

Newsletter issue 34 -February 2012

www.forwardmid.org.uk

FORWARD

MIDLOTHIAN

DISABLED PEOPLE



Equality - Diversity - Inclusion

TOWARDS A GOOD LIFE, TOWARDS AN EQUAL LIFE

Open Invitation to Join us on 28th March 2012,

Help shape services for Disabled People in Midlothian. Working with the Rights of Independent Living to Co- Produce an Action Plan for Disabled People 2012 – 2015.

A co-production event with Forward Mid, Midlothian Council, NHS Lothian.

On 28th March 2012 around fifty people representing various agencies including Forward Mid, Midlothian Council, Communities and Well Being, Housing, NHS Lothian and other agencies, will come together at Loanhead Miners to participate and contribute to a major stakeholder event to shape services for Disabled People in Midlothian till 2015.

The event takes place on **Wednesday 28th March from 11am till 3pm.**

Forward Mid is taking a lead role in organising the event and working with Midlothian Council, we are keen that disabled people are represented well on the day and are active participants in shaping the Action Plan for Disabled Peoples Services that will result on the day. Transport may be provided

Do you want to get involved? Join us and make your contribution to shaping better services for Disabled People in Midlothian! **INVITE LETTER INSIDE!**

If you share our values and want to be involved, Get In Touch! Contact Jayne on 0131 271 3665 or Eric on 0131-663-9471

The event will be introduced by Jeff Adamson, Chair of Forward Mid and Eibhlin McHugh, Director Communities and Well Being. The day will be structured around the Rights of Independent Living. Independent Living means disabled people having the same freedom, choice, dignity and control as any other citizen – across all areas of their daily life including at home, at work and as members of the community. Independent Living asserts that disabled people are the best people to make decisions about what their needs are. The Rights are; Accessible Environment, Barrier-Free housing, Accessible Transport, Personal Assistance, Suitable Equipment, Peer Support, Information, Peer Advocacy, Communication, Health, Education, Income, Employment.



A major part of the event will see people working in groups to identify priority areas of change around each of these areas of life.

The event is potentially a positive example of Forward Mid working with Health, Midlothian Council and Community Planning partners to move the key equality issues forward for disabled people.

The key points and actions from the event will shape an Action Plan for Services for Disabled People in Midlothian 2012 – 2015.

The day will also see the launch of the 2012 Directory for Disabled People in Midlothian.

Forward Mid will continue to challenge and progress the rights of Disabled people in Midlothian and nationally, so that we all have the same freedom, choice, dignity and control as other citizens at home, at work, and in the community as well as the right to practical support to participate in society and live an ordinary life.

Your Call Counselling Service

COUNSELLING SERVICE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE WINS SELF MANAGEMENT AWARD

On Tuesday 4th October 2011, Your Call Counselling Service, a unique service for disabled people in Scotland, won the Self-Management Project of the Year Award 2011. The award is sponsored by the Long Term Conditions Alliance Scotland, and was presented at a ceremony in the Scottish Parliament by Joan McAlpine MSP.

Your Call is a free telephone counselling service for people with long term conditions, older people and people with experience of disability across Scotland. Since it was first launched in 2008 it has helped over 150 clients and has delivered over 1700 hours of free telehealthcare. It is one of the services offered by the Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living, a user-controlled organisation which supports disabled people to live independently.

Ian Fuller, Your Call Coordinator, said:

'The award is a recognition of the hard work and effectiveness of Your Call counsellors over the last three years, and a testimony to the commitment of LCiL in supporting independent living for disabled people and people with long term conditions.'

The aim of counselling at Your Call is to support disabled people to empower themselves and increase their sense of personal capacity. A counsellor will not judge, nor tell a person how to live their life. Instead he or she is trained to help explore a person's own situation and to support them to find their own way forward. The Your Call service is unique, in that all the professionally qualified volunteers who work for Your Call are disabled people themselves, and know what it means to live as a disabled person in Scotland today.

Client quote: "**[Your Call]** has helped me deal with some really emotional issues and events and has helped me move on in a big way and overcome my fears. It has given a big boost to my confidence to say I can do and I can cope."

No other country in Europe has a national counselling service for disabled people, far less one staffed by professionally qualified disabled people. In these times of cutbacks and increasing levels of prejudice against disabled people, it is refreshing to reflect on a uniquely Scottish success story.



Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living (LCiL)

LCiL moves forward at a time of change and uncertainties ‘Moving Forward’

Readers of Forward Mid will be familiar with the concept! It can mean moving in a number of directions of course, but for the LCiL it is about looking at the future confidently, pro-actively and using the lessons of the past, or the present, to build a better and more inclusive future for disabled people in the Lothian Region, including Midlothian. Fortunately this is also what LCiL has been funded for by the Scottish Government for the next three years, with added funding in the first year from the Change/Innovation Fund and the Enterprise Growth Fund.

This funding cannot be used to deliver our current services - so far funded by the local authority - but will greatly enable us to better engage with people and organisations of Midlothian to ensure that LCiL responds to the needs of individuals in line with new forms of support options covered by the coming Self Directed Support (SDS) Bill.

With resources and a vision, LCiL can embark on a work programme which will inform, contribute and influence positively current and future developments in the field of SDS. To do this we will work closely with disabled people, regardless of their impairments, people with long-term conditions, older people, with their organisations and, we hope, with Midlothian Council which has the key role of implementing the National SDS strategy for Scotland locally.

As new models of care and support packages should be introduced, choice increased and flexibility improved, we want to be a reliable and innovative partner, as well as a conduit of change for the benefit of people in receipt of care/support, their families and carers. In co-production with the various stakeholders, we will use our long experience of working alongside Midlothian Council to be a key resource available to the Local Authority staff and clients. Indeed to provide practical help to people in receipt of SDS is what we do and want continue to do in a time of change and uncertainty.

The Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living (LCiL)

1. Can help people prepare for their assessment
2. Inform people about SDS and all options available to them
3. Help organise support with direct payments whether the individual chooses to: recruit and employ PAs (incl. help with recruitment, contracting, managing any aspect of payroll, managing DP finances) or choose to use an agency or to purchase equipment as well as choose to use a particular service provider.
4. Can support and offer information to people who are exploring how to meet their individual outcomes
5. Provides information to, and have training available for, professionals in relation to SDS and DPs at their identified outcomes

For any information please do contact us:

Tel: 0131 475 2350

Textphone: 0131 475 2383

LCiL@lothiancil.org.uk

www.lothiancil.org.uk

MONEY

First Some Clichés About Money

Money makes the world go round

Money is the root of all evil

Money goes to money

Money makes the heart grow fonder

(I know it's really absence, but it makes you think!)

You know who your friends are when you have no money.

Then there's your fair weather friends if you have!.

You take it in one hand and pay it out with the other

And to balance the books

You rob Peter to pay Paul.

Money, Money - how do you get money?

Hard work by most, to earn an honest dollar,

Hand-outs from "the brew" for others

No Comment

Gambling can get money

But I think it's "win a little lose a lot"

I have my pension, I don't spend much money. I'm fine.

My daughter helps with household bills. We're fine.

My husband died and left a little money,

But I'd rather have him here,

Than his insurance money

Poem by Margaret Weighand

Are all websites accessible ?

The answer is no! Disabled people with visual impairments are being discriminated against as websites fail to implement an alternative to many functions on a website - for example: disabled people who cannot use a mouse, use a keyboard to navigate around a website. These websites are contravening the Equalities Act 2010.

The Government has yet to prosecute any website owner, so disabled people are supposed to take civil action against website owners. Those that have taken civil action were settled out of court.

The Equality and Human Rights commission have a statutory remit "to promote and monitor human rights; and to protect, enforce and promote equality across the nine "protected" grounds - age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation and gender reassignment." They have yet to take action against any website that is contravening the Equalities Act.



Blue Badge Scheme in Midlothian

The Blue Badge Scheme provides parking concessions nationally and across Europe for people with a permanent and substantial disability, whether that person is the driver or a passenger.

The holder of a Blue Badge is permitted to park in areas normally subject to restrictions and benefits those who are unable to walk great distances.

New blue badge

On 1 January 2012 a new UK-wide application form came into use for all Blue Badge applications in Scotland, England and Wales. There are slight differences between the schemes in the 3 countries that are reflected in the online forms. Those resident in Scotland can apply online for a new Blue Badge at:

www.bluebadgescotland.org

We recognise that many people do not have access to a computer, and paper copies of the application form have been prepared by the Travel Team for the residents of Midlothian. The new Scotland-wide online form includes seven sections, but any one applicant need not fill in more than 3 sections. Rather than printing one huge form with all 7 sections, 3 separate forms have been created for use in Midlothian.

Form A [printed on blue paper] for applicants who are eligible without further assessment. This includes those who can provide proof of identity and residency, and written evidence of one of the following:-

- Registered blind (severely sight impaired)
- Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance
- War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement
- Armed Forces and Reserved Forces (Compensation) Scheme Tariff 1-8

Form B [printed on lilac paper] for applicants needing further assessment, all those individual applicants not covered by Form A

Form C [printed on yellow paper] for organisational applicants (such as nursing or care homes)

Blank forms A and B are widely available from Midlothian libraries, main Midlothian Council offices and health centres in Midlothian. Form C is only available upon request from the Midlothian Travel Team in Bonnyrigg.

