

Forward

Midlothian

Disabled People

www.forwardmid.org.uk

Forward

Mid

Equality - Diversity - Inclusion



Winter Newsletter 2023

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.

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 0808 808 2282.

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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. **Be careful not to combine products which exceed the maximum daily limit.** 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 26th and 27th December 2023 and on 2nd and 3rd January 2024.

Most pharmacies will also be closed during the holidays. Please refer to the NHS24 website,  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.

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 Wise - a set of simple steps you can take to protect your pipes and protect your home. Read Scottish Water's winter Wise at  www.yourwateryourlife.co.uk/campaign/winter/.

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 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;

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 appointments at a safe venue, through Changeworks for Energy Advice Surgeries once a month. Carers can book by email 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 - Online form: www.changeworks.org.uk/contact/  www.changeworks.org.uk/

Warm Spaces

Bonnyrigg and Lasswade

Lasswade Library, 19 Eskdale Drive, Bonnyrigg, EH19 2LA

During normal opening hours

St Leonard's Church Lasswade & Bonnyrigg, Dobbie's Road Lasswade EH18 1BJ

Mondays: 10:00hrs until 12:00hrs.

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.

Dalkeith

St Mary's Church, High Street, Dalkeith EH22 2NA

Tuesdays: 12:00hrs - 15:00hrs.

Grassy Riggs, 10 Woodburn Road, Dalkeith EH22 2AT

Tuesday through Thursday. For times ☎ 0131 654 1770



Danderhall

Danderhall Library, 59 Edmonstone Road EH22 1QL

During normal opening hours

Newton Parish Church Hall, Edmonstone Road EH22 1QE

Tuesdays: 10:00hrs - 13.30hrs

Wednesdays: 10:00hrs - 12:00hrs

Gorebridge

Gorebridge Beacon, Hunterfield Road, Gorebridge, EH23 4TT

Warm Space

Monday 09:00hrs - 14:00hrs;

Tuesday, Wednesday 14.30hrs - 16.30hrs;

Thursday 14.30hrs - 21:00hrs.

WiFi, phone charge points, games, connection, soup (donation or not)

Community Cafe

09:00hrs - 14:00hrs Tuesday to Saturday. All welcome. If you would like a bowl of soup (free) please say 'Robert Sent Me' when you order.

Loanhead

Loanhead Library, 59 Edmonstone Road EH22 1QL

Free hot drinks or soup and bread. Free wifi, toilets, books, jigsaws and card games. Staff can also advise on getting all the support you are entitled to during the cost of living crisis.

During normal opening hours

Loanhead Parish Church, 118 The Loan, Loanhead EH20 9AJ

Tea, coffee, snacks and chat

Friday 10.30hrs - 12:00hrs

Mayfield and Easthouses

Mayfield and Easthouses Church, 2 Bogwood Road

Wednesdays: 10:00hrs to 12:00hrs

Cafe (£1.50 unlimited tea and coffee)

Thursdays: 12:00hrs to 14:00hrs. Friendship lunch
Men's group (free, donation basket for anyone who can afford to donate)
Last Tuesday of each month: 12:00hrs to 14:00hrs..

Newbattle

Newbattle Library, 1 Newbattle Way, Easthouses, EH22 4SX

Hot drinks or soup and bread at no cost. Free wifi, toilets, books, jigsaws and card games. Staff can also advise on getting all the support you are entitled to during the cost of living crisis.
During normal opening hours

Pathhead

Pathhead Community Cafe, Pathhead Pavilion, Callander Park, Pathhead, EH37 5YN

A great warm space for a coffee and a good blether. £1 for coffee and biscuits, no charge for refills.
Tuesdays: 10:30hrs - 12:00hrs

Penicuik

Food Fact Friends, 42 John Street EH26 8AB

Monday to Friday: 10:00hrs to 15:00hrs with free hot soup, something to eat, tea and coffee.
Saturday: 11:00hrs to 13:00hrs with free tea and coffee and something to eat.

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

Tuesdays: 10:00hrs to 12:00hrs

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

Penicuik Storehouse, 22 High Street EH26 8HW

Café and community group meeting space.

Monday to Wednesday 10.00hrs - 16:00hrs, Thursday to Saturday 10.00hrs - 17:30hrs,
Sunday: 11.00hrs - 16:00hrs.

Trinity Community Church Hall, Kirkhill Road EH26 8HX

Free tea, coffee and biscuits.

Thursdays: 10:00hrs - 12:00hrs

Rosewell

Rosewell Development Trust, The Steading, Carnethie Street EH24 9AA

The Trust offers a warm space and an affordable two course meal lunch club.

Tuesday and Thursday, £3.50 for a two course meal

To book, contact Rosewell Development Trust on ☎ 0131 629 9398

Roslin

Roslin Church, Penicuik Road EH25 9LH

Coffee morning and a blether. Free food and drinks.

Wednesdays: 10.30hrs - 12:00hrs

Rosslyn Bowling Club, 108 Main Street EH25 9LT

Coffee, chat and games. Free food and drinks.

Wednesdays: 14.30hrs - 16:30hrs

Warm Home Discount Scheme

For winter 2023 to 2024, you could get £150 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 2023 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:

British/Scottish Gas	☎ 0800 072 8625
 www.britishgas.co.uk/energy/energy-saving/warm-home-discount.html	
Ebico	☎ 0300 004 0308
 ebico.org.uk/	
EDF Energy	Online Only
 www.edfenergy.com/for-home/help-support/warm-home-discount	
E.ON	☎ 0345 052 0000
 www.eonenergy.com/energy-efficiency-grants/warm-home-discount.html	
Octopus Energy Ltd	☎ 0808 164 1088
 octopus.energy/	
OVO	☎ 0330 303 5063
 www.ovoenergy.com/help/warm-home-discount	
Sainsbury's Energy	☎ 0808 501 5277
 www.sainsburysenergy.com/?gclid=ds	
Scottish Power	☎ 0800 027 0072
 www.scottishpower.co.uk/warm-home-discount	
Shell Energy	Online Only
 help.shellenergy.co.uk/hc/en-us/articles/9867680676625-The-Warm-Home-Discount-Scotland	
Utilita	☎ 03452 072 000
 utilita.co.uk/warm-home-discount/scotland	

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.

