

FORWARD MIDLOTHIAN DISABLED PEOPLE



It's here! The Self Directed Support Act is now live.

On Tuesday 1st April the Social Care (Self Directed Support) (Scotland) Act came into force.

This Act, which introduces new legislation for people accessing care and support services in Scotland, was officially launched at a national event hosted by Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living in partnership with the Scottish Government.

The keynote speaker at the event was MSP, Minister for Public Health, Michael Matheson. He was joined by some disabled people who already use Self Directed Support (SDS) who spoke about the difference it has



made to the lives by giving them more choice, flexibility and control in the way they want to have their social care/support provided. A video of the full event can be seen by visiting this webpage: www.lothiancil.org.uk/get-involved-with-lothian-cil/makesdswork/

This landmark piece of legislation requires councils to offer people a range of options for how their social care is delivered.

There are 4 ways people will be able to direct and receive their support:



Minister speaking to SDS users Suselle and Jeff,

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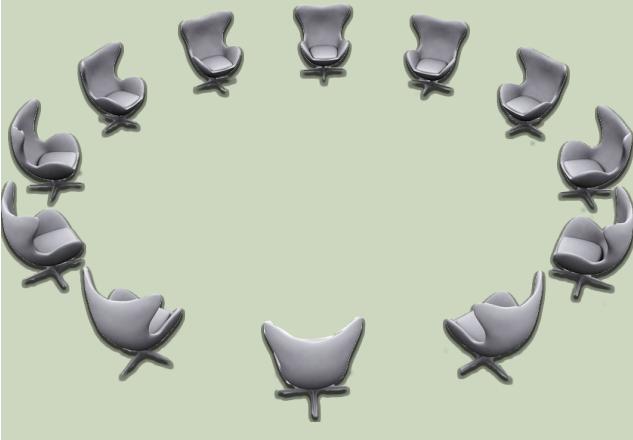
1. A direct payment - you will be given your individual budget to make your own arrangements. You can do this with or without assistance.
2. Choose a care or support organisation and the council will arrange it. You then work with the care or support organisation to plan your support.
3. The council holds your budget and arranges your service. Your support will be arranged by your care manager who will have talked with you about your wishes and preferences.
4. A mix of the above.

Midlothian's Self Directed Support Programme Board is now complete.

Public and Carer Representatives appointed to Self Directed Support Programme Board

Congratulations to our new Self Directed Support Programme Board user and carer representatives. Jeff Adamson (public member), Douglas Hendry (carer member), Isabell Lilley (depute public member) and Ruth Forbes (depute carer member) will ensure that people who use social care services and their carers are at the heart of implementing Self Directed Support in Midlothian.

The Board Membership

- 
- Acting Head of Adults and Community Care
 - Social Work group manager
 - Senior Accountant
 - Practice Learning and Development Manager
 - Social Work Service Manager
 - Learning Disability Resource Manager
 - Children and Families Resource Manager
 - Assistant Director VOCAL
 - Self Directed Support Planning Manager
 - Public member
 - Carer member

The new Self Directed Support Programme Board will oversee the implementation of the new Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013, which, as you have seen, came into force on 1st April 2014. The role of the public and carer representatives is to:

- To review the work of the Programme Board to support delivery of the Project Plan and the implementation of Self Directed Support.
- To advocate for wider service user/ carer involvement as appropriate.
- To make sure the outcomes of user/carers involvement are considered in decision-making.
- Make sure that the impact of services on the lives of users and carers (their personal outcomes) is regularly part of discussions.
- Provide a link between recognised user and carer groups and the Programme Board.

SDS will be available initially for new clients from April 2014. Existing clients will be offered it through annual reviews.

For more information on self directed support in Midlothian visit the Self Directed Support webpage at www.midlothian.gov.uk or visit www.selfdirectedsupportscotland.gov.uk or www.lothiancil.org.uk

Coming Soon - A Forward Mid newsletter telling you all you need to know about Self Directed Support

Would you like to be involved In shaping Self Directed support in Midlothian



Would you like to join Midlothian's Self Directed support Reference Group?

We are currently planning how self directed support will work in Midlothian and want to make sure it is informed by the views of people living in Midlothian using social care services.

What is a Reference Group?

The reference group is a group of people who use social care services or care for someone using social care services, who can advise how Self Directed Support should work in Midlothian.

It is an opportunity for you to influence the decisions being made about Self Directed Support and to ensure that it is shaped around People's needs and views.

What will the group discuss?

It is up to the group to decide what issues they want to discuss around Self Directed Support and will depend on what is currently being developed locally. Some specific areas that the group may decide to consider to include :

- How to tell people in Midlothian about Self Directed Support
- Making sure the proposed Self Directed Support information is easy to understand

What is the time commitment and where is the venue the meeting will be held?

