

Forward Midlothian Disabled People



www.forwardmid.org.uk

Equality - Diversity - Inclusion

Forward Mid Launch new Disabled Directory 2016

Forward Mid, Midlothian’s Equality Forum, along with a network of disabled citizens has recently launched the Disabled Directory 2016. This is a comprehensive directory of services for disabled people living in Midlothian.

The event took place on Tuesday 29th March at Dalkeith Older Peoples Welfare Hall, Dalkeith.

Guests included representatives from Forward Mid, local groups and individuals, Alison White Head of Community Care Midlothian Council,

Catherine Johnstone, Leader of Midlothian Council and local politician, Colin Beattie.

Jeff Adamson, Chair of Forward Mid and Chair of the Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living said, “Access to accurate local information is key to disabled people being informed and allows them to make active choices that enable them to live better lives.



I know from personal experience how frustrating it can be when you desperately need help or support and don’t know who can provide it. It’s something that most of, if not all disabled people I’ve spoken to have experienced – it’s almost seen as a rite of passage. But it shouldn’t be – information is a fundamental need for disabled people.

Our aim with this directory is to give physically disabled people, their families, their carers and people with long term conditions practical, relevant, up to date and hopefully liberating information –

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information that can give people the knowledge and therefore the power they need to take control of how they want to live their lives.

Forward Mid is the voice of disabled people in Midlothian. It is a forum of active disabled citizens with links to health and social work planning. It strives to enable disabled citizens to have the same freedom, opportunities, choice and control at home, at work and in the community.

More information can be found on the Forward Mid website: www.forwardmid.org.uk

A representative from UPDATE, Scotland's nationwide disability information service commented that the Disabled Directory 2016 is one of the best one-stop sources of first class information on all aspects of support, health and social care options for disabled people at a local level.

If you want to connect with Forward Mid, or know more about the group, contact Ian or Eric on 0131 663 9471.

Copies of the Forward Mid Disabled Directory 2016 are available from Midlothian libraries and from Midlothian Voluntary Action an Eelectronic version is available from www.forwardmid.org.uk

Racketeering

SCAM WEBSITES OFFERING BLUE BADGE SERVICES

A small number of scam websites have been set up purporting to assist residents in making their application for a Blue Badge. These websites make a charge for their service. They are not associated with any local authority or government department.

The most recent to come to our attention is at <http://bluebadgeonline.org>. A fee of £49 is charged to **assist** with an application for a Blue Badge. This web site has now been taken down.

Midlothian council advise residents that it is not necessary to apply for a Blue Badge through this site, or any similar sites.

Applications for new Blue Badges can be made online through www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge, or directly to Midlothian Council using the paper application form available at all carousel information points;

- In all Midlothian libraries,
- Main Council offices,
- Health centres at Pathhead and Penicuik,
- The Midlothian Community Hospital reception
- Rosewell Development Trust office

Replacement of lost or stolen Blue Badges should be requested using the pink form available at the carousel information points. Renewal of a Blue Badge when the current Blue Badge is about to expire should be requested using the single sheet white form also available at the carousel information points.



Completed forms can be sent by post to the Travel Team at Midlothian House in Dalkeith, or handed in personally at Buccleuch House in Dalkeith or the Mayfield Hub at Mayfield Library.

Opening times and methods of payment are shown on the forms. The cost for a new, replacement or renewed Blue Badge in Midlothian is £20 [this price has not been increased since 2009].

Stay safe on line if you think the site is not right then do not use it.

Self-Directed Support bite size Part 2

In the last issue of our newsletter we gave a bite sized overview of Self-Directed Support (SDS).

To recap, SDS is the only way any social care is now provided. In the past the Council would have decided what support you should get and arrange it for you. You wouldn't have had much say over who supported you or the kind of support you got. SDS is about their individual making an informed choice in deciding how much ongoing control they wish to have.

In this issue we look at the very first stages in the process applying for SDS – First Contact, Eligibility Criteria and The Assessment Procedure. (This article co-produced with Midlothian Council).

