

FORWARD MIDLOTHIAN DISABLED



To Cut a long story short

An accident put paid to my life as I knew it. I struggled with my physical, mental and emotional well being. I lost 10 years of my life to a debilitating illness, became isolated and eventually realised that I needed help with very basic things. When I got to this point I felt that life was not worth living.

In one of my more lucid moments I read an article in a local newspaper and noted a name and contact number and plucked up the courage to contact Local Area Co ordination and talked about the difficulty I was having. Little did I know that initial call would change my life completely. It was answered by a lady who organised a visit to my home for a chat. She treated me with great respect, was non judgemental, listened to me and heard what I was saying and I knew I could trust her.

She helped me to fill in a form in the hope I might get help with the installation of a walk in shower. Unfortunately my application was turned down by someone higher up the Social Work tree. When I was informed of this decision I was very disappointed and angry and decided that no matter what I would never allow anyone from the S.W. department access to my home as long as I live.

Having spent most of my adult working life in a caring, supportive, professional capacity, successfully encouraging and assisting people to regain some quality of life I felt very let down.

Local Area Co ordination gave me excellent support through this most difficult time and

gave me the strength to carry on. How local co-ordination might help you. My story may make an impact on you. I shut myself off from the outside world, but one phone call changed my life.

Nowadays I can get out and about and have made lots of new friends. I facilitate mixed groups on a voluntary capacity and have spoken at conferences about what Local Co-ordination did for me and how it helped me to regain my confidence.

For many of us out there who have/ have used this person centred service it has given us encouragement to carry on. Do not suffer in silence, lift the telephone and call them. It worked for me, it may well work for you.

Why Local Area Co-ordination is not like Social Work. Local Area Co-ordination is not a statutory service. Local Area Co-ordinators are only part of your life if you want them to be. They can also help other members of your family with information and support to understand your condition. They do not sit in judgement of the needs of people. They give support, form relationships of trust, mutual respect and equality and encourage people to take small steps to identify where they see themselves and help them to get there, from small steps to longer term goals. I can now do things on my own that I couldn't do for years. Nowadays I look forward to the challenges of each day and that is down to the tremendous support I got from and still need on occasions from the Local Area Co-ordination Team.

Forward Mid Travel diary Scheme for Midlothian.

Forward Mid work to promote ordinary lifestyles for disabled people in Midlothian.

Our goal is that disabled people of all ages have the same freedom, choice, dignity and control as other citizens at home, at work, and in the community. One of the key areas where people experience discrimination, yet is so essential to every day life is transport.

Whether it be catching a bus, a taxi, a train or even flying, people experience discrimination with regard to equal opportunities and the right to be treated as ordinary citizens.

With this in mind Forward Mid launch the travel diary scheme for disabled people in Midlothian. The travel diary is a straight-forward way of recording your experience of public transport. It enables you to highlight if you have any negative aspects to your trip, such as poor attitude, disrespectful comments or problems with physical access to the vehicle, bus or taxi in question.

Why is this Useful?

People often tell of having poor experience with public transport, what this scheme allows us to do is to build a body of actual evidence of when, where and how people were discriminated against as disabled individuals using public transport in Midlothian.

Forward Mid will then present this evidence to Midlothian Council and the key transport providers across Midlothian and ask for positive change.

If you believe in that disabled people should be able to travel barrier free and with the same ease and accessibility as anyone else, please join in with the travel diary scheme. Get your voice heard. Make a contribution.

You will find a copy of the travel diary in this newsletter. Please use it the next time that you use public transport and return it to; Eric Johnstone, Forward Mid, MVA, 4/6 White Hart Street, Dalkeith, EH22 1AE. If you need help with postage, call Eric on 0131 663 9471 or eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk

Make your voice Heard.

Disabled persons parking bill

On the 26th February 2009 the Scottish parliament passed legislation which will see people fined for wrongly parking in disabled bays has been passed by MSPs.

The Disabled Persons' Parking Places Bill means anyone using designated spaces without a blue badge faces a fine of up to £60.

The move won cross-party support, but some. The change aims to make it easier for councils to designate bays as disabled. Currently, 85% of them are not legally enforceable.

Labour MSP Karen Gillon, standing in for Ms. Baillie, said the abuse of parking places was top of the list of what disabled people considered as barriers to getting out

and living a life. "The age of just relying on politeness has ended and the age of enforcement has come," she said.

The Tories' David McLetchie said it was a poor reflection on society that laws were needed to enforce disabled parking rules.

