

“An energy-boosting routine for wheelchair users that helps to increase upper body strength and ease joint stiffness.”

## 10 Dives



Sit tall in a chair, place your arms out to the side, in one movement bring both arms into the front lean forward and tuck your head as far down as possible. Breathe in through your nose. Hold for a few seconds and breathe out through your mouth while returning your arms to the side and sit up.

10 is the recommended number, do not rush as you can build your strength slowly.

## 20 Overhead Punches

Sit tall in a chair, bend your elbows and bring your fore arm as if to protect yourself and clench your fist, as fast as you can punch one hand upwards and return to the protect position. Complete up to 10 on each arm.

20 is the recommended number, do not rush as you can build your strength slowly.



## 20 Punches

Sit tall in a chair, bend your elbows and bring your fore arm as if to protect yourself and clench your fist, as fast as you can punch one hand forward rotating your shoulder to extend the reach and return to the protect position. Complete up to 10 on each arm.

20 is the recommended number, do not rush as you can build your strength slowly.

## 20 Side Arm Raises

Sit tall in a chair, place your arms out to the side, raise both or one arm as high as you can manage. Breathe in through your nose. Hold for a few seconds and breathe out through your mouth while returning your arms to the side.

20 is the recommended number, do not rush as you can build your strength slowly.



## 10 Raised Arm Circles

Sit tall in a chair, place your arms out to the side, keep arms as straight as possible, complete 5 rotations in a forward motion from the shoulder and complete 5 rotations in a backward motion. Remember to breathe.

10 is the recommended number, do not rush as you can build your strength slowly.

## 20 Chest Expansions

Sit tall in a chair, place the palms of your hands together in outreach position. Slowly pull your arms as far back on each side as far as you can and push your chest out, breathe in through your nose. Hold for a few seconds and breathe out through your mouth while returning together in the outreach position.

20 is the recommended number, do not rush as you can build your strength slowly.



## Keeping Affordably Warm this Winter

Many people will struggle this winter living in a cold home or will get into fuel debt.

There is help out there to support people who are struggling to keep their home warm. To identify if someone needs help ask these four key questions:-

- ❖ Is their home cold?
- ❖ Is their home damp?
- ❖ Is their home draughty?
- ❖ Are they concerned about affording energy in their home?
- ❖ If the answer is 'yes' to any of these, what next?

Support is available through:

1) The Scottish Government's Energy Assistance Package. Just ring the Energy Saving Scotland advice centre on ☎ 0808 808 2282 for more information.

2) Changeworks' Warm and Well Midlothian provide support to people who struggle with heating costs. Warm and Well supports anyone in Midlothian whose health may be affected by living in a cold, damp or draughty home. Older people, young families and people with health difficulties are particularly vulnerable, so we work with health and social work professionals, amongst others. We provide tailored advice on affordable warmth through video calls, talks and events. VOCAL are



offering free 45 minute appointment at a safe venue, through Changeworks for Energy Advice Surgeries once a month. Carers can book by email on [Midlothian@vocal.org.uk](mailto:Midlothian@vocal.org.uk) or on ☎ 0131 663 6869.

3) The Scottish Government says: “A person is living in fuel poverty if, to heat their home to a satisfactory standard, they need to spend more than 10 per cent of their household income on fuel.”

If you would like to contact one of their advisors - email: [ask@changeworks.org.uk](mailto:ask@changeworks.org.uk)

 [www.changeworks.org.uk/client/midlothian-council](http://www.changeworks.org.uk/client/midlothian-council)



## Extra Cash In your pocket

Many people over pension age don't receive the money they should.  
You might be one of them.

Midlothian Council and Citizens Advice can check to see if you should be getting more. Even if you have savings you maybe entitled to more.

Midlothian Council and Citizen's Advice can help with:



Pension Credit



Housing Benefits



Attendance Allowance



Help with Heating bills



Council Tax Reduction

### Who Can Help?

No one will ask for your password, Leave a message and someone will call you back.

Midlothian Council  
☎ 0131 270 8922

Citizen's Advice  
Dalkeith ☎ 0131 660 1636  
Penicuik ☎ 01968 675 259

## Warm Home Discount Scheme

For winter 2022 to 2023, you could get £140 off your electricity bill through the Warm Home Discount Scheme. This year Scotland has a different Warm Home Discount Scheme the application forms are due to be out in November or December.

