

FORWARD

MIDLOTHIAN

DISABLED PEOPLE



Equality - Diversity - Inclusion

Do you want to be involved in improving Life for disabled people in Midlothian?

LET'S WORK TOGETHER WITH DISABLED PEOPLE TO SUPPORT A GOOD LIFE - AT HOME AT WORK AND IN THE COMMUNITY

**Wednesday 24th June 2015 – Dalkeith Arts Centre
11 am – 3pm**



- ➔ Do you want a good quality of life for disabled people in Midlothian?
- ➔ Do you believe that disabled people should feel in control of their own life choices?
- ➔ Do you believe in an active and healthy life for all, a life where people can flourish and grow?
- ➔ Do you want good support to enable those who need it to live a full life?

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This day aims to give you the opportunity for you to -

- Be part of shaping a new Action Plan- Midlothian Physical Disability Strategy 2015 -2018.
- Hear about successes so far, good news about good things happening!
- Hear from disabled people and professionals about positive and challenging aspects of living as a disabled person in Midlothian.
- Become an active participant in improving the lives of disabled people in Midlothian.
- Join in discussion groups with Disabled people, social work and health professionals where people can discuss/ share ideas and experiences.
- Make connections around areas of interest and plan for more future successes!



Information on the day from;

- Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living
- Grapevine
- Self Directed Support
- Forward Mid
- Midlothian Access Panel
- Community Care Fieldwork Team
- Local Area Co-ordination
- Benefits Advice/ Welfare Reform
- VOCAL

If you want to know more call;

Eric on ☎ 0131 663 9471 or Jayne on ☎ 0131 271 3665

Talk Time Edinburgh

Talk Time Edinburgh is a charity founded in 2014 with the following aim:

To help physically disabled young people to reach their potential and to improve their mental well-being and that of their families.

Talk Time Edinburgh support disabled people aged between 16 and 25 through weekly one-to-one counselling sessions with qualified professionals. For more information regarding our counselling please take a look at what Talk Time Edinburgh offer at www.talktimeedinburgh.co.uk/index or get in touch.



The service is currently available to anybody within a comfortable travelling distance of our base in the Leith area of Edinburgh. We are hoping to be able to reach out to new areas in the future.

Talk Time Edinburgh AIM

Talk Time Edinburgh aim to provide counselling and emotional support to young people aged 16-25 with a physical disability living in the Lothian region.

Talk Time Edinburgh believe that it helps to talk to someone in confidence who will not judge you or tell you what to do, but just listen and help you come to terms with your personal issues.

HOW IT WORKS

If you think that you or someone you know could benefit from our service, please contact us to arrange an introductory meeting through the Get In Touch page.

Talk Time Edinburgh understand that impairments come in different shapes and sizes. Please do not feel embarrassed or guilty about requirements you may have. Talk Time Edinburgh understand that you may not want anyone to know that you have contacted us and Talk Time Edinburgh will do our best to help you to access the service.

WHERE AND WHEN

Talk Time Edinburgh have sessions on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evening between 5-7pm at totally accessible premises with disabled toilets at The Junction in 84 great junction street Leith Edinburgh, EH6 5LL

CONFIDENTIALITY

Everything you tell your counsellor is totally confidential. This means that they are not allowed to tell anyone else what you have said. The only time this rule can be broken is if they are genuinely concerned about your safety.

For more information check out their website at www.talktimeedinburgh.co.uk/index or Tel:  07774 210104

Is It fair?

It all depends where you're standing, or perhaps better to say where you are living.

The issue has come up in connection with travel by the elderly or disabled on the new Borders rail line. There have been huffing and puffing of outrage that there would be no discounted fares.

We all know that the National Entitlement Card (usually known as The Bus Pass as that is what it is mainly used for) allows the users free bus travel anywhere in Scotland for the person who is over a certain age or has a certain level of disability; and this may include free travel for a companion. However it is not valid on trains (or trams in Edinburgh) and there is some doubt as to whether it can be used on National Express buses which start in England and then come into Scotland. The bus companies claim back a fare from the government of something like 60% of the normal fare.

The situation with rail is completely different. There is no government subsidy (with the exception of the blind who get free travel on trains). There is of course the national rail card scheme for both seniors and disabled which gives between one-third and one-half off the price of tickets.

