

Newsletter issue 33 -December 2011

[www.forwardmid.org.uk](http://www.forwardmid.org.uk)

# FORWARD MIDLOTHIAN DISABLED PEOPLE



## Prepare for winter

Getting ready for winter at home is easy. Just make a household plan and collect together the items for an emergency kit that that will be essential to you and your family. (see insert in this newsletter)

Winter proof your home.

Scottish Water information;  
know what actions to take if a water pipe burst.  
Know where your stop valve is and how to turn off your water.

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



Know how to turn off your electricity supply at the mains.

Making your home energy-efficient will make it cheaper and quicker to heat during cold weather. Call the Scottish Government's Home Energy Scotland Hotline on 0800 512 012. Check the terms of your household insurance policies, and 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 have any. Make sure you will be able to have your footpaths clear and driveway if severe weather strikes. It's a good idea to keep a shovel (specially designed snow shovels are particularly good), and some salt or grit at home, and find out where your nearest local authority public grit bin is.

Keep healthy in the winter, and avoid the 'flu.

People aged over 65 years or have a medical condition, check with your local medical practice to get advice on a seasonal flu vaccination. Protect yourself from influenza this winter.

# Emergency Helpline for severe weather conditions

Midlothian Council's social work team will run an emergency helpline which is activated and publicised if severe weather arrives. This is for elderly, disabled and vulnerable people without other means of support, for example where carers or family members are unavailable.

The helpline can assist if they are running out of their prescription medication and/or need basic groceries like bread and milk. The council works in partnership with the British Red Cross so if you phone, they can arrange for a volunteer to pick up and deliver an emergency prescription and supplies to your home.

It's 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 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 my area you could contact your local community council.

If the weather is bad you or someone you know might be concerned about transport or whether a council facility has had to close. For up to date information during severe weather visit the council's website [www.midlothian.gov.uk](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk) or call our contact centre on 0131 663 7211.

In a social work emergency you can call 0800 731 6969 (out of normal office hours).

## OTHER KEY CONTACTS IN MIDLOTHIAN

### Emergency services - Ambulance, Fire and Police Tel: 999

<u>Midlothian Community Hospital</u>	<u>Tel: 0131-454-1001</u>
<u>Refuse/ Wheelie Bins</u>	<u>Tel: 0131-561-5284</u>
<u>Midlothian Travel Team contact Karl Vanters</u>	<u>Tel: 0131-561-5443</u>
<u>Dial a bus Midlothian</u>	<u>Tel: 0131-663-1103</u>
<u>Dial a ride Midlothian</u>	<u>Tel: 0131-447-9949</u>
<u>Midlothian Social Work Services Tel Loanhead</u>	<u>Tel: 0131-271-3900</u>
<u>Carers VOCAL – Midlothian</u>	<u>Tel: 0131-663-6869</u>
<u>Citizens Advice Bureau</u>	<u>Tel: 0131-660-1636</u>
<u>Breathe Easy Tel Billy</u>	<u>Tel: 0131-663-3829</u>
<u>Midcare (Telecare) Midlothian</u>	<u>Tel: 0131-271-3900</u>
<u>NHS 24</u>	<u>Tel: 08454-24-24-24</u>
<u>Direct Payments</u>	<u>Tel: 0131-271-3900</u>
<u>Leisure and Recreation</u>	<u>Tel: 01968-664-055</u>
<u>Alzheimers Scotland</u>	<u>Tel: 0131-654-1114</u>
<u>Housing Midlothian Council</u>	<u>Tel: 0131-271-3607</u>
<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Tel: 0131-271-3201</u>
<u>Direct Payment</u>	<u>Tel: 0131-271-3637</u>
<u>Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living</u>	<u>Tel: 0131-475-2350</u>
<u>Citizens Advice Dalkeith</u>	<u>Tel: 0131-663-3688</u>
<u>Citizens Advice Penicuik</u>	<u>Tel: 01968-675-259</u>
<u>Red Cross</u>	<u>Tel: 0131-654-0340</u>

## Are you ready for winter?

This year disabled people across Scotland are being encouraged to get ready for winter.

Getting ready for winter is something we all need to do – it takes only 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 your community and neighbourhood, or behind the wheel, we all need to consider what might help.

By thinking about how we can all get ready, we can help Midlothian be better prepared.

Last year's severe weather caught many people out.

This special newsletter contains some good advice and tips to prepare us for this winter. Some useful phone numbers are included, My Winter plan; write down your important numbers now and keep by the phone.! We have included some sources of support, take time to read through, make sure you have thought about the things that will make this winter manageable, safe and enjoyable!



### Winter in the community

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 feel 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, your local community council.

Clear ice or snow from your pathway. Remember, for some people bad ice can make things just as difficult as deep snow.

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.

Midlothian Council will do all they can to keep essential services running during periods of severe weather. However, severe weather may cause some change to routine local services, such as temporary closure of schools, changes to the times of refuse collection and 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 your local authority for the latest information and advice during severe weather also on Local radio stations Black Diamond and Radio Forth.

## For your good health

- 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 say they contain paracetamol, ibuprofen or aspirin, so always check before using them. If you have a cough, cold or flu, drink plenty of water or other non-alcoholic liquids to replace fluids lost in sweating and keep warm and rest as much as you can.
- Check medicines in your home are up-to-date and keep them in their original labelled container. Always follow instructions on the box or label. If you are unsure or taking other medicines prescribed by your doctor, check with your local pharmacist first.
- To combat the cold, layers of thinner clothing are more effective than one thick layer. Choose clothes made of wool, cotton or fleecy synthetic fibres. Also wear a hat (up to half your body heat is lost through your head) and make sure that your shoes will grip in slippery conditions.

## Health advice over the festive period

- GP practice closures: During the festive season most GP practices will be closed for four days from Saturday 25 December to Tuesday 28 December. They will also be closed for four days from Saturday 1 January to Tuesday 4 January. Last Date for prescriptions 18th December. Some medical practices are changing computer systems over this period ensure prescriptions requested in plenty of time.
- Pharmacy closures: Most pharmacies will be closed on the festive public holidays too. For opening times, see the NHS 24 website at [www.nhs24.com](http://www.nhs24.com). Some pharmacies give dispense emergency a wide selection of prescribed medication.
- Repeat prescriptions: With GP practices and many pharmacies closed on these days, please order and collect from your GP practice any repeat prescriptions you need in plenty of time. Our out-of-hours services cannot provide repeat prescriptions.
- A&E services: Hospital Accident & Emergency (A&E) services are for urgent and emergency situations only. A&E is not an alternative to your GP, so please don't go to A&E if your doctor can't see you immediately or when your GP surgery is closed.



**Most of all Happy Christmas and a Merry New year to all our readers.**

### Alternative Publications

The editions of the Forward MID newsletters are available in large print or at [www.forwardmid.org.uk](http://www.forwardmid.org.uk)  
For alternative publication please E-mail to [eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk](mailto:eric.johnstone@mvacvs.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.

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