The money isn't paid to you - it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill, usually between September and March. The discount won't affect your Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel Payment.

### Pre-pay or pay-as-you-go meters

You can also qualify for the discount if you use a pre-pay or pay-as-you-go electricity meter.

Your electricity supplier can tell you how you'll get the discount if you're eligible, e.g. a voucher you can use to top up your meter.

### Eligibility

You qualify for the discount if on 21 August 2022 all of the following apply:

Your electricity supplier was part of the scheme

Your name (or your partner's) was on the bill

You were getting the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit (even if you get Savings Credit as well)

- \* Have a child living with you who was born on or after 01 April 2008;
- \* Receive Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance;
- \* Receive Disability Living Allowance or you receive Disability Living Allowance on behalf of a child living with you;
- \* Receive War Disablement Pension;
- \* Receive Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit;
- \* Receive an additional payment (such as the work-related activity group or support; component of Employment and Support Allowance) because of sickness or disability.



### Check with your supplier to see if you're eligible and how to apply.

Electricity suppliers. The following suppliers are part of the scheme:

<b>British/Scottish Gas</b>	☎ 0800 072 8625
<a href="http://www.britishgas.co.uk/energy/energy-saving/warm-home-discount.html">www.britishgas.co.uk/energy/energy-saving/warm-home-discount.html</a>	
<b>Co-operative energy</b>	☎ 01608 434 003
<b>Now Octopus Energy</b>	
<b>Ebico</b>	☎ 0300 004 0308
<a href="http://ebico.org.uk/">ebico.org.uk/</a>	
<b>EDF Energy</b>	☎ 0191 426 5610
<a href="http://www.edfenergy.com/for-home/help-support/warm-home-discount">www.edfenergy.com/for-home/help-support/warm-home-discount</a>	
<b>E.ON</b>	☎ 0345 052 0000
<a href="http://www.eonenergy.com/for-your-home/saving-energy/need-little-extra-help/warm-home-discount/warm-home-discount-form">www.eonenergy.com/for-your-home/saving-energy/need-little-extra-help/warm-home-discount/warm-home-discount-form</a>	
<b>M&amp;S Energy</b>	☎ 08081 697 822
<a href="http://www.mandsenergy.com/">www.mandsenergy.com/</a>	
<b>Octopus Energy Ltd</b>	☎ 0808 164 1088

<a href="http://octopus.energy/">octopus.energy/</a>	
<b>OVO</b>	☎ 0330 303 5063
<a href="http://www.ovoenergy.com/help/warm-home-discount">www.ovoenergy.com/help/warm-home-discount</a>	
<b>Sainsbury's Energy</b>	☎ 0808 501 5277
<a href="http://www.sainsburysenergy.com/?gclid=ds">www.sainsburysenergy.com/?gclid=ds</a>	
<b>Scottish Power</b>	☎ 0800 027 0072
<a href="http://www2.scottishpower.co.uk/whd.process?execution=e1s1">www2.scottishpower.co.uk/whd.process?execution=e1s1</a>	
<b>Shell Energy</b>	Online Only
<a href="http://help.shellenergy.co.uk/hc/en-us/articles/9867680676625-The-Warm-Home-Discount-Scotland">help.shellenergy.co.uk/hc/en-us/articles/9867680676625-The-Warm-Home-Discount-Scotland</a>	
<b>Utilita</b>	☎ 03452 072 000
<a href="http://utilita.co.uk/warm-home-discount/scotland">utilita.co.uk/warm-home-discount/scotland</a>	
<b>Utility Warehouse</b>	☎ 0333 777 0 777
<a href="http://uw.co.uk/legal/energy-information/warm-home-discount-scheme">uw.co.uk/legal/energy-information/warm-home-discount-scheme</a>	

## How to claim

If you qualify for the discount, you'll get a letter this autumn or winter telling you either: you qualify for the core or you have to apply for the broader group when it becomes available

## SP Energy Networks

SP Energy Networks manage the electricity network in Midlothian so if you have a power cut it's there engineers who attend to make repairs and they want to make sure that in the unusual event of a power cut that you are well supported.