Any concession other than the Railcard can be made by a local council, but it is the council which must bear the cost of this not the government. In general the ones which do this offer tickets for a single journey within the council's boundary at prices ranging from 50p to £1 wherever it is a fairly small local authority area; the larger ones normally charge 50% of the price of a standard ticket. Within the SEStran area, East Lothian, Fife, and West Lothian do this. Midlothian subsidises free train travel within the Lothian area for those who have a taxi card, and Edinburgh used to do this. Aberdeenshire, Angus, Highland all have 50% schemes, and SPT has a fixed rate for journeys under 10 miles and a 50% scheme for longer journeys.

So the unfairness I started off talking about is not so much about Midlothian and Borders against the rest of the world. Anyone over 60 can get the Railcard for £23 a year and then get 33% off the price of all tickets, disabled Railcard is £18 a year with 33% off ticket prices. If you're in some of the areas I mentioned above you will get a slightly larger discount of 50% without paying the annual subscription. So there's always the possibility of a discount on trains for the disabled or elderly, and the difference between the one from the council and the government is not all that great.

The real unfairness is the difference between subsidy throughout the country by the government for bus travellers and random subsidy by councils for rail travellers. It seems unfair that anybody over 60 can go on jollies by bus at the expense of the taxpayer but that people who live in an area where the bus service is very poor have to pay at least 50% of the cost of travel by train and many people have to use taxis simply to get out of the house. And we know what's happening to taxi card schemes across the country – they are either being severely curtailed or completely scrapped.

Which brings me back to my common refrain that provision for disabled people is erratic and inconsistent – and often incomprehensible.

SATA (Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance) has just published an Accessible Transport Strategy and Action Plan for Scotland (ATSAPS). The relevant bits from the Action Plan are quoted below. You will see that it identifies who SATA thinks should take the lead on actions.

7.1 Provide a range of travel concessions for disabled people throughout Scotland.

7.1.1 The Scottish Government to accept all those defined as disabled under legislation as being eligible under the Scotland-wide Concessionary Fare Scheme for buses, coaches and ferries and extend its eligibility to more community transport services.

7.1.2 Transport Scotland to review the provision of fare concessions for disabled people on taxis, community transport and trains, which at present are provided locally or regionally by some local authorities, with a view to extending the existing national entitlement scheme for concessions on buses and coaches

7.1.3 All operators and local authorities to provide fare concessions for disabled people on rail services and to publish reports on take-up/usage.

7.1.4 Transport Scotland to undertake research into the level of use of the national bus concessionary fare scheme by older people and disabled people and ascertain reasons for non-use.

7.1.5 All local authorities to review charges made for Blue Badges and restrictions on free parking in reserved spaces.



Thanks to Mike Harrison for this story.

PS

Dated the 2nd March 2015

Irony

I've just got home from a meeting with Transport Scotland about the Transport Accessibility Summit; held in a government building mainly occupied by the NHS which must house about 1000 workers. WHERE THERE IS NO WHEELCHAIR-ACCESSIBLE TOILET. They say they have 2, I tried both, and in both cases there was an immediate 90 degree turn required before there was room to clear the door. 1960s build, and probably not long for this world.

Personal Assistant Employers

Between June 2015 and 2017, the Pensions Regulator will be contacting all small employers to advise them that they must automatically enrol their eligible employees into a pension scheme and make contributions towards their employee's pensions.

Your staff are people you pay via a payroll. You must assess them for automatic enrolment based on their ages and how much they earn, regardless of how many hours they work for you. There is a table here with more information about who you need to enrol on the Pensions Regulator website here: <http://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/employers/check-who-you-need-to-enrol.aspx>

Each employer will be given a staging date, this is the date when the law will come into effect for you.

You will soon receive, or you may already have received, a letter from the Pensions Regulator:

- Keep it safe;
- Send a copy into LCiL's payroll service if you use this service or let your payroll service know you've received the letter.

The letter will ask you to nominate a primary contact and you can also nominate a secondary contact if you wish. The pension regulator will then send information to you via these contacts.

