

Forward

Midlothian

Disabled People

www.forwardmid.org.uk



Equality - Diversity - Inclusion

Winter Newsletter 2021

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

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

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

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



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Dalkeith CAB Energy Project

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

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

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



Preparing for Winter

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

During the holiday season, most GP practices will be closed from the 25th until 28th December and from 1st until 5th January 2021.

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

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



Winter in the Community

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



severe weather.

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

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

Tips for keeping well

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

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

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

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



WAYS TO WORK AROUND WINTER TIREDNESS

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

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

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

LET THE LIGHT IN

We need at least 15 minutes a day of sun light and over the winter months we can become more tired and this can effect your sleep cycle. Lack of sun light means the brain produces more of the

hormone called melatonin, which makes you more sleepy. To prevent this happening let as much sun light in. Open curtains and blinds to get as much natural light in.

GOOD SLEEP

Sleep is such an important part for our bodies to do the things it needs to do while we sleep, so good sleep hygiene is so important. During the winter feeling sleepier does not mean we should sleep more as it can have the opposite effect and we feel more sluggish during the day. Aim for eight hours of sleep a night if possible and a bedtime routine is so important as you train the body to recognize a sleep routine. Try to go to bed at the same time and get up at the same time every day. Good sleep hygiene can include having your sleeping space comfortable, warm bedding and having the TV off will help. More information www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/sleep-hygiene

EXERCISE

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

RELAX

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

EATING THE RIGHT FOODS

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

FAMILY TIME OR FRIENDS TIME

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

 www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing/stress/breathing-and-relaxation-exercises-for-stress

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

 www.healthdirect.gov.au/relaxation

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

 www.painconcern.org.uk

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

relaxation.

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

BREATHING – PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION-MINDFULNESS

Chair Exercise Workout.

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

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

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

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

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

A fall can easily result in injury or worse still, a fracture which then results in needing to attend hospital. Avoiding having a fall in the first place is the key i.e. prevention, by staying as fit and as active as possible and improving your strength and balance with these exercise below.

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

10 Dives



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

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

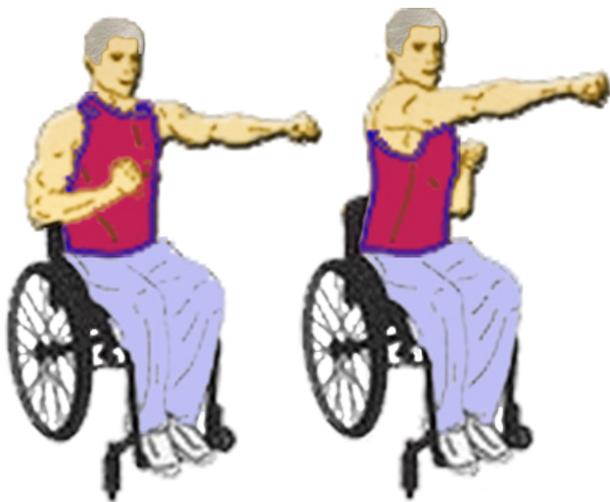
20 Overhead Punches

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

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



20 Punches



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

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

20 Side Arm Raises

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

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



10 Raised Arm Circles



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

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

20 Chest Expansions

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

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



Keeping Affordably Warm this Winter

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

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

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

Support is available through:

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

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

provide tailored advice on affordable warmth through video calls, talks and events. VOCAL are offering free 45 minute appointment at a safe venue, through Changeworks for Energy Advice Surgeries once a month. Carers can book by email on Midlothian@vocal.org.uk or on ☎ 0131 663 6869.

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

If you would like to contact one of their advisors - email: ask@changeworks.org.uk

 www.changeworks.org.uk/client/midlothian-council



Extra Cash In your pocket

Many people over pension age don't receive the money they should.

You might be one of them.

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

Midlothian Council and Citizen's Advice can help with:



Pension Credit



Housing Benefits



Attendance Allowance



Help with Heating bills



Council Tax Reduction

Who Can Help?

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

Midlothian Council
☎ 0131 270 8922

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

Warm Home Discount Scheme

For winter 2021 to 2022, you could get £140 off your electricity bill through the Warm Home Discount Scheme.

The money isn't paid to you - it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill, usually between September and March.

The discount won't affect your Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel Payment.