They can be reached 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on either our Freephone number ☎ 0800 0929290 or on the new single emergency number of ☎ 105. This new number is free from all landlines and mobiles and will connect you to the correct network operator for your property, no matter who you pay your bills to.

If your electricity goes off unexpectedly there are a few checks that it's useful to do if you can, before you call us.

- Have your neighbours lost their supply?
- Are the streetlights out?

If electricity is crucial to your health (for instance if you use medical equipment at home) or if you are over 60, ask to be included on the Priority Services Register. You can do this via online at [www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/priorityservices](http://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/priorityservices) by phone ☎ 0330 10 10 444 or by email [customer@spenergynetworks.com](mailto:customer@spenergynetworks.com) or by text to 61999.

SP Energy Networks on ☎ 0330 1010 154 can offer free & impartial energy efficiency advice and access to grants where available. It is important that everyone keeps in contact with any friends and neighbours who might require assistance during periods of severe weather. Older people particularly value the information and support they receive from neighbours during these times. Someone they know popping round can help to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.

If you would like to help any elderly or vulnerable people in your area, you could contact your local community council, Red Cross or Volunteer Midlothian. Community council, Red Cross or Volunteer Midlothian.

# HcL Dial-A-Ride and Dial-A-Bus...

## Getting you from A to B!

If you find it hard to get out and about, HcL 'Hop on an HcL Bus' might be able to help. They provide supported door-through-door transport to help you get out and about, do your shopping, or attend appointments and social activities.

### Dial-A-Ride

Choose where you want to go – a medical appointment, the shops, a visit to friends or family, to church, the cinema or theatre, or Edinburgh Airport

### Dial-A-Bus

Hop on an HcL Bus to local shopping centres including Cameron Toll, Tesco Eskbank, ASDA & Sainsbury's Straiton, Tesco Penicuik, Morrison's Dalkeith.



Their drivers pick you up from your front door and can support you to leave your house and on the bus if you need a bit of extra help. They can help you put your coat on, lock your house and help carry your shopping home. Each bus can carry two wheelchair passengers. You can use the service on your own or bring a friend or carer.

For more details on the cost and how to register and book, call:

**Dial-A-Ride:** ☎ 0131 447 9949

**Dial-A-Bus:** ☎ 0131 447 1718

Email: ✉ [edinburgh@handicabs.org.uk](mailto:edinburgh@handicabs.org.uk)

## Severe Weather

If there's heavy snow, police have powers to remove vehicles parked on bus routes.

"No parking" cones will be placed along specific lengths on the streets but only when prolonged and heavy snow is forecast.

For maps of routes affected visit see below or

 [www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200270/severe\\_](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200270/severe_)

Lothian Buses Website: [lothianbuses.com](http://lothianbuses.com) Twitter: [twitter.com/on\\_lothianbuses](https://twitter.com/on_lothianbuses)



## Bus "apps" for smartphones

Most bus operators have their own presence in the digital world, offering a range of information from journey planning to real time information about bus departure times from any/every bus stop in their operating area. "**Transport for Edinburgh**" embraces East Coast Buses, Edinburgh Trams, Lothian Buses and Lothian Country. The "**Borders Buses**" app gives info about the X62,

X70, X95. “**Prentice of Haddington**” has details for their 111 service. “My Bus Edinburgh” is another App. It is restricted to information on East Coast Buses, Edinburgh Trams, Lothian Buses and Lothian Country.

Apps can be found in the Play Store, AppStore or Microsoft Store. These Apps can keep you up to date with bus information during bad weather.

“**Traveline Scotland**” is the national service for all modes of transport information. If you’re going further afield, there are links to Traveline Cymru and Traveline England.

Getting winter ready is something we all need to do – it only takes a few simple steps. It’s time to start thinking about how you could be affected by severe weather, and what you need to do now to be better prepared.

Whether it’s at home, in the community or behind the wheel, we all need to consider what might help. By thinking about how we can all be ready, we can help Midlothian be better prepared. Previous years severe weather caught many people out.