First Contact

if you think you need support in your daily life then you may want to contact Midlothian social work services talk about this You can call yourself; a family member, a friend, someone from a support organisation, your doctor, an advocate, or anyone else you know.

If you already have an allocated worker, you can speak to them about your support. If you don't have a social worker or care manager, you could phone or e-mail the social work department at Midlothian council to make a referral to apply for SDS

Social Work Enquiries: Tel: 0131 271 3900

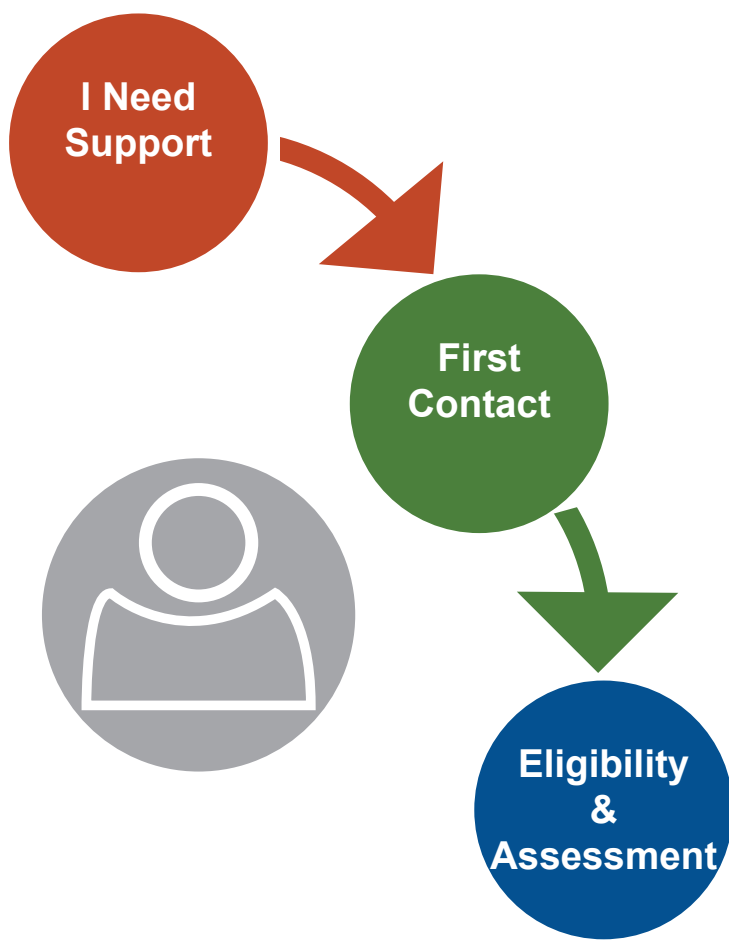
www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/1350/care_and_carers/1342/self_directed_support.

When you make this first contact you will be asked about your situation, then, if it is considered you may need support, you will be referred to a social work practitioner (Occupational Therapist, Social Worker or Community Care Assistant). Once a referral has been received arrangements will be made for a Self-Directed Support assessment to be completed with you. Urgent Self-Directed Support assessments are done first so there may be a wait for your Self-Directed Support assessment. If you are waiting and your circumstances change, it is important you let the Council know, as they may wish to complete your Self-Directed Support assessment sooner.

Self-Directed Support Assessment

Once you have been allocated a social work practitioner they will usually speak to you on the phone first to find out a bit more about you and your circumstances. Then you will agree a time for them to visit you and begin your Self-Directed Support assessment conversation. Your appointment should give you enough notice to allow you time to prepare, although sometimes, your situation may require a quick response.

During your Self-Directed Support assessment the Practitioner will work with you to find out what your personal 'outcomes' are. Outcomes are the things in your life that matter to you. It is important that you are supported to decide which things matter in your life so that any support you



arrange doesn't get in the way of these things. You should be involved in the making decisions about your support in line with the Self Directed Support Legislation. The practitioner will also work with you to determine whether your needs are eligible for social work funding.

You should be encouraged to decide: what is important to you in your life, why these things are important, how to go about doing or getting these things and who will be involved in your life and support.