How to nominate your contacts

You can either nominate your contacts on-line or by telephoning the Pension Regulator. Telephone – 0845 600 1011 (9am – 5.30pm). Or online at www.tpr.gov.uk/ae-contact

You will need

- Your own email address which you check regularly
- The letter sent to you by the Pension Regulator
- This gives your letter code and PAYE Reference number – you will need to enter this information on the form

Who should be the Primary contact?

- You as the employer should, where possible be the primary contact

Who can be the Secondary contact?

- If you use the LCiL Payroll service you can use the LCiL payroll team as your secondary contact and give payroll.team@lothiancil.org.uk as the contact details.
- You may want to check with your own payroll service whether they can be a secondary contact for you if you don't use this one.
- If you use LCiL's payroll service and have any difficulty completing the nomination process, or require any further information please contact Alison Walsh at LCiL payroll on 0131 475 2350.

Full information on the Pension Regulator website is here: <http://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/employers/your-step-by-step-guide-to-automatic-enrolment.aspx>

LCiL also have a dedicated webpage for PA Employers here: <http://www.lothiancil.org.uk/our-services/payroll-services/information-for-pa-employers-automatic-enrolment/> including resources on our Payroll category of the online E-library with more information: <http://www.lothiancil.org.uk/e-library/>



9 Pension Regulations Quick Review

Carry out a quick review of your staff to help you work out what you have to plan next. When assessing who you'll need to automatically enrol, there are three different categories of staff to consider as illustrated in this table and explained below.

Your staff are people you pay via a payroll. You must assess them for automatic enrolment based on their ages and how much they earn, regardless of how many hours they work for you.

Monthly gross earnings	Age			Weekly gross earnings
	16 to 21	22 to SPA	SPA to 74	
£486 and below	Has a right to join a pension scheme 1			£112 and below
Over £486 up to £833	Has a right to opt in 2			Over £112 up to £192
Over £833	Has a right to opt in	Automatically enrol 3	Has a right to opt out	Over £192

Figures correct as of 2015/2016. *SPA = state pension age

1 Has a right to join a pension scheme

If they ask you to, you must provide a pension scheme for them, but you don't have to pay contributions.

2 Has a right to opt in

If they ask to be put into a pension scheme, you must put them in your automatic enrolment pension scheme and pay regular contributions.

3 Automatically enrol

You must put these members of staff in your automatic enrolment pension scheme and pay regular contributions. You don't need to ask their permission. If they give notice, or you give them notice, to leave employment before you have completed this process, you have a choice whether to automatically enrol them or not.

It is against the law to try to influence your staff into opting out of your pension scheme.

You must carry out a full assessment of all your staff when you reach your staging date.

What you must pay and what your employee must pay if they choose to join a pension plan

Date	Employer minimum contribution	Total minimum contribution
Before 30/09/17	1%	2% (including 1% staff contribution)
01/10/17 — 30/09/18	2%	5% (including 3% staff contribution)
01/10/18 onwards	3%	8% (including 5% staff contribution)

Example:

If you employ a PA who earns £100 a month and they opt to have a pension plan, this would mean your employee would pay 1% or in this example £1.

Example 2 :

If you employ a PA who earns £500 a month and they opt to have a pension plan, this would mean your employee would pay 1% and you would pay 1% or in this example £10 a month.

At each staging point you will have to re-assess what you pay in. There are a few pension plans with no minimum, but all charge an annual fee.

What's happened so far? Diary of Events.

01 September 2014. A petition was lodged with the Parliamentary Petitions Committee (PPC) by Jeff Adamson on behalf of Scotland Against the Care Tax calling for the Scottish Government to abolish all local authority charges for non-residential care services. The petition starts from the premise that social care in any form is an equality and human rights issue. It is an essential part of the infrastructure of a fair and just society which respects, upholds and guarantees the equality and human rights of its citizens.



A society which pursues a policy of charging those who are entitled to use non-residential care services does not do this.

11 November 2014.

The Committee took evidence from Jeff Adamson, Ian Hood (Learning Disability Alliance Scotland) and Dr Pauline Nolan (inclusion Scotland).



Jeff spoke about his own personal experience with care charging saying that he had a 'personal allowance' of £137 and that 70% of any income he had above that amount was taken by his local authority to pay towards the support he needs to live an ordinary life.