Make sure you will be able to have your footpaths and driveway cleared if severe weather strikes. It is a good idea to keep a shovel (specially designed snow shovels are particularly good) and some salt or grit at home. Remember to find out where your nearest local authority grit bin is located. Information about local services is kept up-to-date on Midlothian Council’s website ([www.midlothian.gov.uk](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk)), so it’s important to check for the latest information and advice during severe weather. Stay tuned to local radio stations such as Black Diamond and Forth FM as they also provide advice and updates during bad weather.



**Black Diamond**  
**107.8 FM**



Clearing snow from a vehicle, clean the snow from the roof as well as the windscreens and also make sure your number plate is visible both front and rear,

Here are some recommended items to keep in your car over winter:

- ☺ **A blanket,**
- ☺ **Warm winter clothing (including boots),**
- ☺ **Ice scraper and de-icer,**
- ☺ **Battery jump leads,**
- ☺ **A map for any unplanned diversions,**
- ☺ **A first-aid kit,**
- ☺ **A torch and spare batteries,**
- ☺ **A mobile phone and charger,**
- ☺ **A shovel for snow; food and drink that will last (and a warm drink in a flask before each journey).**



## Winter Information

### Social Media

Midlothian Council: Website:  [www.midlothian.gov.uk/](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/)

Twitter: [twitter.com/@midhelp](https://twitter.com/@midhelp) and [twitter.com/@midgov](https://twitter.com/@midgov)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/MidlothianCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/MidlothianCouncil)



### Midlothian Voluntary Action

Website: [www.mvacvs.org.uk/](http://www.mvacvs.org.uk/)

Twitter: [twitter.com/MVACommunity](https://twitter.com/MVACommunity) or [@MVACommunity](https://twitter.com/@MVACommunity)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/MidlothianVoluntaryAction](https://www.facebook.com/MidlothianVoluntaryAction)




### Other Essential Contacts

For all other essential contact details see the Ready Scotland Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/ReadyScotland](https://www.facebook.com/ReadyScotland)

**VOCAL** Christmas opening times; Midlothian Carer Centre will close at noon on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> December 2022 and re-open at 9am on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

**VOCAL** Midlothian has a Winter Programme of events, activities and support available to carers - ☎ 0131 663 6869 or email:  [midlothian@vocal.org.uk](mailto:midlothian@vocal.org.uk)

## A message from Midlothian Council

Midlothian Council's Cabinet Member with responsibility for winter services, Councillor Dianne Alexander understands why some Midlothian residents may be dreading this time of year.

The short days and freezing temperatures can discourage us from getting out and meeting other people, leaving us feeling lonely and isolated. Add to the mix the cost of living crisis and even indoors might not be the cosy refuge that can make winter at least tolerable.

Cllr Alexander says: "This winter is definitely even more of a challenge than usual. As councillors we're well aware many people are struggling to afford to heat their homes. Some are telling us they are only putting the fire on in just one room and are worrying about their bills and the cost of food.

"This is not what we want for our Midlothian citizens and we want to get the message out to them that there's lots of help on hand."

Cllr Alexander encouraged those with internet access to check the council's cost of living supports pages in the first instance.



You can find them at  [www.midlothian.gov.uk/midlothiancares](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/midlothiancares)

There you can get everything from details of local pantries offering subsidised food, including fresh fruit and vegetables, at affordable prices to information on free helplines for people who just need a chat. Pages also have helpful information on cutting energy bills to how to make sure you are getting all the benefits and financial supports to which you are entitled.

From Monday 5 December, the council is opening two free warm and well hubs at Newbattle and Lasswade libraries. Open during the libraries normal working hours, the hubs will have free hot drinks and soup and bread. Customers can keep warm while enjoying the books, card games and jigsaws.

“I’d encourage everyone to go along. There will be a warm welcome and good company, just what we all need if we’ve been stuck at home with no-one to talk to,” says Cllr Alexander.

### **Midlothian Libraries**

Midlothian Libraries has many services to support older residents in the community. Alongside the branches, our Mobile Library is making weekly visits to areas without open branches, including Danderhall and Roslin. In every branch we are running a Reserve & Collect service; borrowers inform us of the books they want/like, then we arrange a pick up time for them. Think of us as your personal shoppers! We have a great selection of stock, including accessible reading stock including Large Print books and Audiobooks.

You can also get Hearing Aid batteries and Dog Bags when you visit, and apply for your National Entitlement Card and Blue Badge in branch.

