

Newsletter issue 14 January 2008

www.forwardmid.org.uk

FORWARD MIDLOTHIAN DISABLED



Equality 2025

Equality 2025 is a big step towards the government meeting its commitment to implement the recommendations in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report 'Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People'.

Equality 2025 will carry out the promise to disabled people that they will have a direct voice into government to help design policies and services that they really want.

All members of the Network must be disabled people.

The Network reflects as wide a range of disabled people as possible. This includes disabled people from marginalised groups, for example disabled children and young people, people who have learning disabilities, people who have mental health issues, disabled people from a black or other minority ethnic group, those of different sexual orientation, and people with different faiths.

Due to the unique challenges of Devolution, the Network will have members who have knowledge of the issues facing disabled people from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The representative for the East of Scotland is Fiona Wallace. Fiona is chair of People First, Edinburgh and the Lothians and was born in Dalkeith. Fiona has worked on disability issues with the Scottish Government.



THE PURPOSE OF EQUALITY 2025

To work with the Government to help it achieve the aim of equality for disabled people by 2025.

To provide advice and information from disabled people based upon the values underpinning the work of the Network and the views and experiences of disabled people.

To advise government departments on how they can engage effectively and meaningfully with disabled people.

To assist Government in raising awareness of disabled people and their rights, improving attitudes towards them and challenging negative stereotypes in the media and the wider community.

To help ensure that public bodies are meeting their legal duties under the DDA in relation to the new Disability Equality Duty.

To advise Government on the implementation and maintenance of international treaties and conventions within the UK.

In everything that it does, the Network will seek to include and articulate the views, experiences and opinions of the full and diverse range of disabled people, especially the most marginalised, disempowered or excluded groups and those who experience multiple discrimination and those who do not identify themselves as 'disabled'.

National Entitlement card

There are changes to the national entitlement card, this card is available to older and disabled people living in Scotland, apply for it in your local library



On the front will be: your photograph a Local Authority logo which will

relate to your local authority area card expiry date.

Some cards will have other symbols beside the large C.



These symbols will be on the bottom right hand corner of the card and will



look like this:

If your card has the symbol left this indicates to you and to the driver that you are entitled to have a companion

travel free with you on your journey.

This symbol below means that the card holder is blind or partially sighted and is also entitled to the National Blind Scheme Concessions.



The green 'L' symbol or orange 'S' as shown on the sample card above are there to indicate that you may be entitled to other concessions in your local area



Forward MID web site

The Forward MID web site has been upgraded. If there is anything that you would like to see on our web site please contact us. We will take all requests seriously, please take a look and tell us if you find the information useful and what you would like included in the future. We look forward to your comments and ideas.

Informing the public at large

It seems that no one is prepared to take on the responsibility of teaching the general public how to treat disabled people especially if you use a wheelchair. It is once again left to disabled people to dispel the myth from the truth.



We will have to inform

members of the general public that there is no such thing as wheelchairitis and if there is, it is not transmittable, offer them your hand no matter if you have limited mobility. Make sure that you make eye contact if they shy away, inform them you do not have the ability to turn them into a pillar of salt.

If you are with a carer, inform the carer that all questions about you are directed to you, and get the person directing the questions to come down to your eye level and talk to you in a normal tone, you will have to remind them physically disabled people are able to interact in a normal manner.

Be polite at first. Make it clear that if you are a wheelchair user, then the wheelchair can be seen as an extension of your body and remind people to ask if they wish to put something on it. Explain to anyone trying to move your wheelchair that they should ask first, the act of suddenly moving a wheelchair can have adverse affects, perhaps muscle spasms or even causing the individual to fall out of their chair. Never slap a disabled person on the back as a greeting or when they are departing as sign of goodwill, this feels inappropriate and can lead to a person losing their balance, or in the event of a spinal injury can lead to considerable discomfort or pain.

The best people to inform the public how to treat disabled people are the individuals themselves. A refreshing perspective can often come from children, it might be in their nature to stare but interestingly, often as not they are on the same height as a wheelchair user, giving some sort of equal exchange. Children can often be educational to their parents often tell their elders how to do things in more ordinary ways.

Last of all, and most important of all, we should encourage people to look past the disability and see the real person.

P.A. POOL

A new year. A new service hits the headlines, though this one does look good, A woman called Katy Etherington has set up a personal assistant pool. People who are personal assistants looking for work or disabled people looking for a personal assistant can use this system. To use this service you must register, you will have access to personal information about what the PA's can offer, however to get contact details of a PA in your area will require a small fee. This is £18 per year.