With his own situation as an example, he highlighted the differences in charging throughout Scotland, using the

constituencies of each of the seven MSPs on the Committee to illustrate the point. In every one of constituencies of the MSPs present, Jeff would pay smaller care charges. The amounts he would be better off from ranged from £93 a month in East Renfrewshire to £558 per month in Falkirk.

Expanding on the theme of this 'postcode lottery', Ian Hood said that in 2002, the Scottish Government gave local authorities clear instructions on sorting out the problem of inconsistency and care charging. He said the councils had to sort out three areas; disability related expenditure, the different tax rate, which is the taper rate that has been mentioned, and the amount of money that people get to keep. In the 12 years since then, COSLA has not been able to move close to achieving any consistency in this matter.

Dr Pauline Nolan spoke about the human rights aspect of care charging saying that all the rights protected by the Equality Act 2010, The European Convention on Human Rights, The Human Rights Act 1998 and subsequent human rights conventions that the Government has signed up to have been breached.

At the end of the meeting the Committee agreed to write to the Scottish Government, COSLA, a selection of local authorities and the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The committee also agreed to invite the Scottish Government to give evidence at a future meeting.

27 January 2015.

The Committee took evidence from Shona Robison, Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Sport. Ms Robison, who has said she is sympathetic towards the petition, gave an opening statement which stated that she recognised the concerns that had been raised by people who face a range of challenging disabilities and conditions, their carers and the organisations that work

with them, and that she was determined that the Scottish government will continue to work with local authority and health partners to improve the consistency and fairness of the current approach to charging for non-residential care.

She continued by saying that COSLA is working on a new financial assessment that will lead to more continuity and consistency across local authority boundaries and that there is a need to make the current charge and system fair for those who are paying charges which is a focus of the Government's current discussions with COSLA. The Cabinet Secretary was asked whether she had a timescale to watch which she and her Department are working to try to get a conclusion to the issue. She replied by saying; "I guess that it is always as soon as possible. If I put a timeframe on it and that timeframe slipped because we had not reached conclusions in these discussions, I am not sure how helpful that would be." Shona Robison MSP



The Committee agreed to reflect on the evidence and to consider a paper submitted by Scotland Against the Care Tax before deciding what action to take.

17 February 2015.

The Committee considered the evidence given by Shona Robison MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Sport on 27 January 2015.

At this meeting, Jackson Carlaw MSP said of the Secretary's evidence; "was all a bit equivocal ... I think that we want to get a much more specific idea of the timetable that the Cabinet Secretary is working towards. It would be useful. I welcome the approach that was being articulated but nonetheless there is an urgency and a desire on the part of the Committee to move this forward. The next step would be, after reflecting on the evidence given, to ask when the Cabinet Secretary expects things to coalesce into something a little more definitive."

Concurring with Mr Carlaw, the Committee agreed to write to the Scottish Government.

19 March 2015.

Cabinet Secretary, Shona Robison MSP response to the request from the Cabinet Secretary for "something a little more definitive" was as follows:

"As I stated in my evidence to the Committee, we are in discussion with COSLA at present on the way forward to making a fairer system of charging for social care.

We need to consider in the round what more we can do to create a fairer system and bring more consistency to address some of the issues that Committee members raised. I will update the Committee on timescales following conclusion of our discussions with COSLA."

26 March 2015.

Scotland Against the Care Tax, submitted a response to the Cabinet Secretary's reply to the PPC. The key points of this submission were:

There was nothing definitive" she said in her response nor any sense of urgency.

- She did not mention that COSLA has just produced a 'Standard Financial Assessment Template'.
- This template does not make any changes to most of the charging rates in Scotland. The only change is to the assumed interest on savings approach applies to only 6 councils and affects only 500 people out of the 120,000 people receiving social care in Scotland.
- The Scottish Government organise roundtable negotiations that will involve the local councils, the NHS, the Scottish Government itself and representatives from Disabled People's Organisations and charitable organisations.

31 March 2015.

The PPC considered the SACT petition again. The meeting was short and sweet with Committee member Kenny MacAskill MSP making the following statement.

“I think the government has indicated some willingness to look at this. I think we should be encouraging them to do so expeditiously and to report back. I think it would be premature to make a decision beyond that other than to encourage them to get on with it and, perhaps, just keep the petition alive pending, hopefully, some reasonably speedy discussions.” The action agreed by the Committee was to write to the Scottish government recommending it convenes a roundtable requested by the petitioner and then report back to the Committee.