The thing that matters most to you might be changing the way you feel. It may be:

"I feel better about myself so I can get out and about again."

or

"My health is better so I am as well as I can be."

Maybe keeping something in your life going even if your circumstances are changing:

"I am able to keep in touch with my nieces even though my health is getting worse."

or

"I am able to go to keep my job even though I have good days and bad days."

Maybe the thing that matters most is being involved in making decisions about your support:

"My social worker and my support workers listen to me."

Questions to help you identify what matters to you:

- 1.1 If you could change your life what would you do first?
- 1.2 Then what would you do?
- 1.3 Then what?
- 2.1 What difference would that make to you?
- 2.1 To others?
3. Where would you be doing this?
4. What sorts of things did you used to really enjoy doing?
5. What would help you to do these things again?

Your answers to these questions will define what your personal 'outcomes' are. and will help you to identify the kind of support that you need to make these things happen.

Depending on your situation the assessment may be completed in one visit or you may have several conversations over several visits and phone conversations. During this time the Social Work Practitioner will work with you to help you identify your outcomes and decide on an action plan to help you achieve them. All of this will be recorded in your assessment and once complete you should receive a copy of this document.

Once your outcomes have been agreed the professional will help you consider what support may be needed to help you meet these outcomes. If eligible for Social Work funding they will



Self Directed Support Assessment



also explain the Self Directed Support options which give you choice about how this support is provided.

Midlothian Council's eligibility criteria for providing support are related to the level of risk you are at. Currently Midlothian Council will normally only provide support where the risks are assessed to be substantial or critical.

There are 4 kinds of risk:

Critical Risk:	There are lots of risks to your independent living or health if you do not get care and support.
Substantial Risk:	There are quite a lot of risks to your independence or health if you do not get care and support.
Moderate Risk:	You may need some care and support now or you may be able to manage by yourself or with some help from family and friends
Low Risk:	You are not likely to need care and support services now but may need some information and advice

Preparing for your Self-Directed Support assessment

Preparing in advance can greatly improve your assessment experience. There a number of things that can be helpful to think about before your assessment, write your answers on a sperate piece of paper and have them present at the assessment:

- What is important to you.
- What is working well for you and what isn't working so well.
- What could be improved in your life.
- The personal outcomes you want to achieve.
- Who supports you at the moment (friends/family/neighbours)?
- Who could help support you in the future?
- Think about what support you need and who you would want to provide that support.
- Think about what questions you might want to ask and write them down.
- Is there anything that worries you about the assessment?

You might also want to think about the key people in your life and if you want them to be there for your assessment conversations. They may be able to support you by being there or helping you to prepare.

Who can I involve in my Self-Directed Support assessment?

Your Self-Directed Support assessment doesn't have to be a talk between you and the professional working with you only. You can involve other people who can help you by giving you information and advice. Remember you can ask you family members or a friend to help you at this stage.

You can also get support from a local support organisation Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living:
www.lothiancil.org.uk

An independent advocate can help you to have a stronger voice. Find an advocate in your area at:
www.siaa.org.uk/find-advocate

Every Self-Directed Support assessment will be different. An assessment should be all about you and your own circumstances. Here is a list of the top 7 things that make a good assessment.

- Is a calm and comfortable conversation with a professional?
- Considers what the whole of your life is like - not just the needs arising from your impairment or other condition.
- About your strengths and skills as well as your needs and support
- It is not just about ticking-boxes or filling in forms.
- When you and the professional are open and honest with each other?
- When you are given enough information and advice to fully take part? Including independent information from non-council sources.
- When your professional listens to you and encourages you to say what you think.

If you are applying for a Self-Directed Support assessment for a Child

If you are a disabled parent or able bodied parent or guardian claiming for a Self-Directed Support assessment for someone under 16 years of age you will be more involved.