Meetings will be held every 4-8 weeks. Each meeting will last about 1½ hours. The group meeting will be held at a venue in Midlothian to suit participants.

Do You need any special qualifications to be part of the Reference group?

No special qualifications are required. You will require an interest in the decisions being made and be willing to voice your opinions as someone with knowledge of social care services in Midlothian.

What support is available to enable you to attend?

If you require support for the person you care for, or help with transport, please contact us so we can discuss your individual needs and support and where possible help you to attend.

How do you get involved ?

If you would like more information in being part of the Reference Group please complete the form below and return it to Graham Kilpatrick, you can also contact Graham Tel: 0131 271 3477 or Email: Graham.Kilpatrick@midlothian.gov.uk



I am interested in being involved with Midlothian Self Directed Support Reference Group

Name:.....Tel:.....

Address:.....Email:.....

Return to Graham Kilpatrick, Midlothian Council, Fairfield House, 8 Lothian Road, Dalkeith EH22 3AA or by Email Graham.Kilpatrick@midlothian.gov.uk



What is Self Directed Support?

Self Directed Support gives you more choice and control over the social care support you receive. It enables you to:

- ✳ Have more choice and flexibility.
- ✳ Choose services to suit improve your lifestyle.
- ✳ Manage your own support

The Self Directed Support Act came into force in April 2014 and will affect adults, children and family carers. For more information on Self Directed Support visit: www.selfdirectedsupportscotland.org.uk/

Wanted - Accessible Holiday Recommendation

If you're planning to go on holiday this year and haven't booked anywhere yet time is marching on and it's getting near that time when your options are starting to become limited. Especially so if you, like me, are looking for fully accessible, no hassle accommodation. These hotels/properties tend to be snapped up fairly quickly and if you don't get in quick enough you could be in for a disappointment.

Of course, choosing somewhere suitable isn't the easiest of tasks. How many times have you arrived at your 'accessible' holiday accommodation to find that a brochure's or Internet's adverts definition of accessible does not match yours?

It may be accessible if your wheelchair can wade through 6 inches of gravel to get to the front door or it may be accessible if you're wheelchair is the size of a small child's buggy and you can manoeuvre through the narrow doorways and around the many pieces of furniture. And please, don't get me started about 'accessible' toilets and showers. I'm sure every disabled person has a story to tell about their accessible holiday home disasters. Brochures can paint a rosy picture but nothing can beat the testament of a disabled person who has actually stayed in the property.

So, if you have any suggestions for accessible holiday destinations, home or abroad, please send them into us at Forward Mid and we'll publish them in our next newsletter. Whether it be a lengthy piece or just a couple of paragraphs your recommendation could solve someone's holiday dilemma and save them from any potential access disasters.

To start the ball rolling here's a self catering holiday home I can fully recommend - we've been going there for the last 6 years for a short break so it can't be bad.



View from the (Deck) Chair

4 The Croft - Caton, Lancashire



The Chair relaxes in the Croft's garden with a glass or two of wine.

Having visited the Croft every year for the last seven years and being a tetraplegic wheelchair user I think I am fully qualified to comment on the accessibility of this particular holiday home.

The entrance to the Croft is a smooth wheel from the private drive, along the garden path and up a gentle ramp. Once inside, surprise, surprise, it is 'wheel chair friendly' with plenty of space in each room to manoeuvre your chair about. Especially so in the lounge/diner, where even the worst wheelchair operator, I include myself in this category, can avoid bumping into furniture.

The Croft has two bedrooms; a master with a double bed and a second with two single beds. There is also a bed settee in the lounge which sleeps two. Leading off this room is an accessible kitchen which has a low-level electric cooker.

As for the bath/shower room/toilet - it must be one of the most spacious I've come across in holiday accommodation. You could easily get three wheelchair users in there at the same time. What you would do when everyone is in I shudder to think but the opportunity is there. I can safely say that, if you are a wheelchair user or have mobility problems you will not have any difficulties with accessibility issues in the Croft.

Going outside, through the garden, along the driveway, you pass an old oak tree (no yellow ribbon attached) which is mentioned in the Domesday Book and is the emblem of Caton. Opposite the tree is a 17th-century inn, The Ship, which is exactly 1 minutes wheel, in a powerchair, from the Croft's front door. Another four minutes away is the centre of Caton which boasts a Co-op, a Post Office and a butcher amongst its shops (as well as another pub, The Station). No long drives to find somewhere to eat and drink or to buy a newspaper or a pint of milk as is often the case with accessible holiday accommodation. Beside the shops is an entrance to the Riverside Walk which follows the course of

the River Lune from Caton to Lancaster over 3 miles away. This walkway, an old railway line, has a tarmac surface which is ideal for wheelchair users, no bumps or steep slopes. As well as great views of the Lune, keep an eye out for the pieces of sculpture dotted along the walk.



