

# FORWARD MIDLOTHIAN DISABLED PEOPLE



**Equality - Diversity - Inclusion**

## Special Transport Newsletter/Guide



Welcome to the special edition transport newsletter for disabled people living in Midlothian. This has been jointly produced by **Forward Mid** and **Midlothian Public Partnership Forum For Health**.

Transport can be such an essential component in determining the day to day quality of people's lives, whether it be a trip to see a good friend, getting along to a local group or club or attending an appointment at the hospital or GP surgery, getting there efficiently and safely can be so important. Every persons needs differ, Forward Mid has tried to find out as much information from individual companies and their services.

So what we've tried to do here is to bring together all the various transport options and choices that are available

across Midlothian.

Our hope would be that having a copy of this newsletter to hand can allow disabled people in Midlothian to have a much better understanding of the transport choices available to them.

Please read inside and see what's available!

Hopefully this special edition newsletter will help you when you're out and about or planning a trip across Midlothian.

If you know of some transport option that's available that we haven't included here please get in touch and let us know.

Wishing you safe and happy travelling!

**Iain Tait** on behalf of Forward Mid

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# On the Bus by Mike Harrison

Mike Harrison is Secretary of the Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance and Chair of the Midlothian Disability Access Panel. Following a spinal injury in 2006 he is a tetraplegic wheelchair user who relies on buses for about 90% of travel (trains for the other 10%). Here is a mixture of bits of information and tips from make which can help someone who does not use buses to reconsider and experiment.

## Operators

There are four main operators with services running in or through Midlothian:

1. Stagecoach has services to Dumfriesshire which run through Penicuik. Its website says about users with special needs is 'contact the local operator' but gives no information as to who the local operator is or how you contact them.
2. Perryman operates services between Edinburgh and some Borders towns. All of their buses now have low floors, ramps and wheelchair space.
3. First Group also operates between Edinburgh and some Borders towns. This company is now speeding up its replacement programme and most of the old buses which used to have steps have now gone. However it may be worth checking with them about any particular journey.
4. Lothian Buses provide the most frequent services in Midlothian – generally radially from Edinburgh out to Mayfield, Gorebridge, Rosewell and Penicuik. There is also the 'bus in search of a destination', the number 40 which goes between Penicuik and Portobello by a very circular rural route. Lothian Buses are fully wheelchair accessible for a few years, and the ones on the most used routes now also have a second space for a buggy.

All operators have conditions of carriage which set out their policy about numbers and types of chairs. All trying to juggle constraints to be as fair as possible to most of the users. We may not get what we want all of the time, but should expect it most of the time. From personal experience I reckon that there will be a ramp malfunction on about one in eight journeys, but that's an initial failure – often a second attempt will be successful and usually even if it's not the driver will assist; to be left behind because of a ramp failure is very rare. Slightly more common is the situation where there is already of wheelchair on the bus and a less common one where the space is occupied by a buggy with an uncooperative owner who will not fold it. Although the signs say 'This space must be vacated for



Mike Harrison Alighting a bus

a wheelchair user' the driver cannot enforce this. You may just have to wait for the next bus – not a problem if it's the No. 3 with a 10-minute service, but a 40 or in the evenings when it's 30' it's a pain. I allow 'buggy time' by taking one bus earlier than the one I need to arrive at my destination in time. This means that most of the time I arrive at places 20 to 30 minutes before I need to be there. Reduces stress.

How hard are your tyres? How are your brakes? On a bus you are protected against a sudden stop by the backrest, but if your brakes are not well adjusted you may be liable to some skidding when a bus starts off from a stop and this is much more a significant problem in wet weather. There is no need for restraints in trams or trains, but the modern bus does accelerate quite quickly. It is not a problem if the brakes are well set and the tyres are dry.

## **At the bus stop**

At every stop there is a board which details the kinds of ticket available and the price. If you don't have an entitlement card, READ THIS(!). And remember that, for driver safety reasons, Lothian Buses drivers do not have any access to cash to give change.

The drivers will usually stop if there is anyone waiting even if they don't look as if they are waiting for that particular bus, but it's always best to signal. If you are obviously physically disabled and have a wheelchair or a stick the driver will do his best to get in close to the kerb. Unfortunately bus stopping places are frequently cluttered up with illegally parked cars and pavement heights are very variable. The Kassel Kerb which is designed to be almost exactly at the height of the bus floor is fine if the bus is able to get in close and square to the kerb, but very often they have to come in at an angle which means there is an uncomfortable gap. Also if a ramp is needed, that has to have a space to drop slightly and the Kassel Kerb can be too high. I feel sorry for the drivers as some of the routes are quite long and in the course of a return journey there may be something like 80 stops and every one will be slightly different in the approach line and kerb height. As drivers do not stick to one route, it's obviously impossible for them to remember the details of every stop.

The convention is that a wheelchair user goes to the front of the queue and gets on first so that they have time to position themselves and get the brakes on before the bus sets off, although I did have an argument with a lady a week or two ago who insisted that wheelchairs always got on last, despite other passengers who were trying to get me on before her!

## **Ramps**

The ramps are generally reliable, although slightly over-sensitive and will retract automatically if they hit an obstacle, but there are various tricks the drivers will use and generally will make three or four attempts to get a ramp out before they will come out of their cab and assist manually with a wheelchair.

I always tried to make sure there was somebody behind me in the queue and would ask them for help, but I learnt that if I said "please stop me tipping backwards" it panicked them, but if I said "can you help me up the ramp?" They were happy to help.

## **On the bus**

If you have an entitlement card and are in a wheelchair you will not be able to reach the card reader. For driver safety reasons they will usually have their window closed, in which case the card has to be passed through the small slot at the front so the driver can scan it. At busy times very often the driver will just offer to enter the 'fare' manually, as long as he/she has seen the card.

If you are not a wheelchair user but have difficulty in walking, it's probably a good idea to have a Thistle Card which can indicate to the driver that you need time to sit down before the bus moves. If you say where you are getting off, it will also enable the driver to give you time to get to the front of the bus. One of the disadvantages of the additional space for the buggy is that it has reduced the number of handholds for getting to the front.



The wheelchairist has an additional problem on some of the older single deck buses which have four inward facing seats on the left-hand side. These are very popular with those who have reduced mobility, but unfortunately the space is quite narrow and it is very difficult to get a chair past without running into people's shins, and of course these are the people who have the most difficulty in getting out of the way. On these buses there is also a slope from front to back so as well as trying to avoid people's legs you are going uphill.