It is important that the child is as involved as possible in the decisions about his or her support. During the child's Self-Directed Support assessment both the practitioner and disabled parent or able bodied parent or guardian should be thinking about how the support will help the child's wellbeing by keeping him or her involved and thinking about:

Safe:	Protected from abuse, neglect or harm.
Healthy:	Having good physical and mental health, and supported to make healthy safe choices.
Nurtured:	Having a happy, healthy place to live and grow.
Active:	Can take part in a wide range of activities – helping them to build a fulfilling and happy future
Respected:	Having a say and being involved in the decisions that affect their well-being.
Responsible:	Taking part within their schools and communities Included: getting help and guidance to overcome problems and to help them be full members of the communities in which they live and learn

What if the Council decide I don't need support?

If the council decide you don't need support from them that shouldn't be the end of it. The professional working with you should help you find other places where you can get support. This could be

- * Your own skills and strengths
- * People you know, such as friends and family
- * Other people in your community
- * Local charities or support organisations
- * Printed information or signposting to information online from Midlothian libraries

Don't be afraid to ask for more information. You can also contact the council again for another assessment if your needs change.

Some Frequently asked questions:

What if I didn't have time or forgot to say everything I wanted in the assessment?

If you feel that you have not provided all the information in relation to your assessment, you should contact your worker and discuss this with them. They will want to make sure all relevant information is included in the assessment.

What if I am not happy about the assessment or its outcome?

You should speak to the worker who carried out the assessment in the first place and discuss your concerns. If you are still not happy, you can raise a complaint using the council's complaints process. Support organisations may be able to help you to do this.

Who gets to see my assessment?

Only people who are involved in providing your support are allowed to see your assessment. In order to provide the best support the council may ask you if we can share information with other agencies. Your worker will explain information sharing to you and ask for your permission to share information.

I am concerned about old information being included in the assessment.

If you think old, unimportant (irrelevant) information has been included in your assessment, you should discuss this with your worker and ask for an explanation of why it needs to be included. If it has to be included, you can discuss what level of detail is required.

Remember: depending on your income, you may be charged for some social care services including:

- * Care at Home (including Supported Accommodation, Supported Living, and Housing Support Services)
- * Day Care and Day Opportunities
- * Community Alarms & Telecare
- * Short Breaks and Respite Breaks
- * Laundry Services
- * Transport
- * Some support provided through Self Direct Support

It should be noted that these charges are not the result of the introduction of Self Directed Support – charges were in place many years before this.

In the next issue of Forward Mid's Newsletter we will look at:

Support Planning

This will produce a plan of how you can be supported. During this planning you will choose how you want your support provided.

Approve the Final Plan

You and the professional only the final support plan.

Support

You follow the plan and get the support you need.



Q'straint on Lothian Buses

Mike Harrison (Secretary of the Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance) explains, I was prepared to be disappointed. I thought it could be any or even all of a) unnecessary b) clunky and difficult to use c) inefficient and d) expensive. I was definitely wrong on three counts, and the 4th is a matter of values.

Trial

Moving in to the chair space was exactly the same as on any other bus. Positioning against the backrest needs reasonable accuracy but is not difficult. In fact, I did not get in absolutely square, but more of that later. A press of the button and the left-side arm swung down, then both arms moved in to touch against the lower part of the hubs and push-rims. This was my first concern — how well would it cope with different types and sizes of wheels, with different profiles of projections? I had only seen pictures of power chairs with small wheels where the tyre was the only projecting part; I have push-rims, batteries, spokes. The bolts attaching the push-rims are a vital part of the touch-sensitive power-control system. I've had 2 broken by careless handling of the chair, and each cost £549 to repair. Now you understand why I was worried?

At this stage, as I was ready, the driver pressed the button to lock the system and the arms tightened up their pressure, but still maintaining intelligent control as we set off. Whoops! Was I slipping? Was it all a big disaster? No, just the system being very intelligent. Remember I said I had not gone in completely square. So the arms were not gripping along their whole length. The movement of the bus allowed the chair to move the 2-3mm to square up, and the arms adjusted to take up the slack. Magic! After that we went round roundabouts and corners with absolutely no movement. Usually, even when it's dry and skidding is not an issue, I hold on to the grab rail. No need. It was more like riding in a train than on a bus.

Conclusion

So it's not inefficient.

It's not difficult to use.