View of the River Lune from the
Riverside Walk

extra cost.

To find out more information about the accommodation, the area and availability visit this website:
www.homeaway.co.uk/England/holiday-apartment-Lancashire/p10721.htm#summary

Should you wish to visit 4 The Croft you can be sure of a warm welcome, a fully accessible holiday home and lots to see and do in the surrounding area. Wherever you choose to go on holiday I hope you enjoy it as much as the holidays we've had here.

Till next time.

Jeff Adamson
Chair Forward Mid
Outside the Ship



4 The Croft

Caton is an ideal base to explore all that Lancaster has to offer; the city of Lancaster itself, the west coast seaside towns and the wonderful countryside surrounding it; the Lune Valley and the Forest of Bowland.

The Croft has two rental rates - Winter = £70 per night or £350 per week. Summer = £75 per night or £450 per week. This is for the whole apartment, not per person. It is open all year round, including Christmas and New Year. Well-behaved pets are welcome at no



Outside the Ship

FREE, CONFIDENTIAL, INDEPENDENT, ADVICE

Midlothian CABx have a new Outreach Service providing Welfare Benefits advice and Debt advice funded by SLAB.

Clinics will be held at the following locations:

- Monday 1:00 to 4:00 @ Gorebridge Library
- Tuesday 10:00 to 1:00 @ MARC Offices Woodburn
- Wednesday 10:00 to 1:00 MAEDT 12 Bogwood Court Mayfield.

This new service compliments the existing services provided by the Midlothian CABx

Citizen Advice Bureau Outreach Drop Ins

- **Monday** Loanhead Library 10am to 1pm
- Gorebridge Library 10am to 12 noon
- Gorebridge Library 1:00 to 4:00 (Debt and Benefit Advice)
- **Tuesday** Danderhall Library 10am to 12 noon
- Lasswade Library 09.30am to 11.30am
- Woodburn. MARC Offices. 10:00 to 1:00 (Debt and Benefit Advice)
- **Wednesday** Loanhead Miners' Welfare Centre 10am to 1pm
- Mayfield, MAEDT 10:00 to 1:00 (Debt and Benefit Advice)
- Newbyers Medical Centre 9.30am to 12 noon (Registered patients only)

No appointment is required, but some drop-ins can be busy so it is advisable to arrive at the start of the session if you require urgent advice

Main CAB offices:

Dalkeith and District Citizens Advice Bureau: Tel: ☎ 0131 660 1636

Phone for advice or an appointment

Mon– Fri 10am-12.30pm and also Mon—Thurs 1 – 3pm

The Dalkeith and District Citizens Advice Bureau is located in a listed building that has a stepped entrance, wheelchair access is not possible, The Dalkeith and District Citizens Advice Bureau will visit wheelchair users in another location.

Penicuik Citizens Advice Bureau: Tel: ☎ 01968 675259

Phone for advice or an appointment:

Open Mon—Thurs 09.30 - 3.30pm and Fridays 09.30—1.30pm



FREE, CONFIDENTIAL, INDEPENDENT, ADVICE

Citizens Advice Scotland (Scottish charity SC016637)

Penicuik Citizens Advice Bureau Registered Charity no SC014421

Welfare Reform Support Group

A new group for people struggling with Welfare Reform changes.

This group aims to support those experiencing difficulty with Welfare Reform. It's about disabled people helping and learning from each other.

- ❖ BE BETTER INFORMED
- ❖ GET GOOD ADVICE
- ❖ MEET PEOPLE IN A SIMILAR SITUATION
- ❖ HELP OTHERS
- ❖ TALK TO PROFESSIONALS WHO KNOW



Struggling with welfare reform?

Who'll be there?

Nicole-Welfare Advice.

Kirstie- Grapevine.

Eric, Marlene-Forward Mid.

Stuart , Morag - Local Area Co-ordinators.

Penny-hardship co-ordinator.

COME AND JOIN US - AND FEEL SUPPORTED

NEXT MEETING Dalkeith Welfare Hall

St Andrews St, Dalkeith.

TUESDAY 6TH MAY 11.00—1PM

For further details, please contact:

Eric or Ian Tel: ☎ 0131 663 9471

Or Kirstie Tel: ☎ 0131 475 2370

Email: 📩 eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk

(Venue fully accessible)

Forward
Midlothian
Disabled People



Hardship: Where to turn to in a crisis

Responding to the impact of Welfare Reform

The current Welfare Reform programme being implemented by the UK Government has already resulted in some of Midlothian's poorest residents having a reduction in their income - for example those effected by the so called "Bedroom Tax". As more changes to the benefit system are rolled out over the coming year, more people are likely to find themselves in crisis and requiring immediate support just to access resources to meet their essential daily living costs. The following information demonstrates sources of help and local services which are available to individuals and families who find themselves at risk and without the resources they require to meet their essential needs.

