

**FORWARD**  
**MIDLOTHIAN**  
**DISABLED PEOPLE**



*Equality - Diversity - Inclusion*

## TOWARDS A GOOD LIFE, TOWARDS AN EQUAL LIFE

Forward Mid would like to offer genuine gratitude for people's attendance and contribution to the **Towards a Good Life** event at Loanhead Miners on the 25th June 2013. Following the event, it was apparent that many people enjoyed the day and found it valuable. As you will know, one of the main purposes of the day was to launch the **Midlothian Physical Disability Action Plan 2015**. We are keen to maintain a connection and a working relationship with participants from the 25th who wish to be involved at any level of their own choosing.



With this in mind we would like to inform you that the workshop themed groups from the event will continue to meet, perhaps every two months, up until the end of 2013. You can find a plan of these sub-groups overleaf along with contact details for people who will lead and plan the up and coming meetings. Once again, if you have any interest in the areas described we would encourage you to think about getting in touch and playing an active role in shaping better services for disabled people in Midlothian. This could be anything from attending ad-hoc or regular meetings to receiving updates on developments with an opportunity to make comments from home.

We would also like to remind people that the next Forward Mid Cafe Connect will be on 27th August in Dalkeith Welfare Hall from 2-4pm. Everyone is welcome here and it is a good opportunity to catch up and have more conversations with people you may have met on June 25th.

Once again, thanks for your participation at the event. Forward Mid are committed to disabled people having more choice and control over their lives. If you share this vision then please do continue to be involved with the ongoing work around delivering the "Towards a Good Life Towards and Equal Life" action plan.

Best regards, Jeff Adamson, Chair, Forward Mid.

LCiL Champions.....	Page 3
Blue Badge criteria.....	page 3
View from the chair.....	Page 4
Health Volunteer.....	Page 6
KICC.....	Page 7
Payroll services.....	Page 7
ELJSP.....	Page 8
Helen's.....	Page 10
Assessments.....	Page 10
Traineeships.....	Page 11
WWW.....	Page 12
Grapevine.....	Page 12

**Peer Support Group – Self Directed Support:** Jeff Adamson and Louise McMeel.

Contact: jayne.lewis@midlothian.gov.uk; eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk

**Summary of Activity:** This group will establish a group of disabled people and professionals who will share information about direct payments and self directed support. They aim to encourage adoption of the system by disabled people.

**Health:** Catherine Evans and Sue Edmond. Contact: jayne.lewis@midlothian.gov.uk; eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk

**Summary of Activity:** This group will work with GP practices and health providers in general to ensure equality of experience for disabled people.

**Midlothian Access Panel:** Mike Harrison. Contact: jayne.lewis@midlothian.gov.uk; eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk

**Summary of Activity –** The access panel will seek to strengthen membership and work with Midlothian Council, health departments and other agencies to improve the physical environment and general access for disabled people across Midlothian.

**Cafe Connect – Community Hubs:** Marlene Gill and Catriona Luff. Contact: jayne.lewis@midlothian.gov.uk; eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk

**Summary of Activity –** This group will set up community information hubs in libraries and plan regular information drop-in sessions in local communities. They will also support Cafe Connect in Dalkeith and also plan to set up another community cafe.

**Transport:** Karl Vanters. Contact: jayne.lewis@midlothian.gov.uk; eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk

**Summary of Activity –** This group will establish a Midlothian wide public transport forum, meeting regularly as well as working with bus and taxi operators to ensure equality of experience for disabled people when using transport locally.

**Peer Support Group – Welfare Reform:** Kirsty Henderson and Nicole Bethune.

Contact: jayne.lewis@midlothian.gov.uk; eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk

**Summary of Activity –** This group will be working to bring together local disabled people and professionals with an interest in supporting people through current welfare reform impacts. The group will hope to meet every 4 to 6 weeks offering concise and up to date information. It will provide mutual support and learn where best to signpost other people facing challenges with welfare reform.