## Getting off the bus

Sometimes this is harder than getting on. Firstly you have to do a 180° turn usually around the pillar that has the blue bell on it. Diagonally opposite are usually the seats for disabled people but these are also very popular with people who have shopping trolleys or walkers. Generally they are not aware of how much space is needed for a wheelchair's footrests, and a polite "Watch your legs I don't want to hit them" is in order.

Go squarely down the ramp, keeping control of your speed. Again people don't realise that you need to go to the end of the ramp before turning and will stand there blocking your exit. Speak nicely to them! A 'Thank you ' at this point can be both to the driver and the people who are giving you space to get off. Be careful in wet weather where you may not have the normal grip on the rims.

## Finally

If you have not used a bus because you think you may not be able to, get a friend or a carer to go with you who can help if you need it and just give you confidence anyway. Don't be dissuaded. It can be an adventure and a sense of humour and a relaxed attitude is an advantage. Always allow more time than you think you will need. You have all the time in the world.

Thanks to Mike for this section.

# Wheelchair on public transport

## Before you Travel!

The majority of wheelchair users will be able to travel on public transport. Wheelchairs that cannot fit on public transport:

- If your chair is more than 700mm wide by 11200mm length. A normal chair approx 660mm wide by 1065mm length when you are in it. Unless otherwise stated.
- If your chair is very heavy, chair and Passenger exceed 220 Kilograms. As public transport do not carry scales it is the wheelchair users responsibility to know the combined weight, scales can be found in most hospitals.
- If you need to travel with your legs fully extended or the backrest reclined.
- If you use a scooter difficult to manoeuvre and may be unstable in a vehicle.

## You must ensure that your wheelchair is in a safe condition to travel.

This means, for example, making sure that it is correctly maintained, that the tyres are properly inflated, that you have not overloaded the back of the chair with bags (this can cause the chair to tip over backwards on a ramp).

If you have a powered chair you must ensure that the battery is secure.

If your chair has adjustable kerb climbers you should check that they are set so that they do not catch on the ramp.

The transport operator has the right to refuse to let you travel if he believes that your wheelchair is not in a safe condition.

# National Entitlement Card

The national entitlement card also known as the bus pass gives 60+ and disabled people free bus travel throughout Scotland.

Application forms are available at all Midlothian libraries – completed forms including a colour passport-style photo must be taken by the applicant to any Midlothian library for processing. The verification system requires the librarian to confirm that the photo submitted is a true likeness of the applicant – if the application form is handed in by anyone other than the applicant, it will be rejected.



Your bus pass is printed in Hull, England and sent direct to your home address. On the front of the card will be your name and card number, your photo, the oakleaf logo of Midlothian Council and the expiry date. This card is not transferable and can only be used by the card holder.











Various symbols appear on the lower right side of the card. All cards show a large orange “C” symbol. Plus 1 logo A “+1” symbol tells the driver that you are entitled to have a companion travel free with you on your bus journey.

Eye symbol on card The “eye symbol” indicates that the holder is blind or partially sighted and is entitled to the free train travel concessions of the Scottish Blind Scheme in addition to free bus travel.



Local buses that accept this card Lothian Buses, First Bus, Edinburgh Coach Lines, Perryman’s and Stagecoach, Travelling intercity this card is accepted by Citylink, Megabus and National express. Over 95% of buses are adapted for wheelchair Carriage, most buses can carry only one wheelchair, not all bus stops are suitable for wheelchair users, it would be advisable to phone before travelling to avoid disappointment.


## Bus Company Contact Details



|   |   |                       |  |
|---|---|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Lothian Buses Tel:</b> _____         |  | <b>0131 554 4494</b>  | <b>select option 2, website: <a href="http://lothianbuses.com/">lothianbuses.com/</a></b>      |
| <b>First Bus Tel:</b> _____             |  | <b>1224 650100,</b>   | <b>website: <a href="http://www.firstgroup.com/">www.firstgroup.com/</a></b>                   |
| <b>Edinburgh Coach Lines Tel:</b> _____ |  | <b>0131 554 5413,</b> | <b>website: <a href="http://www.edinburghcoachlines.com/">www.edinburghcoachlines.com/</a></b> |
| <b>Perryman’s Tel:</b> _____            |  | <b>01289 308719,</b>  | <b>website: <a href="http://www.perrymansbuses.co.uk/">www.perrymansbuses.co.uk/</a></b>       |
| <b>Stagecoach Helpline Tel:</b> _____   |  | <b>07736 892 253,</b> | <b>website: <a href="http://www.stagecoachbus.com/">www.stagecoachbus.com/</a></b>             |
| <b>Scottish Citylink Tel:</b> _____     |  | <b>0871 266 33 33</b> | <b>website: <a href="http://www.citylink.co.uk/index.php">www.citylink.co.uk/index.php</a></b> |
| <b>Megabus Tel:</b> _____               |  | <b>0900 1600 900</b>  | <b>website: <a href="http://uk.megabus.com/Default.aspx">uk.megabus.com/Default.aspx</a></b>   |
| <b>National Express Tel:</b> _____      |  | <b>08717 818178</b>   | <b>website: <a href="http://www.nationalexpress.com/">www.nationalexpress.com/</a></b>         |



**Lothian Community Transport bus services operate wheelchair access facilities with a tail lift for larger wheelchairs.**



**For all enquires please contact Lothian Community Transport 0131 663 0176**



## Accessible Transport for Disabled People in Midlothian

Many public transport services in Midlothian are operated by buses that are considerably easier to use than in the past. Routes normally operated by low-floor buses giving easy access to all including standard wheelchair users are shown in the list with a Disabled symbol. Standard wheelchairs occupy an area no larger than 700mm x 1500mm. Routes normally operated by vehicles with special wheelchair access facilities (eg a lift or ramp) are marked with a .

Midlothian Council helps to fund Dial-a-Ride, a special door-to-door service for people who have mobility restrictions. This includes those who cannot physically manage to board a standard bus vehicle, as well as those who live too far from a standard bus service to reach it comfortably. Dial-a-Ride services are operated by HcL (formerly Handicabs). For Dial-a-Ride bookings and enquiries Tel:  0131 447 9949 .

Dial-a-Bus offers once-a-week trips to selected shopping centres from most towns and villages. An easy-to-board bus calls at your door, and brings you back after your shopping trip. You can have a carer with you. There is a flat rate fare for these trips. Dial-a-Bus services are operated by HcL. For Dial-A-Bus bookings and enquiries Tel:  0131 447 1718 .