Full details of all the submissions to the Public Petitions Committee and the official reports of each of the Committees meetings can be found by following this link: www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01533

To find out more about social care charging and the issues around it visit the Scotland Against the Care Tax website at: <http://scotlandagainstthecaretax.org/>

Care Tax rates in Scotland

The care tax rate is how much of a percentage of your income, above your personal allowance (pa), you have to pay towards your care/support. The tables below show how much the rate varies throughout Scotland. Some councils have a cap on how much you can be charged eg Falkirk and Moray..

Council	How much of your income above your pa can you pay?
Aberdeenshire	100%
Moray	100%
Perth and Kinross	100%
Clackmannanshire	100%
Falkirk	100%
Stirling	75%
Argyll & Bute	75%
Renfrewshire	75%
Midlothian	70%
Aberdeen City	67%
Angus	66%
Dundee City	65%
West Lothian	65%
East Renfrewshire	60%
Dumfries & Galloway	50%

Percentages correct at 2013

Council	How much of your income above your pa can you pay?
East Ayrshire	50%
East Dunbartonshire	50%
Edinburgh City	50%
Eilean Siar	50%
Glasgow City	50%
Highland	50%
North Ayrshire	50%
South Lanarkshire	50%
West Dunbartonshire	50%
East Lothian	45%
North Lanarkshire	40%
Inverclyde	25%
South Ayrshire	25%
Scottish Borders	23.5%
Orkney island's	15%
Fife	No charge
Shetland Islands	No charge

Thanks to Jeff Adamson for this section



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LCiL Training Service

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people who want to learn more about:

- ⇒ Bacteria and causes of food poisoning
- ⇒ Personal hygiene and hand washing
- ⇒ Storage of food and kitchen safety
- ⇒ Choosing the healthy option and more!

Date: 29th April 2015

Time: 11.30am—3.30pm

Venue: Greggs Bakery, 36, Dryden Rd, Bilston Glen
Industrial Estate, Midlothian EH20 9LZ

Email: amanda.beech@lothiancil.org.uk

Phone: ☎ 0131 475 2510

57 Albion Road

Edinburgh

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**Training
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Refreshments provided by Greggs

How to get it wrong!

National Disability summit Melbourne Australia March 26th 2015

Seven disabled people and their five carers were invited to participate in the conference, which had a total 133 attendees. Deborah Haygarth, a wheelchair speaker at the event, had to be carried onto and off the stage because the venue was not wheelchair accessible. Disabled restroom at the conference was out of use because it was being used to store extra chairs. Jax Jacki Brown said. "It really created this feeling that people with disabilities weren't part of the bigger conference and the bigger discussion."



The full story unfolds at www.abc.net.au/news/2015-03-26/speaker-in-wheelchairs-carried-onto-stage-disability-summit/6350328

Digital Support Hub

The Digital Support Hub recommences at Gorebridge Library from Monday 20th of April. The Hub provides a great opportunity for people to get a taste of computing, as well as offering dedicated, local support in Gorebridge. We are able to assist anyone of working age to access jobseeking websites such as Universal Jobmatch, as well as supporting access to benefit claim forms and other online government services. We can also help with general computing tasks such as setting up and managing an email account. For those hoping to improve their skills further, we can direct you to additional support and tuition available locally.

So far, our dedicated volunteers have assisted a number of Gorebridge residents, but we're hoping to engage more with local disabled people. Please come along to our drop-in held every Monday 2:00 - 3:30pm, or the Connect Online computer club each Friday between 10:00 and 11:30am.

Alternatively, if you would like to offer your thoughts on how computing in Midlothian's libraries could be improved for people with disabilities, please contact Jonathan
Tel: ☎ 0131 6639471 or
jonathan.coward@outlook.com.



Alternative Publications

Editions of the Forward MID newsletters are available in large print or at www.forwardmid.org.uk,
Please email: ✉ eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk or call Eric Tel: ☎ 0131-663-9471 or write to Eric at
MVA, 4-6 White Hart Street, Dalkeith EH22 1AE with your request.