Crisis Grants

Crisis Grants in Scotland are managed by local authorities on behalf of the Scottish Government through a new scheme called the Scottish Welfare Fund. Crisis Grants provide a safety net in the event of a disaster or emergency for people who are usually in receipt of or eligible for income based benefits such as Universal Credit, Job Seekers Allowance, Employment Support Allowance or Income Support..

Anyone can apply for a Crisis Grant if they have no money and need help to cover immediate essential daily living costs such as for food, non-food household items like washing powder and toiletries or gas and electricity if they have a prepayment meter. Crisis Grants for food are normally paid in the form of vouchers which can only be redeemed in exchange for food at certain local food stores. Up to a maximum of three Crisis Grants may be awarded to an individual within any 12 month period - although if they have a partner, both of them may be eligible for up to three Crisis Grants each. Applications for Crisis Grants can be submitted by phone. Tel: 0131 270 5600.

Midlothian Council aim to process applications for Crisis grants within two working days and the person applying will receive a phone call to notify them of the decision. If successful they will be able to collect their grant from council offices in Dalkeith or Penicuik. Crisis Grants are not normally awarded to people who are currently on a benefit sanction imposed by the Job Centre.

Community Care Grants

The Scottish Welfare Fund also manages community care grants which help people to leave care and live on their own, or to continue living in their own home. For instance by providing furniture and essential household items like a cooker for someone moving into their own home after a period of living in a hospital, care home, hostel or prison setting. In certain circumstances a Community Care Grant can provide money for clothing, for instance, to someone leaving prison or fleeing domestic violence. Midlothian Council Aim to process applications for Community Care Grants within 15 working days.

Crisis grant and community care grants do not have to be repaid. Application to Midlothian Scottish Welfare Fund Tel:  0131 270 5600

Social work Payments (Social Work Scotland Act 1968 Section 12)

If someone is not eligible for a crisis grant, or if they have already had the maximum of three crisis grants this year, but they are experiencing severe hardship, they may be able to get other financial help from Midlothian Council.

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to support vulnerable individuals and "children in need" if there is an emergency and operate discretionary payments for such.

A vulnerable person is defined as "person in need", being 18 or over and includes people who:

- Are elderly or have a mental illness or physical disability or
- Are vulnerable in other ways (e.g. drug/alcohol dependency or domestic abuse)
- Have applied for asylum and are awaiting outcome of an appeal

Section 12 Payments can cover emergencies, debts, and preventative help to avoid a person's needs becoming greater. Some examples may be:

- Cash payments pay a fuel bill to stop disconnection of supply
- Payments to third parties –a rent guarantee to a landlord
- Payments in kind vouchers to purchase food, fuel, clothing, furniture

Section 22 Payments

Local authorities also have a duty of care for 'children in need'. In exceptional emergency situations the local authority can provide discretionary cash payments under Section 22 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 to help promote the needs of the child if help is unable to be provided in some other way. The cash payments may take the form of those listed above for Section 12 Payments and can be paid to families with children in need, including to families with disabled children.

To find out more or to apply contact: They can speak to their allocated social worker if they have one, or anyone can contact a duty social worker by phoning:

Tel: ☎ 0131 271 3900 (For adults) or Out of Hours Tel: ☎ 0800 731 6969

Discretionary Housing Payments

Discretionary Housing Payments is a fund administered by Housing Benefit Section of the Revenues Department at Midlothian Council and are awarded to applicants who require additional assistance (on top of other welfare benefits) to meet their housing costs, for example individuals or families affected by the "Bedroom Tax".

What counts as a housing cost?

Usually, a housing cost would be considered to be rental costs, but it could also include:

- Rent in advance
- Deposits
- Other lump sum costs associated with a housing need such as removal costs.

Who qualifies for a DHP?

Applicants who are in receipt of Housing Benefit (HB) or Universal Credit (UC) that includes a housing element, and whose income does not cover their housing costs.

What kind of shortfalls can a DHP cover?

- Reductions in HB or UC where the benefit cap has been applied;
- Reductions in HB or UC after the removal of spare room subsidy in the social rented sector;
- Reductions in HB or UC as a result of local housing allowance restrictions;
- Non-dependant deductions in HB, or housing cost contributions in UC;
- Rent shortfalls to prevent a household becoming homeless whilst the LHA explores alternative options;

DHPs can also be used to cover rent deposits and rent in advance, but DHPs can only be made to



applicants who are already in receipt of Housing Benefit.

What payments can DHP not cover?