Karen Gillon (Clydesdale) (Lab): Stated in Holyrood, I begin by paying tribute to my colleague Jackie Baillie, whose unstinting commitment to this cause has brought us to this stage. She has ensured that Parliament takes the needs of disabled people seriously.

I, Iain Tait would like to say a big thank you to Jackie Baillie for making my life a little easier.



On Monday 23rd March 2009 the launch of the Independent Living in Scotland project will take place from 5.30pm to 8.00pm, At the Apex Waterloo Place Hotel, 23-27 Waterloo Place, Edinburgh EH1 3BH.



Refreshments will be served from 5.30pm and there will be a reception following the discussion at 7.15pm.

The Independent Living in Scotland project will be launched in Edinburgh at 5.30pm on Monday 23rd March 2009. The launch will be a Question Time debate on issues for independent living in Scotland and this will be chaired by Shereen Nanjiani. The debate panel will include representatives of the Independent Living Movement including Etienne d'Aboville, Alex Neil MSP, Professor Nick Watson and Stephen Moore.

The Independent Living in Scotland project will work with disabled people and

their networks and organisations to build the capacity of the Independent Living Movement in Scotland. The project aims to ensure that the Movement is better able to influence both national and local policy and services. The project Steering Group is made up of representatives of the Independent Living Movement and they have adopted the following definition of independent living:

'Independent living means disabled people of all ages having the same freedom, choice, dignity and control as other citizens at home, at work, and in the community. It does not mean living by yourself or fending for yourself. It means rights to practical assistance and support to participate in society and live an ordinary life.'

If you would like to attend the event, please telephone Claire McLaurin on 0141 228 5933

Wheelchair fashion

Italy held its first fashion show for disabled people in 2000, Britain had its first wheelchair fashion show in November

2008, to run alongside the BBC three series Britons Missing Top Model. The full series is to be repeated and is also available to watch on the World Wide Web at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/missingmodel/>



This shows the world that People with disabilities can still look good. Disabled people spirits are lifted when they look and feel good. Arthritis Care have published a booklet of fashion and beauty solutions, it is aimed at people with Arthritis but contains advice that is useful across a range of disabilities. It

can be found at www.arthritiscare.org.uk/PublicationsandResources/Listedbytype/Booklets/OracleGuide

If you have a disability and are fashion minded and are looking for more information on fashionable clothes that make you feel good then try these links www.wheeliechix-chic.com or phone them on 0208-392-9617 and

www.tannianddanni.com or phone them on 01538-381-4130. Fancy a job as a model or and actor with disabilities then you need to contact VisABLE people at www.visiblemodels.co.uk or phone them on 01905-77-66-31. You can find links on the Forward MID web site.

Thanks A Lot, Not



Disability and Edinburgh

Edinburgh council bosses stand accused of "disregarding" the disabled in the city after writing to one woman to tell her to stay away.

Sue Polson, an MS sufferer who uses a wheelchair, was told that the closure of Princes Street for eight months from February would make the city centre a no-go area for those with disabilities. Sue received a letter from the office of city development director Dave Anderson recommending she use the Gyle Shopping Centre instead, due to a reduction in the number of disabled parking bays.

Mrs. Polson had complained to the council about the removal of the Shopmobility service, which provides disability scooters, after its base in South St. David Street was relocated due to the tram works. To find out where Shopmobility might be during this time of uncertainty please phone Princes Street area office on 0131 557 4123

The letter reads "There are further major closures planned for Princes Street towards the end of February, with a commensurate reduction in the number of disabled parking bays. I would not recommend visiting the city centre while the tram works are being carried out and would suggest instead that you continue to visit the Gyle Shopping Centre as it has dedicated parking for



Blue Badge holders and an in situ Lothian Shopmobility service."

All this and Edinburgh Council going cap in hand to the Scottish parliament for extra money as tram project now has £50 Million shortfall. Everybody dig deep or maybe they should put out begging boxes and see then how popular the tram system is.

SCOTTISH MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE ASSOCIATION
fighting MND

Charity re branding

For the
Scottish
Motor Neurone Disease
Association

The Scottish motor Neurone Disease Association have launched a new addition to their web site.

SHEL CAT is live!

Shelcat is a new online catalogue that enables you to search the stock of 44 health libraries in Scotland. Library members can search, borrow, renew and reserve items online from the MND Scotland library at

www.shelcat.org/pmnd.

Register to join the library from our website or contact the librarian.

For more information please contact Sandra Wilson Information Officer/ Librarian

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Alternative Publications

The editions of the Forward MID newsletters are available in large print or at www.forwardmid.org.uk
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.