Is it necessary? Well, no, but it's highly desirable. It's not an invitation to the driver to drive as in a Formula 1 event, but it does mean that the passenger is secure. In a forward-facing seat the chair has to be clamped and a seat-belt deployed, but for a back-facing seat the Q'straint deals with that.

Is it expensive? Yes if you think just about one unit. Yes if you think about retro-fitting to a whole fleet. No if you think of the value when installed as part of a replacement programme and in relation to the total cost of a new bus.

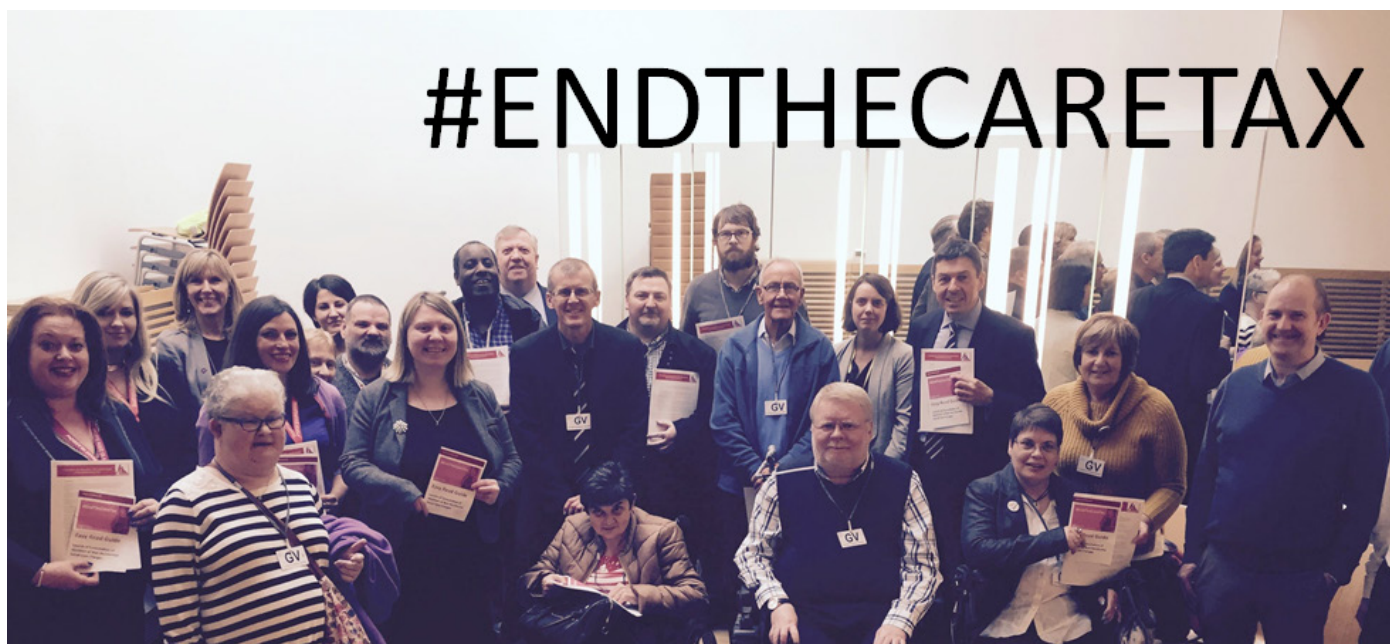
It's well-designed and appears to be well-made. It's not new, and has been well-tried. It should not need a lot of maintenance.

I would look forward to seeing it on vehicles that I travel on.

More including demo video at: www.thequantumleap.com and www.qstraint.com

This is a personal evaluation and opinion. It does not necessarily represent the opinion of SATA, but I am happy for it to be reported as coming from Mike Harrison (Secretary of the Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance).





On October 7th 2015 Siobhan McMahon launched a consultation on the abolition of non-residential social care charges at the Scottish Parliament. The consultation closed on January 29, 2016. The consultation process is part of the procedure that MSPs must follow in order to obtain the right to introduce a Member’s Bill

In total, 127 responses were received. The responses can be categorised as follows:

- * 98 (77%) from private individuals
- * 11 (9%) from representative organisations
- * 11 (9%) from charitable organisations
- * 6 (5%) from public sector organisations
- * 1 from a campaign organisation

The vast majority of respondents were supportive of the proposal in principle. Issues cited for supporting the proposal included equalities, human rights, consistency and independent living.