If you find someone whom you rate highly you can write an evaluation of them so that other people can look at this information before choosing or committing themselves.

There are also nursing agencies around the Edinburgh and Midlothian area, who charge for a minimum of three hours. If you know someone who is looking for work as a PA then please let Forward MID know so we can advertise their services to our readership.

To Join P.A. Pool or find out more visit www.papool.co.uk. You can e-mail them at admin@papool.co.uk. If you would like help in signing up then please contact forward mid and we will endeavour to find a way to help.

Forward Mid

Instead of a meeting in December Forward MID had a Christmas Lunch at the Original hotel in Roslin. Everyone had a great time and the banter was good. The meal was very nice although for most it was too much to eat at one sitting. On reflection Forward MID has grown in experience and notoriety and we are regularly being asked for information or to be involved in different things, it is good to know that our knowledge and skills are useful. 2007 was a good year and a lot was accomplished. We look forward to being more successful in 2008, if you would like to be involved or join us please feel free to come along and be part of our energetic team.

Aqua-Therapy

The Loanhead Leisure centre is providing Aqua-Therapy every Thursday between 12:10 and 1:15 PM. The customers that can attend at this time are likely to have a disability or a medical condition. A member of staff is on hand to give guidance and assistance on suitable water exercises that will help improve water confidence. Water exercise is generally recognised as improving overall health and aids in improving strength and enhance aerobic fitness.

This time is dedicated as a quiet time, no booking is required simply come along. If you require support in getting changed then please bring along someone to help as this service is not offered.

Scottish City Link

City link buses in Scotland are now adapted for wheelchair users, where a wheelchair user can stay in the wheelchair for the whole journey. However it is not as simple as turning up and getting the wheelchair on the bus, you must phone at least 24 hours in advance and nominate the buses you are going to travel on. City link can remove two seats from the bus to allow a wheelchair user on to the bus. It takes more than one person to operate the equipment to allow a wheelchair to alight the bus, this means that you can only get on and off at places where there is someone to give assistance i.e. the bus stations. This is a major step forward by city link buses as by law they are not required to do this until 2017.



More information can be found on their web site at www.citylink.co.uk, or e-mail them at info@citylink.co.uk. Phone number is 08705 50 50 50

Zen Shiatsu

Shiatsu is a traditional Japanese therapy, it has its roots in oriental medicine. Through the use of accupressure massage techniques it balances the body's energies. Shiatsu is non invasive and deeply relaxing. It is especially good for Back Pain, Low energy, Joint Pain, Depression, Neck Stiffness and reduced mobility.

Shiatsu helps relax muscles, it stimulates the flow of blood and lymph through pressure, stretches and rotation. Shiatsu is practiced on a soft futon, the clients remain fully clothed through the procedure.

Shiatsu is traditionally used as a preventative therapy as well as to treat acute and chronic conditions.

Shiatsu is now available in Midlothian with Zoe Masters, phone 0131-660-2795 for further information or visit them on the world wide web at www.zenshiatsu.org



This letter came into Forward mid on the 5th October 2007

I am a wheelchair user, and when I have to travel around I find that pavements are not designed for wheelchairs, then I heard that the Eskbank road in Dalkeith was having the pavement extended, I thought someone had done something at last. So after having my lunch in the Justinlees (A treat), I pushed myself down the road to Dalkeith only to find that the pavement was being dug up, a row of cones had been put down with metal fencing instructing people to go around the area. Guess what! The pavement had no ramp to go down so I had to bump my wheelchair down, yes it hurt me and possibly done some damage to my wheelchair, but the bumper was still to come, now I am down on the road and get around the pavement works only to find out that I can't get up the other side, I can't get out past the metal fencing and I can't ask the workmen for help as there are none there! I sit for thirty minutes until some kind woman with a pram comes along and I have to ask her for help. I miss my appointment and have to explain what has happened, I was going to see someone in Midlothian Council.

I have gone hoarse shouting and now I am asking if you can help me shout, to have something done about pavement works having ramps installed for wheelchair users.

Name and address withheld.



Forward Mid would like to hear from you! If you have something that you would like to say, whether good or bad please put pen to paper and let us know. Best contributions will be printed. You may withhold your name if you choose.



Alternative Publications

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