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

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

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

Eligibility

You qualify for the discount if on 12 July 2021 all of the following apply:

Your electricity supplier was part of the scheme

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

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

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



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

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

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

octopus.energy/	
OVO	☎ 0330 303 5063
www.ovoenergy.com/help/warm-home-discount	
Sainsbury's Energy	☎ 0808 501 5277
www.sainsburysenergy.com/?gclid=ds	
Scottish Power	☎ 0800 027 0072
www.scottishpower.co.uk/customer-services/support/warm-home-discount/	
Shell Energy	Online Only
help.shellenergy.co.uk/hc/en-us/	
SSE	☎ 0800 300 111
www.sse.co.uk/help/accessibility/warm-home-discount#item1	
Utilita	☎ 03452 072 000
utilita.co.uk/	
Utility Warehouse	☎ 0333 777 0 777
www.utilitywarehouse.co.uk/clubhouse/warmhome	

How to claim

If you qualify for the discount, you'll get a letter this autumn or winter telling you either:

- You don't have to apply - you'll get the discount automatically
- To apply by 29 January 2022 - the letter will tell you why and how

You'll receive your letter by 24 December at the latest.

SP Energy Networks

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

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

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

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

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

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

If you would like to help any elderly or vulnerable people in your area, you could contact your local

community council, Red Cross or Volunteer Midlothian.

Severe Weather

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

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

A temporary one way system may also operate, if required, around the upper estates at Mayfield.

Lothian Buses can request assistance from Police Scotland to have a car or van removed if it is obstructing a bus route.

For maps of routes affected visit see below or



www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200270/severe_



The streets affected so far by the traffic regulations are:

Dalkeith:

Woodburn Park: 1↔7, 35↔41, **Salters' Road:** 17↔21, **Woodburn Road:** 24↔32, 64↔68, **James Lean Avenue:** 1↔7, 33↔39, 45,47, 75↔81, **Woodburn Avenue:** 1↔5, **Eskbank Road:** Outside the Kings Park.

Loanhead:

Fountain Place: West side of Fountain place from No. 1↔27

Gorebridge:

Powdermill Brae: 47↔49.

Bonnyrigg:

Polton Road West: Entrance to Cameron Crescent and Gordon Avenue, Number 66↔60.

Lothian Street ↔ Dundas Street: Bonnyrigg High street Traffic control and Waverley Crescent Cockpen Road Roundabout.

Polton Avenue Road: Entrance to Polton Hall Sports complex, Outside Numbers 6A,6B, 6C, 6D. Also 20,21,22,23. Hawthornden Primary School, entrance to Argyll Place.

Rosewell:

Carnethie Street: 49↔53, 73↔79, 103↔107, 137↔141 also bus terminus Rosewell.

Police have powers to remove vehicles parked on the coned areas. Please, do not park your cars on these roads when the snows arrive.

Lothian Buses Website: lothianbuses.com Twitter: twitter.com/on_lothianbuses

Bus "apps" for smartphones

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

X70, X95 and 339. “**Prentice of Haddington**” has details for their 111 service. “My Bus Edinburgh” is another App. It is restricted to information on East Coast Buses, Edinburgh Trams, Lothian Buses and Lothian Country.

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

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

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

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

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



Black Diamond
107.8 FM



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

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

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



Winter Information

Social Media

Midlothian Council: Website:  www.midlothian.gov.uk/

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

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MidlothianCouncil



Midlothian Voluntary Action

Website: www.mvacvs.org.uk/

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

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MidlothianVoluntaryAction

Other Essential Contacts

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

www.facebook.com/ReadyScotland

VOCAL Christmas opening times; Midlothian Carer Centre will close at noon on Thursday 24th December 2020 and re-open at 9am on Monday 4th January 2021.

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



A message from Police Scotland



Winter Driving:

With winter approaching are you prepared for challenging driving conditions?

- Ensure you check the weather forecast prior to any journey.
- Check windscreen wiper fluid is topped up, your tyre tread is correct for driving and tyres are correctly inflated.
- Always clear any snow or ice from the windscreen and the rest of the vehicle prior to any journey.
- Consider packing a shovel, bottled water and blanket into the boot should you become stranded.
- If you have a mobile phone ensure it is fully charged, and make someone aware of your intended journey, as well as when you leave and arrive at your destination.
- If in doubt consider rescheduling any journey or travel plans if the weather is poor.