If you would like more information on any of the subjects please contact either:

Jayne Lewis, Midlothian Council ☎ 0131-271-3665 jayne.lewis@midlothian.gov.uk

Eric Johnstone, Forward Mid ☎ 0131-663-9471, eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk

## ‘LCiL Champions’

LCiL has been awarded 18 months of funding from the Office of Disability Issues to form, train and support a group of disabled people, people with long-term conditions and carers to promote understanding of Independent Living and Self-Directed Support (SDS), and raise the profile of LCiL and Disabled People’s Organisations.

The ten Champions, all of whom are volunteers and involved in LCiL and its services in different ways, have almost completed a six-session training programme which will give them the skills, tools and confidence to work in a variety of settings – both at one-off events and as part of longer-term working groups or committees.

Each Champion has a member of LCiL staff as a ‘Buddy’ whose role is to coach, mentor and support them as they carry out their role.

The group of Champions have been a delight to work with during the training – their enthusiasm and commitment have been fantastic. We’re very excited to see what effect their work will have over the coming months as they start to represent LCiL.

Our team of Champions are eager to get out and about at events where they can tell people their own story and discuss the issues facing disabled people and people with long term conditions today. They are keen to raise awareness and interact with people at events, big or small. If you would like to discuss having a Champion or Champions at your event please contact Debbie Bayne on ☎ 0131 475 2350 or email: [Debbie.bayne@lothiancil.org.uk](mailto:Debbie.bayne@lothiancil.org.uk)



**Champions and Buddies at the first training session**

### Blue Badge Criteria

Transport Scotland have updated publications to reflect criteria for the Personal Independence Payment, including applying for a Blue Badge and an eligibility checker. You can access them online from Transport Scotland’s website: <http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/road/policy/blue-badgescheme/publications>.

If you want more information about applying for a Blue Badge and you live in Edinburgh, East Lothian or Midlothian and require these documents in print format please contact Grapevine on ☎ 0131 475 2370.



## View from the Chair



### Benefit fraud?

Recently I received an 'invitation' from Jobcentre Plus to attend an interview at my local Jobcentre. I have to say I've had more welcoming invitations than this one. In fact, this read more like a threat than anything else. The invitation's first paragraph stated, "We need to see you in order to discuss the benefit we are currently paying you. We need to ensure your payments are correct and it is essential that you attend this interview to discuss the matter. If you arrive late you may not be seen." It continues, "You should know that where there is doubt about whether the conditions for entitlement are met, we can suspend payment of your benefit." Note that the last sentence suggests that I could lose my benefit if there was "doubt" - not proof but a suspicion. In other words, you are 'judged guilty before trial' in the Jobcentre Plus world.

The 'invitation' asked me to bring, amongst other documentation, details about my occupational pension. I telephoned the Jobcentre to find out what this interview was about and was told that the amount of money I receive through my Employee Support Allowance (ESA) could be reduced as I receive an occupational pension. I had just recently moved to ESA from Incapacity Benefit which did not take my occupational pension into account when calculating my payment. Bemused I then spoke to the Grapevine team [Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living's information and advice service] and they found out that under ESA rules if a claimant's occupational pension exceeds £85 per week half the amount of the 'excess' money is deducted from their ESA. For example, someone who receives an occupational pension of £100 per week is £15 over the limit therefore £7.50 would be deducted from their ESA. This was news to me and to Grapevine.

Whilst Grapevine were making further investigations I began to do my own research by trawling through the Internet looking for information about this and how it could affect me. Okay, just in case she should read this, I'll put my hands up; it was my wife that trawled the Internet - for fully three hours, to find the crucial information that would help me at my interview. For some reason this information is extremely difficult to find and, judging by the responses from contributors to a number of forums, the details are not widely known but, eventually, my wife discovered a link to a website ([http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/875/pdfs/ukxiem\\_20100875\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/875/pdfs/ukxiem_20100875_en.pdf)) which covers this piece of legislation and states that anyone "migrating" from Incapacity Benefit to ESA would be exempt from this deduction if they were claiming Incapacity Benefit before 2001 or if they were receiving higher rate Disability Living Allowance (DLA).