If you don’t want to venture out but miss reading, use our free eResources! Borrowers can read daily newspapers and the latest editions of your favourite magazines for free on PressReader. Or read books and listen to audiobooks on BorrowBox. Plus lots more!

To use our services or find out any information, including our opening times and Mobile Library Map

Visit:  [www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/427/libraries](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/427/libraries)

Email library:  [hq@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:hq@midlothian.gov.uk)

Cllr Alexander adds that the council’s trained staff in the Contact Centre are also on hand to help those without website access. They can point callers in the right direction, depending on what they need such as housing options for older people. Call the Contact Centre on ☎ 0131 663 7211.

And if severe weather strikes, our roads team will work hard to keep priority roads and pavements gritted. “We’re doing our bit and we really encourage local people to do their bit too, such as clearing the pavement of snow outside of their home to checking on elderly or vulnerable neighbours,” says Cllr Alexander.

Together, she says, we can weather the worst of the storms to come. “I’m always very proud of how local people respond. Midlothian really does care,” says Cllr Alexander.

Other key phone numbers in Midlothian:

<b>Useful Telephone list</b>	
Emergency Services	☎ 999
Non Emergency Police	☎ 101
NHS24	☎ 111
Midlothian Council	☎ 0131 270 7500 / 663 7211
Midlothian Social Work Services	☎ 0131 271 3900
National Gas Emergency Service (if you smell gas)	☎ 0800 111 999
Scottish Power Energy Networks	☎ 0800 092 92 90 / 105
Scottish Water	☎ 0845 601 8855
Midlothian Council Housing repairs	☎ 0131 663 7211
Midcare (Telecare) Midlothian	☎ 0131 271 3900
Carers VOCAL Midlothian	☎ 0131 663 6869
Dementia Helpline	☎ 0808 808 3000
Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living	☎ 0131 475 2350
British Red Cross	☎ 0131 654 0340
Midlothian Community Hospital	☎ 0131 454 1001
Midlothian Council – Housing Benefits	☎ 0131 271 3201
Midlothian Council – Direct Payments	☎ 0131 271 3900
Midlothian Council - Social Work (out of hours)	☎ 0800 731 6969
Midlothian Waste & Recycling	☎ 0131 561 5284
Deaf Blind UK	☎ 07715 421399
RNIB	☎ 0303 123 9999
LGBT	☎ 0300 123 2523
Hearing aid batteries	☎ 0131 270 7500
Lothian Buses	☎ 0131 555 6363
Traveline Scotland	☎ 0871 200 2233
Dial-a-Bus Midlothian	☎ 0131 447 1718
Dial-a-Ride Midlothian	☎ 0131 447 9949
Citizens Advice Bureau Dalkeith	☎ 0131 660 1636
Citizens Advice Bureau Penicuik	☎ 01968 675 259
Breathing Space	☎ 0800 83 85 87
Samaritans	☎ 116 123
My Doctor	☎
My Plumber	☎
My Emergency Contact	☎

## After the Snow Comes the Thaw

After a period of severe winter weather, the thaw comes as a relief. But it has its own challenges. You can prepare for these by keeping up to date on the current situation.

### **Burst Pipes**

In the coldest days of winter the water pipes around the house can freeze. As the water turns to ice it expands, this will cause the pipe to burst, when it defrosts and the ice has turned back to a liquid is the first indication you have a burst pipe. Make sure you know where to locate the stop valve which controls the water supply entering your home. If you suspect you have a burst pipe, turn off the water supply immediately.



## Icicles and excess snow on roofs

If your property has large amounts of overhanging snow / large icicles, try to make anyone entering it aware of the risk. If you are confident that it is safe to do so, you should try to remove overhanging icicles that pose a threat on your own property - ladders should not be used in icy conditions, nor should you hang out of windows to reach roof. It is important to let children know of the risks of falling icicles - and throwing snow or any other objects onto (or at) icicles or snowy roofs.

## Forward Mid Disabled People's Directory

Following the immense success of the Forward Mid Directory 2022/23 we are reprinting this current version. It should be back in Libraries in December 2022

Jeremy Balfour MSP, "This Directory is a superb resource for disabled individuals and the Third Sector. It's a one stop guide that covers the whole of Midlothian, with accurate and reliable information."