Home Security:

As winter draws closer and the nights get darker remember to review your home security:

- Use timer switches on lights and radios to make it look as though your home is occupied.
- Ensure all your windows and doors are secure before going to bed.
- If possible use security lighting at the front and back of your property.
- Make sure all garden tools and ladders not being used are locked away and secure.
- Use a good quality lock on any garden sheds or out buildings.
- Make a note of all makes and serial numbers of your property.



**POLICE
SCOTLAND**

Keeping people safe

POILEAS ALBA

Scams:

Anyone can be the victim of doorstep crime and cold callers to their property. Be aware of the

following when answering your door:

- If in doubt; keep them out
- Keep front and back doors locked
- Use a door chain or bar
- Only let callers in if they have an appointment and you have confirmed they are genuine
- Always ask for ID
- Don't keep large sums of money at home
- Ensure your doors and windows are locked
- Look out for those in your community
- Report any suspicious, Call ☎ 999 and ask for the police if you feel scared or threatened.

A message from Midlothian Council

Councillor John Hackett, Midlothian Council's Cabinet Member with responsibility for roads and winter services, said the council is, as usual, hoping for the best but preparing for the worst this winter:

"Last Winter was a difficult time for our community. The impact of the pandemic kept many of us apart from our families and loved ones. In addition to the public health concerns, we faced a very difficult challenging winter conditions. I was immensely proud to see so many volunteers in our community clearing paths and roads, supporting neighbours and playing a part to keep the county moving. I was also struck by the extraordinary effort of Council staff, many taking on roles entirely new to them, to support the communities of Midlothian.



Where possible I would urge residents to prepare for similar winter conditions. Please speak with your family and neighbours to have a plan if conditions are difficult. Please stay safe this winter and hope you have the opportunity to enjoy the festive period with those close to you."

For more information, including gritting routes, visit www.midlothian.gov.uk/severe-weather. For latest updates follow the council on Facebook at www.facebook.com/MidlothianCouncil and on Twitter at twitter.com/@midhelp twitter.com/@midgov

Midlothian Libraries

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

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

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

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

Visit: www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/427/libraries

Email library: hq@midlothian.gov.uk

Other key phone numbers in Midlothian:

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

After the Snow Comes the Thaw

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

Burst Pipes

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

Icicles and excess snow on roofs

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

Forward Mid Disabled People's Directory

Following the immense success of the Forward Mid Directory 2021-2 we are reprinting this current version. It should be back in Libraries in December 2021.

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

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



Dalkeith & Penicuik District

Citizens Advice Bureau

8 Buccleuch Street
Dalkeith
Midlothian
EH22 1HA

14a John Street
Penicuik
Midlothian
EH26 8AB

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

- Benefits (we can help to complete forms)
- Debt
- Utilities (gas & electricity as well as advice)
- Employment issues
- Housing

☎ 0131 660 1636

 www.dalkeithcab.org.uk

 bureau@dalkeithcab.org.uk

☎ 01968 675259

 www.penicuikcab.org.uk

 bureau@penicuikcab.org.uk

Appointments

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

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

Dalkeith Outreach

Mayfield Pavilion (Mayfield Public Park, Mayfield, EH22 5EE)
One of our advisers runs a weekly drop-in advice session at the Mayfield Pavilion every Wednesday between 10:00 hrs-15:00 hrs



Gorebridge Hive (35 Hunterfield Road, Gorebridge EH23 4BQ)
One of our advisers operates a weekly outreach session at the Gorebridge Hive on Mondays. This is by appointment only; please contact us for more information.



Penicuik Outreach

Loanhead Library

The Loanhead Centre, George Avenue, Loanhead EH20 9LA
Monday: 10:00 to 1:00 drop in

Loanhead Miners Welfare

74 The Loan Loanhead EH20 9AN
Wednesday: 10:00 to 1:00 drop in

Lasswade Library

19 Eskdale Drive Bonnyrigg EH19 2LA
Tuesdays: 9:30 to 11:30 drop in

Loganlea Centre

Loganlea Centre Eastfield Farm Road, Penicuik EH26 8EZ
Tuesdays 1:30 to 3:00 by appointment

Royal Edinburgh Hospital.