Armed with a copy of this legislation, and my wife, I arrived at the Jobcentre, on time. We were shown into an interview room where a Jobcentre employee began by asking me for proof of my identification. Satisfied with this she then asked me to give her the requested documentation relating to my occupational pension. Rather than wait for her to scrutinise my details and go through a lot of wasteful palaver I cut to the chase and gave her a copy of the legislation relating to the rules of benefit migration and occupational pensions. Reading this she came to the bit that said my occupational pension would be discounted if I was receiving Incapacity Benefit before 2001. "Ah, you were not claiming Incapacity Benefit before 2001." She said triumphantly. I took the liberty of finishing the sentence she had been reading, "or, if they are receiving higher rate DLA - which I am." I replied triumphantly. "You're receiving higher rate DLA?" She said to me, the quadriplegic man in the wheelchair opposite her. "Yes" I replied. She then apologised and said that as I was receiving higher rate DLA I should never have been called in for this interview. Whoever had made the decision to do this had made a mistake. It was a simple clerical error that should never have happened. My wife asked her if I hadn't mentioned that I was receiving higher rate DLA would she have brought it up during the interview. She said she would have eventually. We both

had our doubts about that. Although she had said she was fully conversant with the migration rules she did ask if she could keep the copy of the legislation I had given her. After more apologies we took our leave.

As I said earlier, it was quite a chore for my wife to find the relevant information we needed. Searching through the Internet she found that a surprising amount of support organisations knew little about this piece of legislation and a number of people had accepted that they had to take a cut in their ESA because of their occupational pension. This leads me to a number of questions.



### **How many people have been in my position and accepted this cut to their ESA?**

The legislation states that “DWP and provider staff understand the policy and processes in relation to migration and are able to effectively communicate to customers and support them through the migration process.” Obviously the person who called me in for an interview wasn’t fully aware of the policies of migration. I’m sure there are many other different situations where the transfer from Incapacity Benefit to ESA is not as straight forward as we have been led to believe.

### **How many other Jobcentre Plus staff don’t fully understand the policy and processes of migration?**

New claimants of Employee Support Allowance will be subject to a deduction of their benefit if they receive an occupational pension which exceeds £85 a week which is essentially another tax on their income.

### **How many people are aware of this?**

This whole episode, from receiving the initial ‘invitation’ to the interview was very stressful for my wife and I. The threat of a cut in income is the last thing anyone needs in these times of austerity especially disabled people whose incomes are being depleted year upon year as it is. I’m fortunate that I have a wide range of people/resources that I can call upon to help me through these situations. Which leads me to my last question.

### **What happens to disabled people who don’t have this kind of support?**

Jeff Adamson, Chair Forward Mid



# WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP IMPROVE Health and Social Care Services in Midlothian?



The Shadow Board meet every 8 weeks, with induction meetings initially every 4 weeks.

In addition there will be time spent in reading papers for meetings.

We are committed to supporting people to enable them to fulfil this role.

For more information contact Catherine Evans, Public Involvement Co-ordinator on 0131 446 4821 or Joan Griffiths, Client Relations Officer on 0131 271 3645.

**Closing Date:  
Wednesday 21 August**



The new Midlothian Shadow Board for Health and Social Care is looking for two volunteer members to join them – a member of the Public and an Unpaid Carer.

This is an exciting and important opportunity to help shape health and social care services in the future, and to ensure the people who use services and the people who care for them are at the heart of all decisions.

Until now health and social care services have been managed separately. The integration of health and social care will mean that, for the first time, these services are managed and developed together. We want to improve outcomes for service users and carers and to do this we need to work closely with service users, carers and the public.

Applicants should:

- Have effective communication skills
- Be able to challenge and raise issues of concern
- Have listening skills
- Be able to read and understand complex documents
- Be sensitive to other people's opinions
- Be reliable and committed to carrying out agreed tasks
- Be able to commit to Shadow Board meetings and engage with training opportunities

**For an application pack please contact Lesley Gray, Midlothian Council, Fairfield House, 8 Lothian Road, Dalkeith, EH22 3ZH  
Telephone ☎0131 271 3210 or email [lesley.gray@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:lesley.gray@midlothian.gov.uk)**

## Keeping Fit with a Chronic Condition

“KICC Active Lothian’s aim is to improve the quality for life of people living with long term health conditions through customised exercise classes in their community. We want to enable self-management through regular participation in our yoga, pilates and tai chi classes. These systems of exercise are gentle and holistic, combining movement with breathing to encourage relaxation. Participants report improved balance, flexibility and strength as well as reduced pain and a better ability to relax and sleep.