If you have access to the internet, it is available at [www.forwardmid.org.uk/directory1to14.html#gsc.tab=0](http://www.forwardmid.org.uk/directory1to14.html#gsc.tab=0) and is also available to download in two versions.



## Dalkeith & District Citizens Advice Bureau

8 Buccleuch Street  
Dalkeith  
Midlothian  
EH22 1HA

Dalkeith & District CAB offers free, independent, confidential and impartial advice and assistance on a range of issues including:

- Benefits (we can help to complete forms)
- Debt
- Energy Specialist
- Employment Specialist
- Housing

☎ 0131 660 1636

 [www.dalkeithcab.org.uk](http://www.dalkeithcab.org.uk)

 [bureau@dalkeithcab.org.uk](mailto:bureau@dalkeithcab.org.uk)



## Appointments

At the moment our face to face appointments are very limited, and these are mostly for form-filling or for particularly complex issues.

We can offer advice through: Phone, email, webchat, video call and face to face.

## Dalkeith Outreach

Gorebridge Hive, 35 Hunterfield Road, EH23 4BQ: Monday 10.00 hrs -13.00 hrs, No appointment necessary.

St Johns Church 31 Eskbank Road, Dalkeith EH22 1HJ. Monday 10.00 hrs -13.00 hrs. No appointment required.

Newtongrange Development Trust. 72 Main Street, EH22 4LJ. Drop in, first Monday each month, 13:00 hrs -15:30 hrs

Mayfield Pavilion Mayfield Public Park, EH22 5EE. Weekly drop in, Wednesdays, 10:00 hrs - 15:00 hrs.

Bonnyrigg Rose FC The Pavilion, Polton Avenue Road, EH19 2NU. Weekly drop in, Wednesdays, 10:00 hrs 14:00 hrs.

Gorebridge Library 98 Hunterfield Road, EH23 4TT. Weekly drop in, Thursdays, 10:00 hrs - 1300 hrs.

VOCAL, Hardengreen Estate, 30/1 Dalhousie Road, Eskbank, Dalkeith EH22 3NX [map](#) Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 10:00 hrs– 16:00 hrs (VOCAL clients only)



## Employment Specialist

We have an employment specialist who may be able to advise if you are having issues with your employment. Please contact us to be referred to this service.

## Energy Specialist

We have an energy Specialist who can advise on issues you are having with your energy supply. This can include high bills & energy debts.

## Foodbank Referrals

Food banks are community organisations that can help if you can't afford the food you need. Contact us for a referral.

Income Maximisation clinic at Midlothian Foodbank in Gorebridge. This runs weekly on Thursdays between noon and 14:00 hrs.

## Scottish Welfare Fund – ☎ 0131 270 5600

Crisis Grant: providing a safety net in the event of an emergency or disaster such as a fire or flood in your home

Community Care Grant: if you are about to leave care to live on your own in the community (for example leaving prison or hospital) or you face going into care because you cannot continue to live at home or if you are struggling to provide a safe and secure home for your family.

## ACAS – ☎ 0300 123 1100

Provides free and impartial information and advice to employers and employees on all aspects of workplace relations and employment law.


# Penicuik Citizens Advice Bureau

14a John Street  
Penicuik  
Midlothian  
EH26 8AB

Penicuik CAB offers free, independent, confidential and impartial advice and assistance on a range of issues including:

- Benefits (we can help to complete forms)
- Debt & Money
- Employment
- Housing

☎ 01968 675259

 [www.penicuikcab.org.uk/](http://www.penicuikcab.org.uk/)  
 [bureau@penicuikcab.org.uk](mailto:bureau@penicuikcab.org.uk)



## Penicuik Outreach

Loanhead Library: Monday 10.00 hrs -13.00 hrs, no appointment necessary.

Loanhead Library: Tuesday 09:30 hrs -12.30 hrs, no appointment necessary.

Loanhead Miners Welfare: Wednesday 10.00 hrs -13.00 hrs, no appointment necessary.