Send your completed paper application, along with one passport-style photograph and payment of £20 (cheque, not credit card or cash) to the Midlothian Travel Team at the Freepost address on following page [no stamp required].

Eligibility - who can apply?

If you meet one of the 4 criteria listed above under "Form A", you will **automatically qualify** for a Blue Badge and need no further assessment (assuming all the written evidence required is provided and satisfactory).

You may qualify for a Blue Badge if you meet any of the following criteria, but further assessment will be necessary before the issuing of a Blue Badge can be approved. This may involve attending an Independent Mobility Assessment to see a Council-appointed professional. All such assessments are currently undertaken at the Bonnyrigg Medical Centre, 2 or 3 times a month. Home visits are not possible. If any of the following apply, you should complete "Form B".

- If your disability is substantial and means you are unable to walk or you experience considerable difficulty in walking
- If you cannot walk far without severe discomfort, stopping or receiving support from another person
- If you have a temporary mobility impairment which makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for you to walk and which is likely to last for a period of at least 12 months
- If you have been supplied with a wheelchair via the NHS unit at Astley Ainslie in Edinburgh
- If you are applying on behalf of a child under the age of 3 who has a condition requiring the transportation of bulky medical equipment at all times, or who must always be kept near a motor vehicles on account of a condition so that they can, if necessary, be treated for the condition in the vehicle or taken quickly in the vehicle to a place where they can be so treated
- If you have a severe disability in both upper limbs and regularly drive a motor vehicle, and have difficulty operating parking meters and pay and display machines

Blue Badges issued by Midlothian Council on or after 1 April 2009 have been subject to a charge of £20, the maximum possible under Scottish legislation.

This standard charge will apply to new Blue Badges, renewed Blue Badges and replacement Blue Badges (if the original is lost or stolen and reported to the Police).

Renewal blue badges

If you have an old style card Blue Badge, an invitation to renew your Blue Badge will be sent out by letter from Bonnyrigg during the first week of the month when your existing Blue Badge expires. All card style Blue Badges expire on the last day of the month. This will include either a Form A or a Form B to complete, as the new application forms include questions that did not feature in the previous local forms.

If you have a new style PVC Blue Badge, invitations to renew will be sent from Banbury approximately four weeks before the expiry date. New PVC Blue Badges can expire on any date of the month.

Please remember to keep us advised of any address change so that your renewal invitation can be sent to the correct address. The most common reason why badgeholders fail to receive their renewal letter is that people forget to tell us when they move.

Send your completed renewal and application forms, along with one passport-style photograph and payment of £20 (cheque, not cash or credit card) to the Midlothian Travel Team at the Freepost address below (no stamp required).

Replacement blue badges

If you lose your Blue Badge, or suspect that it has been stolen, this must be reported to the Police. You will be given a reference number by the Police. You should then write a letter to the Travel Team quoting this reference number and describing the circumstances of the loss/theft.

Send this letter, along with one passport-style photograph and payment of £20 (cheque, not cash or credit card) to the Midlothian Travel Team at the Freepost address below (no stamp required). A replacement Blue Badge will be issued with the same expiry date as the original Blue Badge that has been lost/stolen.

Pay by Cash

You can pay by cash for a new, renewed or replacement Blue Badge if you come along to the office in Bonnyrigg in person. You will be issued with a receipt for the £20 - keep this safe as it is your proof of payment.

Office hours at Dundas Buildings in Bonnyrigg are:

- **Monday to Thursday 09.00 -17.00**
- **Friday 09.00 - 15.30**

If you are intending to call later in the day, please arrive at least 30 minutes before closing time to give staff the opportunity to process your form and payment before the office closes.

The office is closed on Public Holidays at New Year [2 days], Easter [Friday and Monday], September Weekend [Friday and Monday] and Christmas [2 days], and between Christmas and New Year. The office will be open on other local and public holidays in the Spring and Summer.

New style Blue Badge

From 1 January 2012 a new improved style of Blue Badge will be issued for all brand new, renewed or replacement Blue Badges. Old style Blue Badges already issued on card will be valid until the expiry date shown. The transition period from old to new style Blue Badges will take just over 3 years. The final card-style Blue Badges will expire by the end of January 2015.