Midlothian Council also supports Lothian Community Transport Services (LCTS). It provides five community bus routes shown in the table of services (R1, R2, R3, R4 and R5), LCTS hires its vehicles for group travel. If you are a non-profit making voluntary or community group, and arranging transport is a problem, LCTS can hire you a minibus for 15 passengers. All vehicles can take wheelchair users. Vehicles can be with-driver or selfdrive. For LCTS bookings and enquiries Tel:  0131 663 0176 .

Midlothian Taxicard offers travel by taxi at reduced rates for those who are physically unable to use standard bus services. Many taxi firms in the Midlothian area (plus two in Edinburgh) are in the scheme, but not all. See the list of current taxi companies page 8. The scheme allows up to 104 single discounted trips per year, effectively one round-trip per week. For Midlothian Taxicard applications and enquiries Tel:  0131 561 5455  More information page 6.

For Midlothian Taxicard bookings – call any taxi firm on the list of operators participating in the scheme. Some taxis are equipped or people sitting in their wheelchairs; if needed, advise when booking.

## Lothian Community Transport Services (LCTS)

Lothian Community Transport Services is an independent organisation that provides, promotes and supports high-quality passenger transport services including:

- Accessible minibus hire services to over 230 member organisations
- High quality training for transport operators
- Support services for transport providers
- 



Lothian Community Transport Services has operating bases in Edinburgh and Midlothian

Lothian Community Transport Services minibus hire services operate from bases in Edinburgh and Dalkeith and are available to not-for-profit organisations in Edinburgh, Midlothian and West Lothian.

All our minibuses are available for hire on both a “Self-Drive” and “With-Driver” and our charges are mostly mileage-based.

Bookings are subject to vehicle availability. Minibuses can only be hired by member organisations and full details are available in our Vehicle Hire Policy.

Anyone driving a vehicle in the LCTS fleet must be on the LCTS Register of Approved Drivers.

## LCTS Community bus routes

**R1** Dalkeith - Lasswade Road - Tesco Eskbank - Bonnyrigg Market - Carrington - Temple - Gorebridge - Bonnyrigg Market Tesco Eskbank - Lasswade Road - Dalkeith (Thursdays only)

**R2** Dalkeith - Newtongrange - Gowkshill - Gorebridge - Cockpen - Bonnyrigg Market - Tesco Eskbank - Dalkeith (Thursdays only)

**R3** Dalkeith - Lasswade Road - Danderhall - Newton Village - Millerhill - Old Craighall - Fort Kinnaird - Asda, The Jewel (Thursdays only)

**R4** Dalkeith - Lasswade Road - Lasswade - Loanhead - Mavisbank - Burghlee Crescent - Park Avenue - Gaynor Avenue - Straiton Retail Park - Sainsbury's - Asda, Straiton (Mondays only)

**R5** Carrington - Temple - Gorebridge - Cockpen - Bonnyrigg - Lasswade - Loanhead - Straiton Retail Park - Sainsbury's - Asda, Straiton (Mondays only)

For more information and enquiries contact Lothian Community Transport Services:

LCTS  
6b Newmills Road  
DALKEITH  
EH22 1DU  
Tel: ☎ 0131 663 0177  
Email: ✉ Dalkeith@LCTS.org.uk

LCTS  
200 Sir Harry Lauder Road  
EDINBURGH  
EH15 2QA  
Tel: ☎ 0131 669 9959  
Email: ✉ Edinburgh@LCTS.org.uk

### The Sestran Thistle Card Scheme

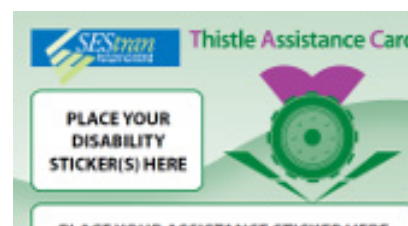
The SEStran Thistle Assistance Card is available to help anyone who has difficulty in using public transport because of age, disability or illness. It's free and is available at all Travelshops and Park & Ride sites as well as a range of outlets across South East Scotland, including; local authorities, bus operators, GP surgeries and health centres. [www.sestran.gov.uk](http://www.sestran.gov.uk)

The SEStran Thistle card is designed to make using public transport easier for older people or those with disabilities or illness. The card, which is supported by a wide variety of voluntary organisation in South East Scotland and by most bus operators, is credit-card sized and comes with a supply of peel-off stickers, which advise the driver of your disability and the help you need in an easy-to-read format.

The cards are available from:

Thistle card Public Transport Midlothian,  
Dundas Buildings, Room 9,  
62a Polton Street,  
Bonnyrigg,  
EH19 3YD

Midlothian Voluntary Action  
4-6 White Hart Street  
Dalkeith  
EH22 1AE  
Tel: ☎ 0131-663-9471



Please wait for me to sit down

Please talk slowly and clearly

Let me know when we arrive at:

Wheelchairs do not have priority over buggies, but to ensure all our customers are treated fairly and with consideration, other customers are asked to move to another part of the bus to allow you to board.

Unfortunately, if a fellow passenger refuses to move you will need to wait for the next bus. Most buses that service Midlothian can carry one or more wheelchair users.



## Midlothian Taxicard - taxi discount scheme

If you have a severe, permanent disability and either can't use ordinary buses, or can only use buses with assistance, a Taxicard could help you to get around by making taxi journeys cheaper. You will need to be a resident of Midlothian. Children under 2 years old and people with temporary mobility difficulties are not eligible to apply.

You need to either book a taxi or ask at a rank if the taxi accepts Taxicard bookings - you cannot hail a taxi in the street, it may not participate in the scheme.

Taxi operators that accept the Taxicard scheme see page 12

### Travelling in a taxi with a Taxicard

Your Taxicard will be issued for a 3 years period.

There is a maximum £3 discount per single taxi journey - you pay the first £2, then the Council pays up to the next £3, and you pay anything over the £5.

Each year you will be allowed to make 104 single journeys using your Midlothian Taxicard (equivalent to 1 return journey a week).

| Taxicard fare example |                   |  |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--|
| Examples              | Fare on the meter | Price you pay                                    |
| Examples 1            | £4.90             | £2.00 Flat Fare                                  |
| Examples 2            | £6.00             | £2.00 Flat fare plus £1.00 The amount over £5.00 |

### When and where can the Taxicard be used?

You can use your Taxicard whenever you like and for whatever purpose, for example: a trip to the shops, visiting friends or going to classes. It's valid day and night, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. We recommend that you keep a note of the number of trips you have made.

**Remember**, you are only allowed 104 trips per year.

If you use up your full allocation before the year is up, you should stop using the Taxicard until the anniversary comes round and you can start using the next year's allocation.