The following costs are excluded by the DHP regulations:

- Ineligible service charges
- Increases in rent due to outstanding rent arrears
- To make a payment when housing benefit is suspended

To Find out more or to apply contact:

Midlothian Council Revenues Section
Buccleuch House, 1 White Hart Street
Dalkeith EH22 1YB Email:  revenues.enquiries@midlothian.gov.uk
Tel:  0131 271 3201

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Payments

Short Term Benefit Advances

Short term advances of benefit are available for claimants of any benefit including universal credit. They are intended for use when someone has claimed a benefit and are in financial need whilst waiting to receive it. Someone may be entitled to an advance payment if for example:

- They have claimed a benefit and the claim has yet to be decided, but they will only be entitled to the advance if the DWP decides they are likely to receive the benefit.
- They have been awarded a benefit but have not received the first payment yet.
- An increase in benefit is awaited, e.g. for a new partner.

To receive an advance payment they need to be able to show they are in financial need, which is defined as a serious risk of damage to health or safety of the claimant or family member. Short term benefit advances have to be repaid usually within a three month period.

Hardship Payments (including if on a benefit sanction)

A hardship payment is a reduced amount of income based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) which someone may be able to get if their JSA is stopped due to doubts about their availability to look for work or if they are on a JSA Sanction. If they qualify for a Hardship payment it is normally paid at 60% of their usual benefit rate, or 80% if they or their partner are seriously ill or pregnant. Hardship payments are also available to ESA claimants.

To receive a hardship payment they must be able to prove that without it they could be in danger of going without essentials such as food or warmth or are at risk of losing their home .

No Hardship Payment is made for the first two weeks unless the claimant or a member of their household is in a vulnerable group (i.e. If they have dependant children, are pregnant, disabled or chronically sick and receive DLA or attendance allowance, or care for a disabled or sick person or a young care leaver (under 21).)

Budgeting Loans

A Budgeting Loan is an interest free loan intended to help spread the cost of certain one-off expenses over a longer period. A Budgeting Loan can help towards the cost of various items - for example things needed for or to improve the home, clothing and footwear, travelling expenses and certain debts. Once an application is submitted a decision is usually available within one week.

Budgeting loans are available to people getting Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance (income-related), Pension Guarantee Credit, or payment on account of 1 of them for at least 26 weeks. Budgeting Loans have to be repaid. To make enquiries about a budgeting loan tel:  0843 515 8360 or application forms are available

from the local Job Centre or can be downloaded from: www.gov.uk/government/publications/budgeting-loan-claim-form (When Universal Credit is introduced Budgeting Loans will be replaced by Budgeting Advances which will work in a similar way to Budgeting Loans).

Budgeting Loans range from a Minimum of £100 to a Maximum of £1500.

Winter Fuel and Cold Weather Payments

The Social Fund also administers Winter Fuel payments for older people on Pension Credit and Cold Weather Payments (£25 paid in arrears, for any seven day period when the local temperature is on average 0°C or below) for certain eligible working-age people on income based JSA, ESA or income support.

Other Social Fund Grants or Payments

Other Grants or payments available via the Social Fund include Sure Start Maternity Grants (Up to £500) for new mothers on certain benefits and funeral payments (Up to £700) for bereaved partners or parents who are on income-related benefits and need financial help to organise a funeral. (To find out about other bereavement benefits, including a one off tax free payment of £2000 available if your spouse or civil partner were paying National Insurance Contributions when they die, contact the DWP Bereavement service Tel:  0845 606 0265).

To Find out more or to apply contact: Social Fund Tel:  0843 515 8360

Turn2us

This organisation which is part of Elizabeth Finn Care provides a website with sources of information about over 3,000 Charitable Trusts who can provide financial help in the form of grants to individuals in need. To qualify for a grant from a charitable trust someone normally needs to meet specific criteria and be in a priority group for that particular Trust, for example to have worked in a particular industry, to have a specific type of illness or disability, or links to a particular area or some other connection. Anyone can search the database of Grant giving Charities on the Turn2us Website at www.turn2us.org.uk/. Or if you do not have Access to the internet you can phone their free phone helpline Tel:  0808 802 2000 which is available Monday to Friday 08:00 to 20:00.

The Family Fund

The Family Fund can provide grants to families with severely disabled children aged under 18 years. They can also provide grants for short breaks for families with disabled children or young people under 21, under the Take a Break Programme. For more information Contact: Email:  info@familyfund.org.uk Tel:  08449 744 099

Energy supplier Charitable Trusts

Some Utility companies and Energy Suppliers have formed Charitable Trusts that can provide financial help to their customers who are experiencing financial hardship and are having problems paying their energy bills and have arrears.

Midlothian Council Welfare Rights Officers:

Welfare Rights officers provide Midlothian residents with advice, advocacy and oral representation at all Social Security tribunals. They represent at 1st and 2nd tier tribunals and ensure Midlothian residents receive free impartial advice. They can advise and provide tribunal representation for all welfare benefit appeals - for example DLA and ESA.