We accept anyone with a stable long term condition. Carers are welcome to attend with the participants and to take part in the class for free while not assisting.

Our tutors all have appropriate qualifications in their field and have or are working towards further training in working with people with long term conditions.

KICC are busy setting up new classes scheduled to start at the end of the summer so watch this space for more details coming soon.

Classes Midlothian:

YOGA

Venue: Newtongrange Leisure Centre

Time: 10.30-11.45

Dates: Tuesdays

Cost: £5

Tutor: Melanie Cook

Suitable for: All levels

Tel: ☎ 0131 555 0809

Mob: 0743 6102 726



For more info please check the website: [www.kiccactive.org.uk](http://www.kiccactive.org.uk)

### LCiL's Payroll service

As of the 6th April 2013, LCiL's Payroll service is now operating under HMRC's new Real Time Information system.

Payroll service users must ensure that their timesheets arrive at LCiL **on time** for their payroll process date. If you are unsure of your payroll process date please contact the payroll team to find out. Late processing of your payroll may result in HMRC charging you a late submission fee.

It is also important to let the payroll team know if you have a new employee starting and send in their P45 form from their previous employer, or have them complete a P46 form. It is also extremely important to let payroll know if an employee is leaving and if annual leave is due.

If any of your employees tell you of a change to their personal details, such as change of address, or a name change, please let the payroll team know of this change as soon as possible, and advise your employee that they must contact HMRC themselves to advise of this change, they can do so by calling 0845 300 0627

If you have any questions please call ☎ 0131 475 2350 and ask for the Payroll Team.



### HMRC Real Time Information system.

If you do your own bookkeeping you are also required to use the new real time information system. You can download the Software for free at [www.hmrc.gov.uk/payerti/payroll/bpt/payee-tools.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/payerti/payroll/bpt/payee-tools.htm) and there is a video at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=5wP0xZ3oMdl](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5wP0xZ3oMdl) to get you started. Everyone who employs one or more people must use RTI by October 2013.



# Edinburgh and Lothian's Joint Sensory Partnership Delivering Better Services for Ethnic Minorities

Following two-year funding from the Scottish Government, RNIB Scotland and Deaf Action have launched the Edinburgh and Lothian's Joint Sensory Partnership (ELJSP).

- ❖ The partnership will deliver better services for people with hearing or sight loss by:
- ❖ Maximising existing resources and networks;
- ❖ Introducing sustainable support services;
- ❖ Raising awareness of sensory loss issues throughout the region.

## Ethnic minorities

Ethnic minority communities have been identified as hard to reach groups within the Edinburgh and Lothians area.

As part of the Joint Sensory Partnership, RNIB Scotland along with Deaf Action have created the role of a Project Development Officer.

The Project Development Officer will identify the various ethnic minority communities within Edinburgh and the Lothians and work closely with them to deliver greater awareness on sensory health and access to local services.

## Objectives

- ❖ **Raising awareness** – Improve knowledge and understanding of the impact of sensory loss amongst members of ethnic minority communities.
- ❖ **Volunteer network** – Establish a network of volunteers to sustain support for people with sensory loss, their families and carers from within their own communities.
- ❖ **Referral pathways** – Facilitate effective pathways and access to health care and sensory services for people from ethnic minority communities.
- ❖ **Educate** – Educate healthcare professionals working with people from ethnic minority communities with sensory loss.
- ❖ **Sensory awareness training** – deliver sensory awareness training including “Deaf Awareness” and “Understanding Sight Loss” to key groups, organisations, agencies and health professionals working with ethnic minority communities.