Not all taxi companies are part of the Midlothian Taxicard scheme. It is a voluntary arrangement whereby taxi operators apply to be part of the scheme. The Council does not compel taxi operators to join.

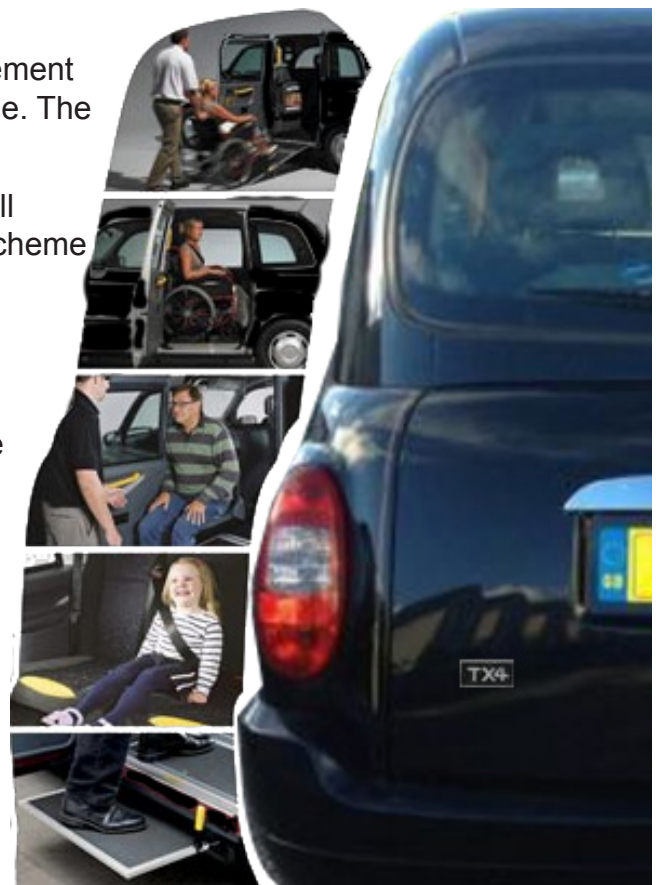
When you qualify for your Taxicard, we'll send you full information about which companies are part of the scheme so that you can keep the list with you.

### How can I apply?

Application forms can be uplifted from any of the Midlothian Travel Team information carousels. These are situated at:

- All Midlothian libraries
- Main Council offices
- Midlothian Community Hospital
- Health Centres at Bonnyrigg, Eastfield, Pathhead and Penicuik

Alternatively, you can contact the Travel Team in Bonnyrigg by phone or e-mail and an application form will be sent to you by post. The Midlothian Taxicard application form is not available online.





## **Where do I send my completed form?**

Post or deliver the completed form to the Travel Team in Bonnyrigg.

You must provide 2 passport-style photographs, fill in both sides of the form.

Please cross-check that you have completed all the relevant sections before sending the form in for the first time. If you don't, the form will be sent back to you for completion, adding delay to the process.

## **What happens if I lose my Midlothian Taxicard?**

You will need to send in a fresh passport-style photograph along with a short letter explaining what happened to the original Taxicard - lost, stolen, mislaid, damaged in the wash, eaten by the dog, or whatever. Any damaged Taxicards should be enclosed with the letter. Send the letter to the Travel Team at Bonnyrigg.

A fresh Taxicard will be issued with the same expiry date as your original Taxicard. The replacement card will have the word "REPLACEMENT" written on it. Should the previously lost or mislaid Taxicard subsequently turn up, please do not use it. Continue to use the "Replacement" card, and return the newly rediscovered original Taxicard back to the Travel Team in Bonnyrigg.

## **How do I renew my Midlothian Taxicard when it expires?**

You will receive a letter and form inviting you to renew your Taxicard from the Travel Team in Bonnyrigg.

This is sent out at the beginning of the month when your Taxicard expires at the end of the month. The form contains the details we have on our system for you. Please check those details and make any corrections necessary. We ask for a further 2 passport-style photographs to be sent with the completed renewal form to the Travel Team in Bonnyrigg.

Taxicard holders often comment that they have not received their renewal letters. In the majority of cases, this is because they have moved house and forgotten to let us know that they have changed address. The renewal letter will be sent to the most recent address we have on our system.

If you have changed address, or are about to change address, then please don't leave it until your renewal is due, but let us know as soon as possible.

There is a special "Change of Circumstance" form available for the purpose in all Midlothian Travel Team information carousels located at:

- All Midlothian libraries
- Main Council offices
- Midlothian Community Hospital
- Health Centres at Bonnyrigg, Eastfield, Pathhead and Penicuik

## **Is there a charge to obtain my Midlothian Taxicard?**

There is no charge for the issue of a new Midlothian Taxicard, a replacement card (if you lose one before it expires) or a renewed Taxicard.

Completed forms should be taken or sent to the Travel Team at:

Midlothian Council Travel Team

Dundas Buildings, Room 9

62a Polton Street,

Bonnyrigg, EH19 3YD.

Tel:  0131 561 5455 or Email:  [ptu@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:ptu@midlothian.gov.uk) .

# Midlothian TaxiCard Participating Companies

Forward Mid asked the taxi companies for a list of Vehicles that they operate that can carry wheelchair passengers .



## Bonnyrigg and Lasswade

|                     |       |                              |
|---------------------|-------|------------------------------|
| P Jack              | ----- | 0754 585 4449                |
| Not confirmed       |       |                              |
| Town & Country      | ----- | 0131 660 2666, 0131 663 2666 |
| Not confirmed       |       |                              |
| United Private Hire | ----- | 0131 660 0011                |
| Not confirmed       |       |                              |

## Dalkeith

|   |       |   |
|---|-------|---|
| Aerial ABW Cabs   | ----- | 0131 663 2000, 0131 663 3232, 0131 663 9666 |
| Aerial ABW cabs say they have the largest fleet of wheelchair accessible vehicles in Midlothian. Aerial ABW cabs have 28 wheelchair accessible vehicles, and 33 private hire cars in a fleet of over 60 vehicles. |       |   |
| Important When booking a taxi, please state that you need a wheelchair accessible cab.  |       |   |
| Antonio Palys   | ----- | 0131 660 2000                               |
| Not confirmed   |       |   |
| Compass Private Hire  | ----- | 0750 742 0426                               |
| Cannot Carry wheelchair passengers  |       |   |
| Dial-A-Cab Direct   | ----- | 0131 516 4141                               |
| Cannot Carry wheelchair passengers  |       |   |
| Freewheeler Taxis   | ----- | 0131 660 3880                               |
| Cannot Carry wheelchair passengers  |       |   |
| Ian Diamond   | ----- | 0771 133 6884                               |
| Not confirmed   |       |   |
| William Dempsey   | ----- | 0754 998 8549                               |
| Not confirmed   |       |   |