They work closely with social work, health and housing colleagues and can answer their complex benefit enquires and clarify and advice on benefit legislation regarding social law queries. Contact: Tel:  0131 271 3781 or Tel:  0131 270 8922

Midlothian Macmillan Benefits Service: Tel:  0131 271 3900 (For people with cancer)

Income Maximisation Officer: For Midlothian residents under 60 who receive a social work service.
And Midlothian Older People's Project for people over 60 Tel:  0131 271 3900

What can someone do if they are sanctioned?

If a JSA claimant receives a letter from the DWP advising that they have been referred by their work programme provider for a benefit sanction due to failure to attend or participate, they have seven days to contact the DWP to provide a good reason as to why they did not attend or participate, before the sanction is applied by a DWP decision-maker. When similar sanctions are applied by the Job Centre (including providing insufficient evidence of job search activity), the letter is issued during an interview with a job adviser who asks the claimant for their comments before referring them to the decision-maker. This is their opportunity to provide good reasons why they believe they should not be sanctioned.

Once a sanction has been applied by the decision maker, the claimant can ask for a mandatory reconsideration of the decision. They can dispute both the application of the sanction and its length. They must ask for a reconsideration within one month of the date of the decision unless they have good cause for lateness. Once they receive a new decision, if they are still not happy with it they have a month from the date of the new decision in which to appeal against it. Their appeal will be heard by an independent tribunal.

Whether or not they appeal, they might find themselves in hardship because of the sanction. In this situation, if the sanction is made on a claim to JSA, ESA or UC, they may be able to apply for Hardship Payments. Hardship Payments are reduced rate payments of JSA, ESA and UC, and as the name suggests they are designed to alleviate hardship. They are administered by the DWP, so applicants need to contact the Jobcentre to apply for a Hardship Payment. The amount of a Hardship Payment varies - as does eligibility for them. For some benefits, in certain circumstances, a person must be in a 'vulnerable group' to be eligible for a Hardship Payment. In other circumstances anyone can apply as long as they prove they are suffering hardship.

If someone who is sanctioned is claiming Housing Benefit or a Council Tax reduction, the DWP will notify the Benefit and Revenues Section at Midlothian Council that their benefit is stopped. Claimants then need to contact the Council Revenues section as soon as possible to provide evidence that they have no other income to ensure their Housing Benefit or Council Tax reduction is not also withdrawn.

Benefit claimants who are sanctioned should seek advice immediately, either from a Citizen Advice Bureau or another welfare rights advice service (see page 10), and take copies of all their notes and correspondence to the advisor. Their advisor will want to discuss the events leading up to the sanction in detail, in order to work out whether, for example, they might have had good reason for failure to meet the work related requirement. If they are suffering hardship because of the sanction, their adviser can also assist them to make a claim for Hardship Payments.

Here are some sources of welfare and money advice for specific groups:

For Housing Association Tenants:

Melville Housing Tenants : Welfare Benefits Service Tel:  0131 654 4224 Money Advice (provided for Melville tenants by CHAI) Tel:  0131 442 1009

Castle Rock Edinvar Tenants: Benefits & Money advice: Financial Inclusion Team Tel:  0131 657 0600

For Carers: Vocal Midlothian Money Matters surgeries. Pauline Quinn Tel:  0131 663 6869

For People with Disabilities:

Grapevine Disability Information Service at Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living: Tel:  0131 475 2370 (or Email:  grapevine@lothiancil.org.uk)

FAIR (Family Advice & Information Resource): Email:  Kimberley@fairadvice.org.uk (Advice Surgeries held in Dalkeith every Monday)

How to deal with Debts:

The Citizen Advice bureaux in Midlothian are able to provide information about options for dealing with debt and are approved by the Scottish Government Debt Arrangement Scheme (DAS) and can offer debt management advice to anyone living or working (fulltime) in Midlothian. To request an appointment and/or a debt information pack contact: Dalkeith CAB Tel:  0131 660 1636 Or Penicuik CAB Tel:  01968 675259

National Debtline

The National Debt Line can give free information to people living in England, Wales and Scotland. It also provides an information pack on dealing with debt. The line is available on Monday to Friday 09:00 to 21:00 and on Saturday 9:30. to 13:00. The National Debtline telephone number is  0808 808 4000 and the website is www.nationaldebtline.co.uk.

Step Change Debt Charity

Step Change Debt Charity is a registered charity offering free, confidential advice and support to anyone who is worried about debt. Step Change Debt Charity has:

- A freephone helpline Tel:  0800 138 1111 where you can speak to a Debt Counsellor
- A website where you can get information on how to deal with your debt problems at www.stepchange.org

Christians Against Poverty: (CAPUK)

CAPUK offers a free debt advice and management service to anyone living in Midlothian who is struggling with debts. An initial home visit appointment is usually available within 2 weeks. For further information or to request an appointment telephone 0800 328 0006 (Free from landlines).