The new style Blue Badges include various new features that are designed to prevent counterfeit production of fake badges such as digital photographs, holograms, microwriting, textured surfaces, complex artwork and enclosure in clear PVC.



The introduction of the new style Blue Badges needs a sophisticated printing machine and means that production moves from the local authorities (such as Midlothian) to one central facility covering England, Scotland and Wales. It would be uneconomic for each local authority to buy its own printing machinery to produce the new style Blue Badges.

The new machinery is in Banbury (Oxfordshire) and represents a significant investment by the agency that won the tender to provide the new style Blue Badges. From January 2012 onwards, all Blue Badges will be produced in Banbury and despatched by Second Class Royal Mail from there direct to the badge-holder's home address. Badges will no longer be produced locally in Bonnyrigg.

A blue Badge time clock will be sent with each Blue Badge despatched from Banbury. These clocks are not required in Scotland, but you do need one if you are travelling to England or Wales. Keep the clock safe for when you travel south of the border.

Midlothian Travel Team – contacts for Blue Badge in Midlothian

Freepost RRRKJ-XSAH-CXSY, Midlothian Council, Midlothian Travel Team, Room 9, Dundas Buildings, 62a Polton Street, Bonnyrigg, EH19 3YD

Tel – 0131 561 5445

e-mail ptu@midlothian.gov.uk

Thanks to Karl Vanters of Midlothian Travel team for this information.

SEStran Thistle Assistance Card

Disabled People and Elderly People often need a little more time to get on and off public transport and enjoy a safe and comfortable journey to their destination.

The Aim of the SEStran Thistle assistance card is to help anyone who had difficulty in using public transport, whether through an illness, disability or age. It will quickly tell the bus driver about any extra help you may require during your journey.



The card is supported by a wide range of voluntary organisations and most bus operators in South East Scotland.

The credit-card sized card comes with a selection of peel off stickers, which indicate different types of disabilities, or the type of help a passenger may need. These are then attached to the card, which should be presented to the bus driver, when boarding the vehicle,

SEStran Chair, Russell Imrie, said :

“SEStran aims to ensure that everyone living in South East Scotland has full access to public transport”

“The SEStran Thistle Assistance Card is a practical initiative designed to help people who may need a bit more time, or some practical assistance when using public transport. The drivers are trained to recognise the at-a-glance symbols on the cards and will be made aware of any assistance the passenger might need quickly and easily”

The SEStran card can be obtained from Midlothian Voluntary Action, 4-6 White Hart Street, Dalkeith EH22 1AE or from Midlothian Travel Team, Dundas Buildings, 62a Polton Street, Bonnyrigg, EH19 3YD



Disability Shopper

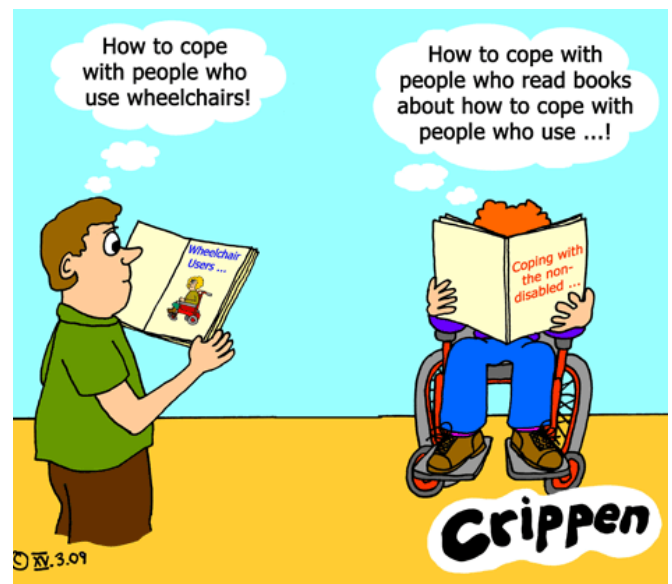
A shopping guide for disabled people:

Everything you are looking for is on the top shelf. Solution: Shop Online. Shopping aisle built out and no room to get past, Solution: Shop Online. Wheelchair user? People step in front of you and stop suddenly. Solution: Shop Online.

Web site not accessible? Ability Net tested 10 web sites for accessibility and 10 failed!

This is a breach of the Equalities Act. If you find a web site like this report it to the Equalities and human rights Commission.

www.equalityhumanrights.com



Alternative Publications

The editions of the Forward MID newsletters are available in large print or at www.forwardmid.org.uk
For alternative publication please E-mail to eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk or call Eric Johnstone on 0131-663-9471 or write to him at MVA 4-6 White Hart Street, Dalkeith EH22 1AE with your request.