## Danderhall

|               |       |               |
|---------------|-------|---------------|
| Aztec Cabs    | ----- | 0131 663 0999 |
| Not confirmed |       |               |

## Edinburgh

|   |       |               |
|---|-------|---------------|
| Central Taxis                             | ----- | 0131 229 2468 |
| Every Central Taxi can carry 1 wheelchair |       |               |
| Computer Cabs                             | ----- | 0131 272 8000 |
| Every Computer Cab can carry 1 wheelchair |       |               |

## Gorebridge

|   |       |              |
|---|-------|--------------|
| D&D Private Hire  | ----- | 01875 820477 |
| D&D Private Hire have 1 taxi that takes wheelchairs, Our private hire cars are not suitable for wheelchairs users. When booking a taxi, please state that you need a wheelchair accessible cab.                                       |       |              |
| Gore Cabs   | ----- | 01875 822233 |
| Gore Cab do not have any wheelchair accessible vehicles. We operate private cars and a minibus we carry a small step to assist people getting in and out of our minibus as the step in can be quite high for elderly/disabled people. |       |              |

## Loanhead

|   |       |               |
|---|-------|---------------|
| Chauffeur Drive   | ----- | 0131 440 1192 |
| Chauffeur Drive say they have the largest wheelchair accessible fleet in Midlothian as follows:<br>For one wheelchair user and 3 passengers we operate 2 VW Caddy<br>For one wheelchair user and 3 passengers we operate 2 Peugeot /eurobus |       |               |

For two/three wheelchairs plus passengers Ford Transit with Electric Tail-lift, suitable for heavy awkward chairs

For two/three wheelchairs plus passengers Mercedes Sprinter with ramp

We also have Mercedes Vitos x 3 that can take one or two standard size wheelchairs

Our fleet is involved in contract work so availability can differ from week to week, it is best to call in advance particularly for the larger vehicles.

We provide transport for days out, holidays but also journeys to hospitals, shops, banks, meals out or visiting friends.

We are introducing a loyalty scheme after using us 10 times the customer will get £4.00 off their 11th journey.

Midlothian Taxi Hire ----- ☎ 0131 440 2985  
Not confirmed

### Newtongrange

Grange Cabs ♿ ----- ☎ 0131 663 9220  
Not confirmed

Swift Taxis ♿ ----- ☎ 0131 654 1004, 0131 660 1031  
1 wheelchair taxi, please book in advance, Half price pensioner Wednesday 10am to 12 am.  
Ring and go service for Newton village, Danderhall and Cousland.

### Penicuik

JC Taxis ♿ ----- ☎ 01968 676161  
Not confirmed  
Penicuik Private Hire Ltd ♿ ----- ☎ 01968 679600  
Not confirmed

### Rosewell

Jed Taxi & Private Hire ♿ ----- ☎ 0131 440 3733  
Not confirmed

## Lothian Buses try a bus day

Lothian Buses try a bus day proved very popular here is a little comment from Lothian buses

Hi readers just wanted to have a little article here on behalf of Lothian Buses, after our open forum day at St Andrew street Dalkeith. To promote our new Volvo Hybrid buses as well as to promote accessibility for all passengers of all capabilities.

We hope that our lowering system and ramp access provides a simple and safe way for boarding and alighting from our vehicles. We enjoyed answering all your questions and enjoyed helping you to feel comfortable and demonstrating our easy accessibility. We hope that you all took a lot from today and remember to not be afraid to ask any of our drivers when necessary for assistance.

On behalf of Lothian Buses we thank you all for your time and comments and look forward to seeing you on our services in the near future.



# Transport For a Health Appointment

## What to do if you need transport for a health appointment?

If you have an appointment at a hospital or other health venue, or you are visiting someone in hospital you may find that you need to arrange transport. Feedback we have received indicates that people don't always have clear information about how to do this. Information to help is below.

## Using Public Transport

If you are planning to travel by public transport, information is included in this newsletter about buses that serve the Royal Infirmary (page 20) and Midlothian Community Hospital (page 19).

## Traveline Scotland Journey Planner

For other destinations; Traveline Scotland journey planner can assist. This can be found at [www.travelinescotland.com](http://www.travelinescotland.com) or by calling Traveline Scotland Tel: 📞 0871 200 22 33. Give details of your start point and destination, along with journey times, the journey planner will give details of bus times, route numbers, bus stop locations and journey times.

## Midlothian Community Hospital

A public transport guide for Midlothian Community Hospital has been produced, giving information about bus routes from across Midlothian to the hospital. A copy is included with this newsletter. If you cannot find it or need another please contact Karl Vanter, Tel: 📞 0131 561 5443.

The free car park at the hospital, includes disabled parking areas close to the hospital entrance.

## Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh

The Royal Infirmary site is undergoing development at present due to the building of the new Royal Hospital for Sick Children and the Department for Clinical Neuroscience. Car parking at the site will continue to be provided, the building work will mean changes to where car parks are located. As a result of the site development the bus stop has been relocated to the rear of the Royal Infirmary, closer to outpatient departments (see page 20). For more information please visit [www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk/riecampus](http://www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk/riecampus)

## Transport between the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh and St John's Hospital

If you are travelling to or from St John's hospital and can easily get to the Royal Infirmary site, a number 40/X40 Horsburgh bus runs between the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh and St John's Hospital. The bus runs approximately once per hour and takes between 50 minutes and an hour.

## General anaesthetic + driving?

Please use public transport, if possible, or arrange to be dropped off at the hospital and picked up again by car. Car parking spaces are limited at some hospitals. There are 'drop off' zones at our hospitals.

## The Scottish Ambulance Service Patient Transport Service

If you are not able to use public transport and do not have your own private transportation, you may qualify for support from the Scottish Ambulance Service Patient Transport Service

### Ambulance transport is available for patients who:

- Require assistance from skilled ambulance staff
- Have a medical condition that would prevent them from travelling to hospital by any other means





- Have a medical condition that might put them at risk from harm if they were to travel independently
- Have mobility difficulties that require the assistance of ambulance care staff
- Are attending hospital for treatment that might have side effects and require ambulance care on the return journey

## Can I be accompanied by my carer?

There are circumstances when you may be accompanied by a carer or escort:

- If you are under 16 years old
- If you have learning difficulties
- If you require more specialist personal support from a carer due to your medical condition or a mental health condition



## How can I request ambulance transport?

To request an ambulance, call the Scottish Ambulance Service Booking Line. Booking line: 📞 0300 123 1236 OR Text Relay: 📠 18001-0300 123 1236 for patients who may be deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired

Calls will be charged at local rates for mobiles and landlines.