Illegal Money Lending and Loan Sharks:

If someone is being threatened and feels they are in danger from a “loan shark” or illegal money lender, they can get free confidential advice from the Scottish Illegal Money Lending Unit. They have access to a wide range of services that can offer protection to individuals who are being threatened. They can also help people access local services including debt advice, income maximisation and addiction counselling.

The Scottish Illegal Money Lending Unit can be contacted Tel:  0800 074 0878 which is free to call from landlines. They are able to accept anonymous reports and can provide advice and arrange protection for individuals who feel at risk from Loan Sharks.

For more information about the Scottish Illegal Money Lending unit visit www.stoploansharks.org.uk or Tel:  0800 074 0878

Midlothian Foodbank: Tel:  07789 173276 www.midlothian.foodbank.org.uk

Midlothian Foodbank is run by Gorebridge Parish Church (located at 96 Hunterfield Road, Gorebridge) and is part of The Trussell Trusts UK wide food bank network. The Foodbank is open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays between 10am and 2pm when individuals (or families) who have been referred can collect a food parcel which has enough food for three days. If transport is an issue it is also sometimes possible to arrange to collect a food parcel from one of a number of

satellite agencies that host food parcels in towns across Midlothian. Foodbank volunteers also signpost people to other agencies for advice and other support. Referrals are welcome from health and social care professionals and also voluntary organisations working with people experiencing hardship in Midlothian. If you want to become a referring agency please contact Janice Burns the Foodbank Co-ordinator Tel: ☎ 07789 173276 or by Email: 📩 janiceburns@midlothian.foodbank.org.uk for further information

Other churches providing food parcels to local people experiencing severe hardship include:

Foodstore @ PNK (Penicuik North Kirk)

The Foodstore @ North Penicuik Kirk currently provide food parcels to families with children in need who are referred by the Midlothian Council Children and Families Team. Food parcels contain both perishable and non-perishable food items and are normally collected by the Children and Families team to deliver to families on a Friday. The Foodstore currently provide food for up to 250 meals each week to children and families in need in the Greater Penicuik area. At the moment the Foodstore is only taking referrals from Children and Families staff for families who are known to their service or who are in exceptional circumstances.

(To enquire about referrals Email: 📩 Lorraine.chapman@midlothian.gov.uk. Or Tel ☎ 01968 664 100.) Other enquires Email: 📩 ruth.halley@gmail.com.

The Storehouse (Dalkeith)

The Storehouse is a project run by the churches in Dalkeith providing food parcels for individuals or families in Dalkeith and surrounding areas who have been referred by the Children & Families team and also by Health Professionals. The Storehouse can deliver food parcels.

Please Email: 📩 Heather.Ritchie@midlothian.gov.uk for more information.

Financial Hardship: Impact on Health

The changes brought about by welfare reform are predicted to have negative impacts on the health and well being of some people in Scotland which are closely linked to their loss of in-come which may result in increasing levels of poverty and disadvantage.

Negative health impacts could include:

- Poorer mental health and increased risk of relapse, self harm and suicides
- Increased risk of CVD and respiratory illness
- Poorer nutrition and diet related health problems
- Increase in drug and alcohol dependency
- Worsening mental health and well being in children
- Increasing incidence of child protection cases and violent crime (incl. gender based violence)
- Increasing sexual health problems including teenage pregnancy and STDs
- Health effects of increasing stigma of welfare benefits claimants and feelings of disempowerment of people going through the system
- Increased difficulty in keeping warm resulting in more health problems particularly young children, the elderly or those with under lying health conditions



If anyone is concerned that financial hardship is impacting on the health they can talk to their GP or other health practitioner if they have one (e.g. health visitor, District nurse, CPN) about their health concerns.

They can also contact the Freephone NHS Inform helpline for advice Tel: ☎ 0800 22 44 88 (Open 8am—10pm seven days a week) Or visit the NHS Inform website www.nhsinform.co.uk or the NHS Lothian website www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Anyone needing urgent medical help outside of their GP surgery opening hours can contact

NHS24 Tel:  08454 24 24 24 (or dial 999 in a health emergency)