While there was significant support in principle, the most common concern raised in relation to the proposal was about how the policy might be funded.

There were 6 questions in total. Below is a summary of the responses to Question 1 and an excerpt from Siobhan’s review of the consultation.

Question 1: Do you support the principle that non-residential social care services should be available free at the point of delivery to those who have been assessed by a relevant professional as requiring them (as is the case within health care)? Please indicate “yes/no/undecided”, and explain the reason for your response.			Response Percent	Response Total
1.	Yes		86.55%	103
2.	No		10.92%	13
3.	Undecided		2.52%	3
			Answered	119

Reasons for supporting the principle

A general theme emerged around equality, dignity and human rights, suggesting that, in an

inclusive and equal society, independent living should be a right that is afforded to all citizens. Many respondents expressed the view that charging for care services is unfair because access to the services should be a basic human right and not a luxury. The argument was put forward that charging is unfair and detrimental to equality and to the quality of life of the person needing the care.

Other respondents referred to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, particularly articles 10 and 14, which support the provision of free care, while others queried why service users should pay for services that they considered would be free if provided within, for Example, an NHS hospital.

A consistent theme throughout the responses related to the current charging system and how charges are worked out in different local authority areas.

Observations included:

- * The current system is a postcode lottery with charges and the way in which they are worked out varying widely between local authorities.
- * People living in rural locations requiring care are further disadvantaged due to higher cost of living and travel costs to access services etc.
- * Disabled people have many additional costs due to their disability that people without disabilities do not and means-testing systems does not take this into account.

Many respondents commented on the health and societal benefits of providing free social care.

Comments included:

- * Social care support can be as important as healthcare in promoting the health and well-being of individuals and thus avoiding deterioration in either physical or emotional health.
- * Providing free social care is essential to the integration of health and social care.

Reasons for opposing the principle

Some respondents provided a brief explanation of why they did not support the principle of the proposal.

These can be summarised as follows:

- * People will be in receipt of an allowance/benefit which is intended to be used to pay their contribution costs.
- * Paying for free social care will mean cuts to other services.
- * It may result in fewer people being able to access any help, depending on how it is funded.
- * There are people with large incomes or savings who can afford these charges.
- * Local authorities are not in a position to end charging unless compensated.

Siobhan McMahon's commentary on the results of the consultation.

As someone who grew up in North Lanarkshire and saw the changes that came to our community as the old industries died out and new ones struggled to be born, I understand the challenges that have to be overcome by disabled people to find the help and support they need to play full lives in the community. That's why I undertook this consultation. Since 2002, successive Labour/Lib Dem and SNP administrations have had the power to regulate both social care systems throughout Scotland and who is covered by Free Personal Care. For various reasons they have chosen not to do this and the current Government has made it clear that it has no plans to do so.



Siobhan McMahon

The aim of my consultation was to provide an opportunity to receive comments and analysis on the proposal to abolish social care charges in Scotland and to gauge public opinion. I am heartened to see that a significant majority (87%) of respondents supported the proposal, with

their reasons focusing on themes of equality and human rights.

In contrast, only a few (11%) were opposed in principle. All of the arguments presented by those who did not support the proposal related to funding in one form or another. Local Authorities throughout Scotland are faced with hard choices and in order to maintain their services in times of austerity, they have to actively consider all sources of income. However, this can have serious consequences for the most vulnerable in our communities.

The overwhelming support by individuals, the experiences that have been related to me during the consultation period and the conversations I have had with both supportive and non-supportive individuals and organisations have affirmed to me that it is right that the Scottish Parliament has this conversation in an open and transparent way. Should I not be returned to the Scottish Parliament as an MSP in the next session, I expect that another Member will take this issue forward to maintain the momentum.