Morningside Place Hermitage Ward Edinburgh EH10 5HF
Thursday: 2:00 to 4:00 (for Midlothian residents appointments only)

Employment Advice

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

Energy Advice

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

Foodbank Referrals

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

Scottish Welfare Fund – ☎ 0131 270 5600

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

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



ACAS – ☎ 0300 123 1100

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

February 2022 a new law on fire alarms in all Scottish homes

The law on fire alarms is changing from February 2022 which means all Scottish homes will need to have interlinked alarms. Interlinked means if one goes off, they all go off, so you will always hear an alarm wherever you are in your home.

What each home needs

By February 2022 every home must have:

- one smoke alarm in the living room or the room you use most
- one smoke alarm in every hallway or landing
- one heat alarm in the kitchen
- alarms should be mounted on the ceiling
- If you have a carbon-fuelled appliance – like a boiler, fire, heater or flue – in any room, you must also have a carbon monoxide detector in that room, but this does **not** need to be linked to the other fire alarms.



Tenements and blocks of flats

Different homes in a shared property like a tenement or block of flats do not need to be linked to each other, and there is no need for alarms to be fitted in communal areas such as entry halls and stairways.

Types of alarm:

- If you are going to use battery alarms, they must be sealed tamper-proof units and have long-life lithium batteries, which can be up to 10 years. You may be able to fit these types of alarms yourself and they do not need an electrician.
- Mains-wired alarms are cheaper but if you use them, they must be fitted by a qualified electrician and must be replaced every 10 years.
- If you also need a carbon monoxide alarm and it is battery-operated, it must have a sealed battery for the duration of its lifespan.

Check that each alarm complies with the following standards smoke alarms

- BS EN14604:2005
- Heat alarms BS 5446-2:2003
- Carbon monoxide detector British Kitemark EN 50291-1

Cost of alarms

If you rent your home your landlord is responsible to ensure that the fire alarms your home meet the new standards and must pay the costs of any new alarms as well as their installation. If you are a home owner you are liable for these costs.



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It is estimated that the cost for an average three bedroom house which requires three smoke alarms, one heat alarm and one carbon monoxide detector will be around £220. This is based on using the type of alarms that you can install by yourself without the need for an electrician. Any re-decoration to walls and/or ceilings should be taken into consideration

Remember – It is the property house owner's or landlord's responsibility to meet the new standard and any costs incurred in doing this.

Different needs alarms

If specialist alarms are needed – such as for deaf people or Telecare systems – these must be fitted in addition to any smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms.

Midlothian Council

Although there is no formal grant scheme run by Midlothian Council a disabled person who owns their own home and is experiencing financial hardship in meeting the standards required can contact Adult Social Care who, depending upon circumstances, may be able to offer some advice or assistance in relation to progressing the installation of alarms.

Adult and older people social care services: ☎ 0131 271 3900 during office hours.

www.midlothian.gov.uk/forms/form/42/adults_and_older_people_social_care_services

Scottish Fire Brigade Service assistance.

To protect the most vulnerable, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) will only fit interlinked alarms into owner-occupied homes where the individual/household is assessed as “high risk” through our Home Fire Safety Visit assessment process.

If the individual / household does not meet these criteria, SFRS staff will provide safety advice, information and details of the revised legislation during the visit. Interim detection can also be supplied if the property has no detectors at present.

Request a Home Fire Safety Visit contact us on ☎ 0800 073199 or text “FIRE” to 📞 80800 or website request Visit - Home Fire Safety Visits (firescotland.gov.uk)

Household insurance

Different home insurance policies will have different terms and conditions which a homeowner must comply with in order for their home insurance to be valid. If you are not sure how the new fire and smoke alarm requirements affect your policy, get in touch with your insurer to find out. Please pass on this information to as many people as you can, particularly vulnerable family members, friends and neighbours.

Volunteer Midlothian – Connect Online

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

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

Contact: **Una Paterson** Email: una@volunteermidlothian.org.uk or mobile: ☎ 07856573694

Connect Online groups:

Tuesdays - Penicuik - Food Facts Friends 10.30-12noon

Wednesdays - Loanhead Library 11-12.30pm

Wednesdays - Rosewell, The Steading 1.30-3pm

Thursdays - Mayfield Pavilion 12.30-2pm

Thursdays - Penicuik Library 2-3.30pm



Alternative Publications

Please like us on Facebook www.facebook.com/forwardmid/

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

Edited by Iain Tait for Forward Mid