Energy Best Deal

Energy Best Deal is a consumer education programme developed by Ofgem and Citizens Advice. The programme provides valuable information and guidance to vulnerable consumers and the frontline advice workers who work with them. It raises awareness of the savings energy consumers can make and the help available for those struggling to pay their bills. Energy Best Deal sessions provide information and guidance to consumers and frontline advice workers on how consumers:

- Can reduce their energy costs by switching tariff, payment method or supplier,
- Know where to go for help if paying energy bills is a struggle,
- Save money by using less energy in their homes.

Funding for the Energy Best Deal programme is provided by a number of energy companies via Ofgem (British Gas, EDF Energy, First Utility, ScottishPower and OVO).

Energy Best Deal group sessions are aimed at vulnerable consumers who are most at risk of fuel poverty and the frontline workers who support them. Organisations delivering Energy Best Deal sessions have well established links with other local support organisations and the frontline workers and volunteers that work with people in or at risk of fuel poverty. Sessions are often held at venues working with groups such as elderly people, tenants, parents or people with health problems.



For more information please visit  www.dalkeithcab.org.uk/services/energy-best-deal

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;

 ready.scot/respond/severe-weather

Lothian Buses:  lothianbuses.com X: 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  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.



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:  www.midlothian.gov.uk/

X: twitter.com/@midhelp and twitter.com/@midgov

f: www.facebook.com/MidlothianCouncil

Midlothian Voluntary Action

 : www.mvacvs.org.uk/

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

Other Essential Contacts

For all other essential contact details see the Ready Scotland

: www.facebook.com/ReadyScotland

VOCAL Christmas opening times; Midlothian Carer Centre will close on Friday 22nd December 2023 and re-open at 9am on Thursday 4th January 2024.

Useful Telephone Numbers for Midlothian	
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
SP Energy Networks	☎ 0800 092 92 90 / 105
Scottish Water	☎ 0800 077 8778
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 – Self-Directed Support	☎ 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	☎



CAFÉ CONNECT



Dalkeith Arts Centre

- Thurs 01/01/24 – Closed
- Thurs 01/02/24 – 14.00hrs to 15.30hrs,
- Thurs 07/03/24 – 14.00hrs to 15.30hrs,
- Then the First Thursday of Month- 14.00hrs to 15.30hrs

All
welcome

Meet or make
friends and share a
blether

Link in with Forward Mid
(Supported by LAC,
Enable Scotland)



VOCAL

VOCAL, Voice of Carers Across Lothian, is a local charity that supports unpaid carers. Each year, Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership funds a Winter Programme to help unpaid carers get a break from caring, reduce isolation and improve their confidence in caring.

We know that many carers can struggle to think about their own health and wellbeing, and the festive season can make this more difficult as day-to-day life gets busier, and expenses come up.

Our Winter Programme has a range of activities and events available to help carers, including carer groups and vouchers for a 'wee break' from caring.

To find out more, or to book any of our groups you can filter by location on the website, www.carerstraining.co.uk To request any of our vouchers or tickets, visit www.weebreaks.com



Penicuik Days Past

Reminiscence group

Come along for a cuppa and a blether to share experiences and memories on an exciting theme each session!

Every second Wednesday
14:00hrs – 15.30hrs

Tea, coffee and biscuits served.

For more information,
please call the library on

☎ : 01968 664 050 or email

✉ : penicuik.library@midlothian.gov.uk



This project is supported by the Scottish Government Public Library Improvement Fund

Health In Mind

Art & Craft in Wellbeing

An online creative exploration.

All art materials are provided.

Thursdays from 14:00hrs -15:00hrs on Zoom.

In blocks of 6 weeks

Next Block due 11th Jan 2024

Contact Ross ✉ : ross.flemington@health-in-mind.org.uk

☎ : 07760753012.



Some groups are in development for the winter that Health in Mind don't have a start date for just yet. For example: online writing group, online mindfulness group, online music group, in-person photography group. A recent Out of Sight Out of Mind Exhibition of Health In Mind work

🌐 www.outofsightoutofmind.scot/2023-basement-corridor-gallery

Health in Mind can also offer one-to-one support online, over the phone or in-person (the latter would be looked at case-by-case, we meet with people in the community and are not insured to handle wheelchairs. People who can independently manage this could be supported by us. This is something that Health in Mind are exploring to expand).

Contact details:

Please leave a voicemail with the team secretary on ☎ : 07779 565607.

You will receive a call back within 2 working days to arrange your appointment.



The
WARBLERS
Singing for lung health



Breathless? Try Singing!

For anyone experiencing breathlessness in Midlothian.

No Singing experience needed
Improve your breathing and connect with others in a fun and relaxed environment.

New members welcome!

Tuesdays from **15:00hrs -16:30hrs** (Apart from the first Tuesday of the Month)

St Anne's Amenity Housing, Newtongrange EH22 4NQ

Sessions Also Available Online.

For more information contact James ☎ 07711307418



✉ robertsonjames56@gmail.com

www www.warblers.org.uk



Alternative Publications

Please like us on Facebook 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 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. 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, Sheree Muir and Tamzin McDonald for Forward Mid