Siobhan McMahon

You can read the consultation summary here:

<https://siobhanmcmahon.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/consultation-summary.pdf>

Changes to Midcare Alarm Service

Following a review of charges for the Midcare Alarm Service, it was approved that from the 1st of July 2016 the cost will increase from £2.05 per week to £3.00 per week. This is a rise of 46%. To be paid quarterly at £39.00.

Midlothian Council claim that they charge considerably less than many other local authorities. That will mean absolutely nothing if you have to live on benefits.

If you have a Midcare Alarm Service user and pay by Standing Order, Midlothian council ask you please to increase the amount you pay with your bank.

The Midcare Alarm Service

Through the use of technology the Midcare alarm service enables you to continue to live independently in your own home for as long as possible, allowing you to feel safe, secure and supported.

The East Lothian control room receives the initial alerts from the equipment and passes this on to ensure that an appropriate response is provided. The control room is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days per year.



What responses are provided?

Response can be provided by:

- A key holder such as family/friend/neighbour, who may be requested to assist in an emergency (service users would provide details of these contacts).
- A Midlothian based responder service provides a back-up when required.
- If appropriate, a client's GP or the emergency services will be contacted.

Tea and Tales. Storyteller wows Café Connect.

CAFÉ Connect, Dalkeith's once-a-month peer support café had a special guest at the March meeting. Lea Taylor a professional storyteller had her audience transfixed with her engaging delivery of some traditional Scottish and traveller stories and songs.

Lea brings her storytelling alive by encouraging active participation with stories and songs. These include Traveller tales, Celtic tales, international tales, fairy tales, wonder stories, environmental stories, peace tales and original stories.

Lea is passionate about storytelling's ability to inspire, inform, educate, enable and enlighten. While she has extensive experience of storytelling with family groups and children she has also used her skills in a variety of other contexts ranging from schools (transition and project work) to business and community groups.

Founder member for BagaTelle, Midlothian's storytelling development group and long-standing member of the Botanic Gardens 'Talking Trees' Lea is always passionate about using storytelling in all the activities she is involved in. In 2013 Lea developed the First Young Storytellers Festival (Edinburgh, Lothians, Dunbar) and is actively involved with Young Storytellers Scotland. She is also a working member of The Life Stories Group - working with elderly people.

Café Connect is held on the last Tuesday of the month at Dalkeith Older Peoples Welfare Hall, St. Andrew Street, Dalkeith between 2 pm and 4pm. Drop in for a chat and free refreshments! All are welcome! For further information, please contact Eric on 0131 663 9471.



New trial to improve conditions for disabled drivers

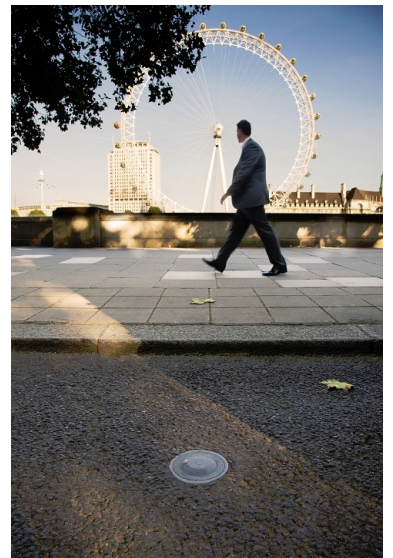
Westminster City Council, in partnership with Smart Parking, is set to unveil new technology which could eliminate the issue of inconsiderate drivers parking in disabled bays.

New technology emerging out of Westminster's successful bay sensors pilot in central London now means that disabled drivers can be issued with electronic permits, known as EPermits or RFID tags, which communicate with sensors in the road. Should a car without a tag park in a disabled bay with a sensor illegally, nearby traffic marshals will be alerted so that they could go to the site and ask the driver to move on. They also have the power to issue a fine as a last resort.

"This new technology will help to eliminate misuse of disabled parking bays broadening Westminster City Council's commitment to providing fairer, easier, parking".

The pilot project is set to last around 8 weeks, and evaluation will be carried out before a decision will be made on a citywide roll out.

Hopefully will be in Disabled Persons Parking bay in Scotland Soon.



Alternative Publications

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