You may request bookings up to 28 days in advance of your appointment. You will need your appointment letter when you call with the 10 digit CHI number at the top of the letter. Due to limited space on the ambulance, you will only be able to travel with one piece of hand luggage.

A lot of time is wasted by people not cancelling a journey no longer needed. If you need to cancel a journey which has been booked, please call 📞 0800 389 1333 (freephone from landlines).

## What is the NHS Travel Costs Scheme?

If you travel to hospital by other forms of transport, you may be entitled to get help with your costs. More information is available at [www.scotland.gov.uk/healthcosts](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/healthcosts) or call 📞 0845 850 116 (calls charged at local rates).

## Other transport options

If you contact the Patient Transport Service and you do not qualify for an ambulance, they will advise you about alternative options. One option available locally is the British Red Cross Transport Service.

## British Red Cross Transport Service

The transport service offers freedom and independence for people who cannot get about easily or use public transport. British Red Cross help people to get to medical/hospital appointments

### How do we help people?

British Red Cross can provide a driver with a vehicle to offer door-to-door assistance for those in need. The service aims to:

- Enable clients to keep appointments safely and efficiently
- Provide freedom of travel for those with mobility problems.

The British Red Cross ask for a contribution to our costs, based on mileage used. The charge for the service is 55p per mile which we ask you to pay in cash at the time of the journey. You will be informed as to how much the journey will cost when you book it.



It is best to give as much notice as possible as this is a popular service.


### **What skills and training do our volunteers have?**

The British Red Cross volunteers are fully trained in helping people who have difficulty travelling and those using our specially adapted vehicles must complete accredited driver training.

### **Could I volunteer for this service?**

Without volunteers, the British Red Cross would never be able to give people the help they need in a crisis. Because we offer so many services across the UK, we depend on people who generously give up their time to help others. Please contact us if you would like to become a transport volunteer.

### **How do I get in touch?**

For further information, please contact our West Lothian branch Tel:  01506 654 652. Our West Lothian branch manage this service for Midlothian.

## **Travelling Home from Hospital**

When being discharged from hospital, the first option to travel home should be family or friends. You should make the staff in the ward aware as soon as possible if you have someone who can collect you from hospital when you are being discharged.

If you have a clinical or mobility need and require assistance, staff in the ward can contact the NHS Lothian Transport Hub. There is limited access to transport and this is prioritised for patients who require assistance and for transfer to other hospitals.

### **NHS Lothian Transport Hub**

NHS Lothian Transport Hub is a single point of contact for patient transport and can only be accessed by NHS Lothian staff.

When a patient needs transport to leave hospital or be transferred to another hospital, nursing staff will call the Transport Hub on the patient's behalf.

Call handlers within the Transport Hub have access to various transport options including ambulances, patient transport buses, Royal Voluntary Service patient transport drivers and taxis. The Hub uses the same assessment as the Scottish Ambulance Service to decide what the most appropriate transport solution is for each patient.

The Hub benefits for each patient are:

- Staff are able to access the most suitable type of vehicle when the patient is ready for discharge or transfer
- The waiting time for transport outwith Lothian has reduced from 2-3 weeks to 2-3 days. This means that bed capacity is available much sooner.
- Nurses only have to make one 5 minute phone call to arrange transport. Previously this could take up to an hour. This frees up nursing time which can be used for patient care.
- All transport is used more efficiently and all patients that need the assistance on an ambulance crew will receive this assistance.

Thanks to Catherine Evans for this section.



## The Blue Badge Scheme

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 this benefits those who are unable to walk great distances.

### Blue Badge and PIP

The Department for transport has decided that people should be automatically eligible for a Blue Badge if they score 8 points or more in the 'Moving Around' activity of PIP. This activity assesses a person's physical ability to get around and a score of 8 points or more will be awarded to people who are either unable to walk or who cannot walk further than 50 metres. The changeover is happening now.

### Printed application forms can be found in Midlothian Libraries or Dundas Buildings

**Form A Blue Paper**, for applicants who are eligible without further assessment. This includes those who can provide proof of identity and residency, and evidence of one of the following:-

- Registered blind.
- Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of the Disabled Living Allowance
- War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement
- Armed Forces and Reserved Forces Scheme.
- People who have been supplied with a wheelchair by the NHS.

You will automatically qualify for a Blue Badge and need no further assessment

**Form B lilac paper** for applicants needing further assessment:-

- 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 by the NHS
- If you are applying on behalf of a child under the age of 3 who has specific medical condition
- 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

Send your completed paper application, along with one passport-style photograph and payment of £20 (cheque, not credit card or cash) to the Travel Team address Freepost address

### Eligibility - who else can apply?

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 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. This standard charge will apply to new Blue Badges, renewed Blue Badges and replacement Blue Badges.

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





## Helen's Handy Hints

Well, now that the weather is getting better you may fancy a weekend away somewhere, either in Scotland or if you feel like going a wee bit further, what about England? I often go to Sheffield by train to visit a friend. When I first thought about going on the train by myself I was a bit anxious, but having done it many times now I can honestly say it was a lot easier than I imagined it would be. If I can do it anyone can!

Once you've decided where you want to go and when, the next thing you need to do is think about what assistance and support you may require to get there.

The train company need to know that if you are in a wheelchair, can you transfer to a seat or do you need to remain in your wheelchair. If you can, it is better to give the train company as much notice as possible as sometimes it can be difficult to get a wheelchair space if others have already been pre-booked as there are limited wheelchair spaces available. You then need to contact either the train company you are travelling



with or National Rail direct and they will book your tickets and any assistance you may require, for example, getting on or off the train or whilst on the train. If you need ramps to access the train they have to arrange to have them at your departing station and at your destination station. You will also be asked how much luggage you have as you may need assistance with that, both with getting on the train and when you arrive at your destination. Do you need someone to take your luggage to a taxi or whatever transport you have arranged to pick you up? There is a lot of planning involved and the best way to do this is to break it down into manageable stages.