## Outcomes

**The project aims to:**

- ❖ Increase knowledge amongst ethnic minority communities on sensory loss and related health services
- ❖ Establish a network of Community Sensory Volunteers to provide first language support to people with sensory loss and deliver information on sensory health at community events and exhibitions
- ❖ Develop the delivery of sensory services through key organisations, agencies and health professionals working with ethnic minority communities
- ❖ Ensure health professionals are equipped with the knowledge to engage more effectively with ethnic minority communities and make services more accessible
- ❖ Equip ethnic minority community groups and organisations with the skills and knowledge to work more effectively with people with sensory loss.

## Volunteers

We will be recruiting Community Sensory Volunteers. The roles will range from offering direct support to people with sensory loss to being involved in community engagement activities.

## Community organisations

If you work with ethnic minority communities we would love to hear from you.

As part of a programme of activity we will be running a series of free training workshops on sensory awareness. We can also develop tailored training packages on British Sign language (BSL) and visual impairment.

## Further information

Tariq Mahmood, Project Development Officer (Ethnic Minorities)  
tariq.mahmood@rnib.org.uk telephone: ☎️ 0131 652 3140

RNIB Scotland and Deaf Action  
Joint Sensory Partnership  
Edinburgh and Lothian's,  
12-14 Hillside Crescent  
Edinburgh EH7 5EA

Copies of this leaflet are available in Urdu and Cantonese on request from Tariq Mahmood.

For more information visit [www.jointsensorypartnership.com](http://www.jointsensorypartnership.com)

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Deaf Action Registered charity number SC009898



## “Helen’s Hot Shops”

Well, this is my weekly visit to the Fort, and what does everyone do first before they go shopping? For me its caffeine, so I head to Waterstones, don't worry I'm not going to bore you with my top ten favourite books but I do like a good murder mystery especially if it is written by Harlan Coben.

Starbucks is upstairs in Waterstones and it's easy to get to via the lift at the back of the shop. Once you come out of the lift you have to go through a door to get into the café. The door is easy to push open if you are on your own but usually someone is there to open it for you. Well, now I'm in Starbucks and wondering what coffee to choose. I like a Latte but I ordered a medium one last time and it's quite big! Anyway, when you order they ask your name, which is a bit strange although you can make up a name ha, better not or won't get my coffee! It's a latte and a ginger biscuit, oh dear here goes the diet again, never mind will cut down later! Ordered my coffee and the guy at the counter has asked if I want him to take it to a table, so that's a yes. The café feels quite tight for space as there are a lot of tables and chairs. However, I got a table with 2 seats, one of the staff has taken a seat away making it easier for me to get nearer the table, (forgot to say I am in a wheelchair). A member of staff then brought me my latte and my ginger biscuit, great my caffeine fix at last. Oh dear, have picked a great table looking over the shop, unfortunately I hate heights, never mind, will try to relax here for a while. Latte was lovely and of course so was the biscuit.



Before I hit the shops have to go a place. Back through the door I came in, someone has opened it so that's good. The disabled toilet is just across from lift the door, it's unlocked so that's good too. I've been told if it's not open just ask one of the staff to unlock it. Toilet is clean and fresh, another good sign. Now back in lift, down to the ground floor and out of store no problem as main door is normally open.

Time to go shopping; well my plan is to window shop, we'll see, maybe that story is for another day Watch this space.....

### **Mandatory DWP health advice for ESA claimants**

From November ESA claimants are to be forced to have regular meetings with DWP health professionals to discuss how they can make themselves well enough to work. Failure to comply will lead to having their benefit stopped. The rules will apply to claimants who are in the work-related activity group and who are expected to be able to return to work in 18 months or more.

The regular discussions will focus claimants on how they can improve their view of their readiness for work by taking steps to manage their health issues. They will not replace a person's GP, but can promote health support and help a claimant to re-engage with their GP if they are struggling to adapt to their condition.

According to employment minister Mark Hoban, "Many people on sickness benefits want to work, so it's vitally important that we give them the right help to move into a job if they are able. The help we give people at the moment tends to focus on work-related skills, but doesn't necessarily address health problems. But by giving people regular support from health professionals we can do more to help people manage or improve their conditions."

**My one Question is! Where are these employers located?**

## Disabled people on traineeships, supported internships, work trials and work academies to get additional help through Access to Work.