Penicuik Hub, Food, Facts, Friends, 42 John Street EH26 8AB

Monday: 10:30 hrs - 13:00 drop in

**By appointment Only ☎ 01968 675 259**

Midlothian Community Hospital 70 Eskbank Rd, EH22 3ND

Thursday: 13:00 hrs - 15:00 hrs

Loganlea Centre, Eastfield Farm Road Penicuik EH26 8EZ

Tuesdays 13:30 hrs 15:00 hrs

## New ways to see your GP...

### In a library!

Gorebridge Library is part in a pilot to help people see their GP via video link.

If you have been offered an online GP appointment but don't have space or the equipment at home, you can go to Gorebridge Library. They will provide a private space, internet connection and a tablet for you to attend your appointment, along with technical support. All for **FREE**.

Call: ☎ **01875 820630**

Email:  [gorebridge.library@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:gorebridge.library@midlothian.gov.uk)



### Minimum requirements if connecting from own system

#### The latest Browser version

**A microphone and speakers or a headset for privacy.**

**A wired internet connection will provide the best video quality, but you can also use a fixed-wireless (Wifi) or mobile (3.5/4G/5G) data service. Internet speed affects video quality, so your internet connection with the recommended speeds of more than 1.1mps:**




## Sing it loud



Singing together can make us feel connected to others, improve our wellbeing and reduce stress.

For people who are living with dementia, these benefits can have real impact on reducing symptoms. After a successful Music Therapy pilot at Pittendreich Care Home, funding has been secured for a further year to include Music Therapy as part of Care Support Team's package of

help for people living with dementia and those who care for them. For further details, email  [Laura.Bolton2@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:Laura.Bolton2@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk)

Golden Voices brings together people living with dementia and their families to sing in a safe, fun, and friendly environment. They meet every Monday in Rosewell. It's a chance to relax and make new friends. Call: ☎ 07875 358 582

Email:  [yw.lvbs@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:yw.lvbs@yahoo.co.uk)



## Jingle and Mingle



By popular demand the Red Cross will be holding their Jingle and Mingle event, in Dalkeith 20th and 22nd December and Loanhead on 29th December.

Come and join them for festive entertainment, food and meet new friends. Transport can be provided. Numbers are limited so booking is first come, first served. Call ☎ 0131 654 0340

## Volunteer Midlothian – Connect Online

Would you like help to keep connected while not leaving the house? We can help you keep in touch with family and friends via email, Facebook, messenger, WhatsApp, text messages, calling from your smart speaker (Alexa) and many more ways! We can help setup online grocery shopping so you can have shopping delivered to your home. Looking for winter weather updates? We can help you access Midlothian Council's website or Facebook for the latest information via your smartphone, tablet or laptop. Or maybe you would like to access electronic books, audiobooks or newspapers and magazines for free via the library apps?

We offer weekly drop in groups and home visits for people who are housebound, have mobility issues or are carers. Remote support or online groups may also be offered.

Contact: **Una Paterson** Email:  [una@volunteermidlothian.org.uk](mailto:una@volunteermidlothian.org.uk) or mobile: ☎ 07856573694

### Connect Online groups:

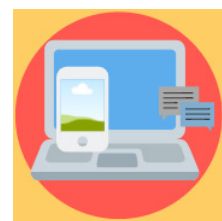
**Tuesdays** - Penicuik - Food Facts Friends 10.30-12noon

**Wednesdays** - Loanhead Library 11-12.30pm

**Wednesdays** - Rosewell, The Steading 1.30-3pm




**Thursdays** - Mayfield Pavilion 12.30-2pm

**Thursdays** - Penicuik Library 2-3.30pm



## Alternative Publications

Please like us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/forwardmid/](http://www.facebook.com/forwardmid/)

Forward Mid newsletters are available in large print on request from Eric Johnstone ☎ : 0131-663-9471 or  [eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk](mailto:eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk) write to him at MVA, 4-6 White Hart Street, Dalkeith, EH22 1AE with your request. Electronic copies can be found on [www.forwardmid.org.uk](http://www.forwardmid.org.uk). The latest Firefox browser has the reader symbol  in the address bar, click and select narrate from left menu. The latest Safari Browser has the reader symbol  but does not read aloud. These only work on websites without errors. If you require help please contact Forward Mid and we will arrange to help you.

**Edited by Iain Tait for Forward Mid**