- ➡ Stage 1 Where and when am I going
- ➡ Stage 2 When I arrive at the station, what support do I need
- ➡ Stage 3 What support do I need to get on the train
- ➡ Stage 4 What support do I need when on the train
- ➡ Stage 5 What support do I need to get off the train
- ➡ Stage 6 What support do I need once I am off the train but still in the station

You can book your tickets on line but I prefer to phone the company direct and get them to send my tickets to my house. It's best if you can give them at least 7 to 10 days to enable them to do this but I always find they are sent out very quickly. There is an additional cost for this but it is well worth the peace of Mind it gives you to know you don't have to panic about buying tickets at the station or trying to get them from the automatic machines they have within the station forecourt. I would usually arrive 30 to 45 minutes before departure even though they would only normally require you to be there 30 minutes before. This gives you that little extra time to make sure you are prepared for your journey. If you intend to travel a lot I would suggest you get a disabled railcard as this can save you a great deal of money. The Disabled Persons Railcard allows you to get 1/3 off most rail fares throughout Great Britain. If you're travelling with an adult companion they also can get 1/3 off their rail fare - so you can save money for your friends too! The railcard cost £20 for one year and £54 for three years so, use your Railcard for a £60 fare and you'll save £20 on the journey. That means a one year Railcard has paid for itself in just one trip! Take a friend with you and you've saved enough for lunch, a visit to the cinema or whatever you both enjoy!

Getting into Edinburgh Waverley is not as easy as it used to be as there are now barriers at the entrance to the station and only permitted Edinburgh taxis can gain access to the station along with Handicabs. If you are coming by car or via a Midlothian Taxi you can be dropped off at the Carlton entrance which is at the back of the station in Market Street. There is a telephone available for you to use at this entrance and you can contact the East Coast train provider direct to let them



know you have arrived at the station and could they send the support that you have previously arranged, to meet you. (You will need to take the lift to the ground floor where the person from the train company who is going to support you will meet you).

Once on the train there is a refreshment service provided, either in the buffet car or brought to all passengers via a trolley service. Tea, coffee, cold drinks, sandwiches, crisps and biscuits are all available and although I haven't asked for it yet I think you can get alcohol as well, might consider that on my next trip! Try and have some change with you as it just makes life easier but they also accept some bank cards. The toilet facilities are usually very clean and accessible but I prefer to take my foot plates off as it makes things more manageable for me negotiating the narrow carriages. You can call for assistance if you need it to get to the toilet as there is a button at the table beside your seat. Someone will then take you to the toilet and wait outside the door or you can tell them that you will call them on the assist button which is inside the toilet to come back for you when you are ready to return to your seat.

I enjoy traveling on the train and will continue to in spite of some of the obstacles with the access to Edinburgh Waverley Station, which hopefully will be sorted before I plan my next trip away, which hopefully will be very soon!

Here are some numbers you might find useful:

Cross Country \_\_\_\_\_ 📞 0845 7443366

East Coast \_\_\_\_\_ 📞 0131 550 2461

National Rail \_\_\_\_\_ 📞 08457 484950

## A Word From Edinburgh Trams

We want as many people as possible to be able to use our trams in safety and comfort. All our trams have dedicated wheelchair spaces. If there is no wheelchair user occupying or requiring to occupy a wheelchair space, other passengers including those travelling with a buggy or with bulky luggage may occupy a wheelchair space. Any passenger using a wheelchair space must vacate that seat if requested to do so by a Company official.

Our trams have certain seats which are designated as 'priority seats' and are intended for use by those passengers who are less able to stand throughout their journey. Any passenger using a 'priority seat' must vacate that seat if requested to do so by a Company official.

Please note that mobility scooters are **NOT** permitted on our trams. Wheelchairs which are in a condition which could endanger other passengers or damage their belongings or the tram will not be carried.

### Travelling as a wheelchair user or with a wheelchair user

All of our trams have dedicated wheelchair spaces. These spaces are designed for wheelchairs which are no bigger than 700mm wide, 1200mm long and 1350mm high. A wheelchair user will not be able to board a tram if the tram is full, or if there are already wheelchair users occupying the wheelchair spaces.



When using a tram, wheelchair users and/or carers must ensure that the wheelchair is positioned in a wheelchair space and comply with the instructions given by notices and or a Company official. Wheelchairs must have the brakes ON whilst the tram is in motion. Whenever the wheelchair space is needed by a wheelchair user, other passengers must move to make it available unless the tram is full.

Scottish National Entitlement Cards that do not have City of Edinburgh Council as the issuing Local Authority are **NOT valid on tram services.**

## Borders Railway Project

Expected completion date Summer 2015

The 30 mile railway, with seven new stations will deliver major economic and social development opportunities and offer a fast and efficient railway. Bringing inward investment for the local community plus approximately £33million of benefits for the wider Scottish economy. It will support 400 jobs during the construction phase and act as a catalyst for increased business development and housing opportunities within easy commuting distance of Edinburgh.

The services will operate on a regular clock face departure every 30 minutes from Edinburgh to Tweedbank and from Tweedbank to Edinburgh. The first service from Tweedbank is at 05:20 during the week.

If you have a disability that makes travelling by train difficult you might qualify for the Disabled Persons Railcard. The Disabled Persons Railcard allows you to get 1/3 off most rail fares throughout Great Britain. If you're travelling with an adult companion they also can get 1/3 off their rail fare. It costs £20 for a one-year Railcard. £54 for a three-year Railcard. You can apply online at [www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/](http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/)



## Midlothian Public Partnership Forum for Health

### What is the Public Partnership Forum for Health?

The forum is a network for people who live in Midlothian and local groups and voluntary organisations. We aim to improve health and health services for the people of Midlothian by working with Midlothian Community Health Partnership. We provide a voice for the people of Midlothian within the local NHS. Anybody who lives in Midlothian can join, as can local voluntary organisations and community groups.

### What does the forum do?

- We help to review and produce patient information
- We organise public meetings and events
- We speak to people about their experiences of using health services
- We take forward ideas about how to improve local health services
- We raise issues directly with the NHS



We have two members who sit on the Community Health Partnership Subcommittee, which is the main decision-making body for health services in Midlothian.

### How can I be involved?

You can get involved in different ways. Many members receive our newsletter and get in touch when a topic of interest comes up, or when they have something to tell us. Others come along to events from time to time or attend our regular meetings. It is up to you to choose how you would like to be involved.

### Why join?

For the forum to be effective we need to have a broad and diverse membership. That way we can better represent the views of Midlothian's people. We want everyone with an interest in health to join so that we can make sure you have information about health services, and so that you can tell us your experiences and ideas to help us develop better services.