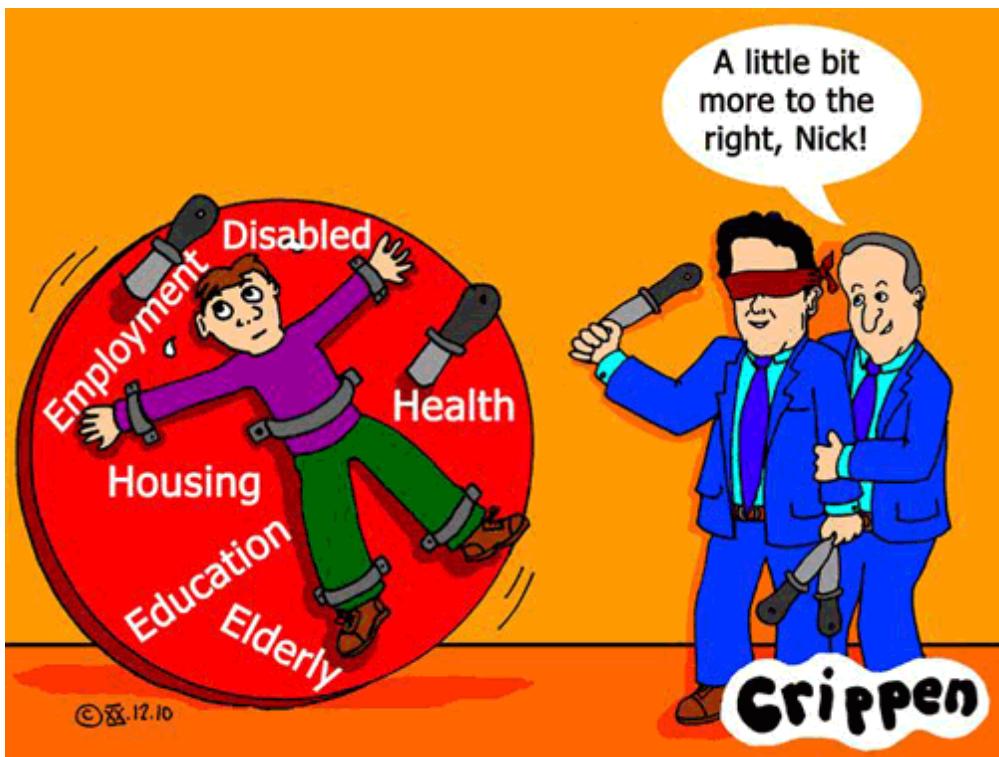
Help with fares to travel to get advice or other support:

The March Project has a small budget within a Facilitation Fund to assist people to travel to access resources for hardship across Midlothian. If some-one hasn't got money for bus fares and needs to attend an advice drop-in or appointment or needs to collect a food parcel, contact the MARCH project Hardship coordinator to find out how to get bus fares or other transport costs paid through our facilitation fund. It may be possible to collect a Lothian buses ticket or day pass from a local agent or we may be able to refund other agencies who are able to provide bus fares to clients on our behalf.

(NB: JSA Claimants who are required by the Job Centre to attend additional appointments, meetings, workshops, courses or interviews on top of their fortnightly signing appointment are entitled to claim back their travel costs. They need to remember to save their bus tickets or other receipts to claim their fares back from the job Centre.)

For further information please contact:

**Penny Stafford,
Hardship Coordinator
Midlothian Financial Inclusion Network,
Tel:  0131 271 3951 (Voicemail),
Tel:  07410133590 (Mobile),
Email:  Hardship.midlothian@gmail.com**



Ten Levels of Accessibility

Living in West Dunbartonshire, a family applied for two years for easier access for their disabled daughter. Their daughter uses a wheelchair and her mother struggles to get her daughter up the flights of steps and into the house.

But she could hardly have bargained for the bizarre solution local housing officials dreamed up. It is like a bad joke. If this is the only that was open to West Dunbartonshire Council was to fit something into the garden – because of building regulations.'

Does West Dunbartonshire not have any disabled Persons housing ?



On the 4th October 2013 West Dunbartonshire Council submitted their Equal Opportunities Committee, Draft Budget Scrutiny for 2014 - 2015

www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/West_Dunbartonshire_Council.pdf

Accessible housing

7. A key characteristic of the West Dunbartonshire housing stock is that there are many houses with too many stairs. There is a shortage of accessible housing, with growing pressure on more easily accessible ground floor accommodation.

The solution: A ramp 60 meters long with 10 levels which winds from the front door to the pavement, installed by West Dunbartonshire council at the home in Duntocher, Clydebank so wheelchair user can access her home.

The garden has been completely built over and now the young girl has lost her garden to play in. It is estimated that the cost to West Dunbartonshire council is around the £40,000.

Well thought through

The family's problems have been further compounded by youths now using it as a skateboard run. Council officials have refused to install a gate, citing health and safety concerns.

Maybe they can use in the commonwealth games 2014 as a practice area for some of the downhill events.



Alternative Publications

Editions of Forward MID newsletters are available in large print or at www.forwardmid.org.uk For alternative publications please email eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk or call Eric Johnstone on 0131-663-9471. Write to him at MVA, 4-6 White Hart Street, Dalkeith, EH22 1AE with your request.