Disabled people will get more support to gain the skills and experience they need to get a job under changes to the government's specialist disability employment scheme announced 6 July 2013.

Disabled people on traineeships, supported internships, work trials and work academies will for the first time get additional help through the Access to Work scheme – which provides funding towards the extra costs disabled people face in work, such as travel costs, specially adapted equipment or support workers.

Minister for Disabled People Esther McVey said:



“Young disabled people tell me how difficult it can be to get a job without experience – and they want the same choice of training opportunities as everyone else to help them into work.

We're opening up Access to Work to do just that – so that more young disabled people can get a foothold in the jobs market, get their careers on track and achieve their full potential. Recent changes also mean that businesses with up to 49 employees will save up to £2,300 per employee who uses the fund by no longer paying a contribution towards the extra costs faced by disabled people in work. Disabled jobseekers who want to set up their own business through the New Enterprise Allowance are also eligible for Access to Work funding. The government will continue its marketing campaign – targeted at young disabled people and people with mental health conditions.

Last year the programme helped 30,000 disabled people keep or get employment. Research also shows that around half of Access to Work customers would be out of work if they did not receive support through the scheme.”

To apply, go to [www.gov.uk/access-to-work](http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work) and find the Access to Work centre that deals with your area.

Supported internships are a Department for Education programme for young people who have complex learning difficulties or disabilities. They will provide a structured learning programme at an employer that is tailored to the young person's individual needs with expert support provided to both the employer and the young person usually through job coaches.

Traineeships are a new Department for Business, Innovation & Skills and Department for Education programme to support young people to develop the skills they need to secure employment, including apprenticeships. It will be open to people aged 16 up to 24, including those with a disability and in other disadvantaged groups. Places will be available from August 2013.

Sector-based work academies offer pre-employment training and work placements in growth industries with a guaranteed job interview.

Self-Made Work Trials will enable young disabled people to set up their own trial with a local employer if there is a realistic prospect of a job at the end of the trial.

Work Experience placements offer young people a few weeks with a local employer to help build their CVs and job skills.

The New Enterprise Allowance helps unemployed people who want to start their own business by providing access to financial support – a weekly allowance worth up to £1,274 and a loan of up to £1,000 to help with start-up costs – as well as business mentoring from local entrepreneurs.

## The World Wide Web

Disabled people and internet access – Inclusion Scotland are looking to collate examples/case studies of people affected by a lack of internet access, particularly in light of benefit changes which means that most claims will eventually have to be made online.

The Office of National Statistics stated in May 2013, “Individuals with no disability are over three times more likely to have used the Internet than individuals with a disability. There were 3.7 million disabled adults, as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), who had never used the Internet. This represents 32% of those who were disabled and over half (53%) of the 7.1 million adults who had never used the Internet. Of those adults who reported no disability, 9% (3.3 million adults) had never used the Internet.



Now that all Department for Work and Pensions forms have to be completed online, if an error is made on an online benefit claim form, people could now be hit with a £50 fine. If you know anyone who doesn't have any internet access and may be affected by the move of benefits claims to online, please let us know. Contact Inclusion Scotland via email: [information@inclusionScotland.org](mailto:information@inclusionScotland.org) or telephone ☎ 07429 199617

## Grapevine Service

Grapevine can advise you on possible entitlement to: State Pension, Pension Credit, Carer's Allowance and making applications for Attendance Allowance. We can also advise older people on, for example:

Charitable trust funders to help pay towards the cost of something such as transport concessions.

- ➔ Taxicard,
- ➔ Bus Pass
- ➔ Blue Badge
- ➔ Heating allowances
- ➔ Access to Health
- ➔ Social Care services



To make access to the support offered by the Change Fund programme contact our offices at;

Grapevine,  
c/o LCiL,  
Norton Park,  
57 Albion Road  
Edinburgh  
EH7 5QY

Call us on ☎ 0131 475 2350

email: [grapevine@lothiancil.org.uk](mailto:grapevine@lothiancil.org.uk)

## 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 publications please email [eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk](mailto:eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk) or call ☎ 0131-663-9471. You can write to Eric at MVA 4-6 White Hart Street, Dalkeith EH22 1AE with your request.