For more information please contact Catherine Evans, Public Involvement Co-ordinator, Midlothian Community Health Partnership Tel:  0131 271 3411

Email:  [catherine.evans@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:catherine.evans@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk)

# Lothian Buses at Midlothian Community Hospital

The Lothian Bus number 39 is the only bus that goes into the Midlothian, Lothian Buses 40 and 49 stop in the Eskbank road in Bonnyrigg, marked below the Lothian bus number 29 stops at Tesco Hardengreen, there is a short walk to a footpath that takes you over the A7 shown as the dotted blue line. The First Bus X95 stops at Justinlees on the B703 about 1 mile east Line on map, Lothian community transport service route R1 and R2 stop at Eskbank road in Bonnyrigg.

**Number 39 to Gorebridge bus stop** 1Z

**Number 40 to Penicuik bus stop** 1X

**Number 49 to Rosewell bus stop** 1X

**Number 29 to Gorebridge bus stop** 1T

**Number 39 to Woodburn and Gorebridge bus stop** 1T

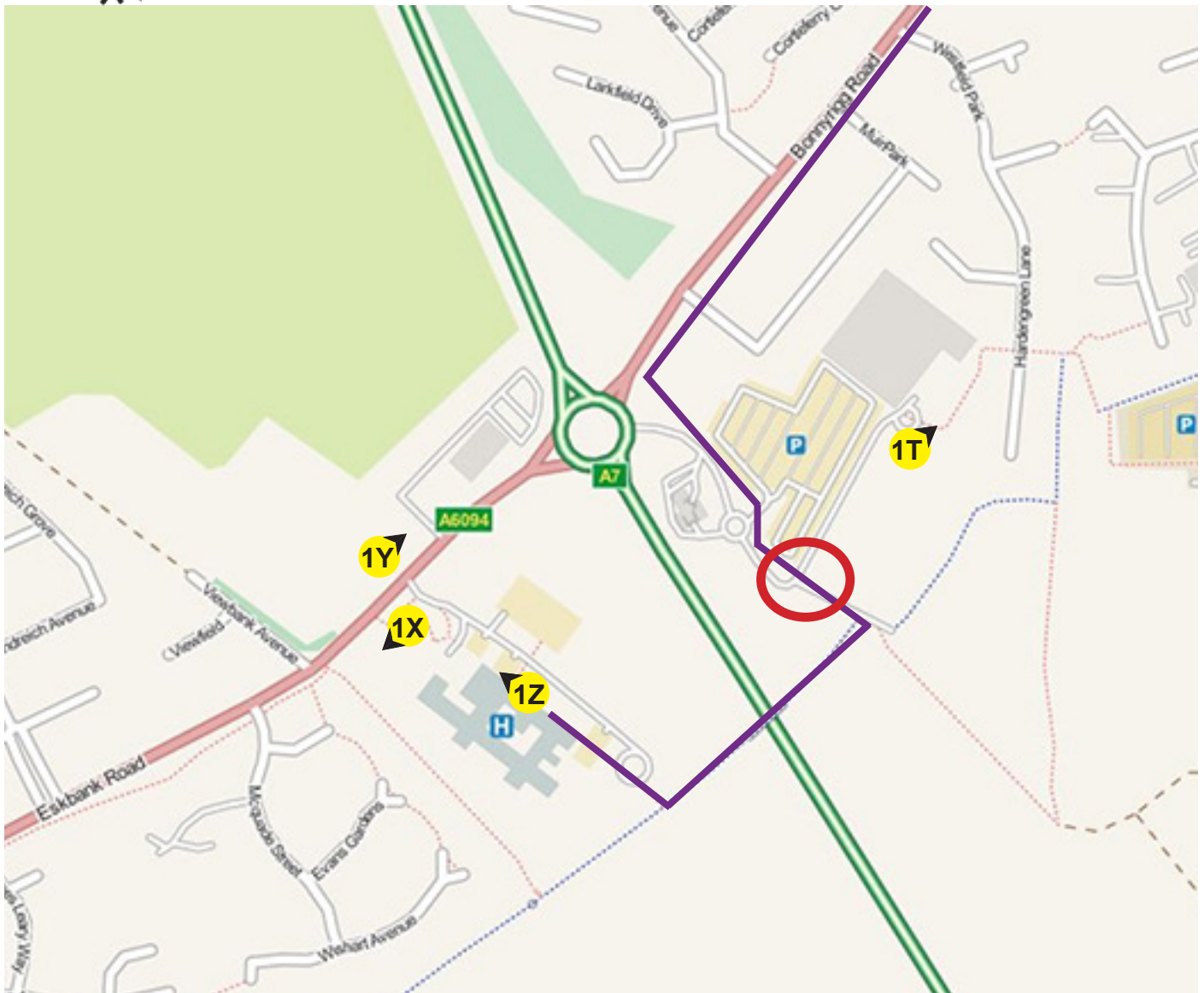
**Number 40 to Portobello bus stop** 1Y

**Number 49 to the Jewel bus stop** 1Y

**Number 29 to Silverknowes bus stop** 1T

**LCTS R1 and R2 to Dalkeith 1Y and from Dalkeith 1X, Thursdays Only.**

15 to 20 minutes  Not recommended as footpath is broken and missing. 



# Lothian Buses at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary

The relocation of the current bus stops is to allow for the development of the New Royal Hospital for Sick Children also the department of Clinical Neuroscience. The bus services affected by these developments are Lothian Bus 7, 8, 18, 21, 24, 33, 38, 49 and also the NHS shuttle bus.

The bus stops have moved from Little France Crescent to Little France Drive, for the Lothian Bus

Number 7 to Newhaven bus stop 1A

Number 8 to Muirhouse bus stop 1B

Number 18 to Gyle Centre bus stop 1F

Number 21 to Gyle Centre bus stop 1C 1K 1L

Number 24 to West Granton bus stop 1C 1K 1L

Number 33 to Baberton bus stop 1A 1K 1L

Number 38 to Granton bus stop 1C 1K 1L

Number 49 to The Jewel bus stop 1A 1K 1L

Number 33 to Gorebridge 1N 1M 1D

Number 49 to Rosewell 1N 1M 1D

NHS Shuttle Bus  Either 1F, 1E or 1D.



## Alternative Publications

Editions of Forward MID newsletters are available in large print or at [www.forwardmid.org.uk](http://www.forwardmid.org.uk) For alternative publications please email [eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk](mailto:eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk) or call Eric Johnstone on 0131-663-9471. Write to him at MVA, 4-6 White Hart Street, Dalkeith, EH22 1AE with your request.