

**FORWARD**  
**MidLOTHIAN**  
**DISABLED PEOPLE**



www.forwardmid.org.uk

**Equality - Diversity - Inclusion**

**Newsletter/Guide Midlothian Transport 2016**

Your guide to transport delivered in Midlothian. This has been produced by **Forward Mid, Midlothian’s Disability Equality forum, promoting the equal rights of disabled people in Midlothian and Midlothian Council Transport Team.**

Transport can be such an essential component in determining the day to day quality of people’s lives, whether it be a trip to see a good friend, getting along to a local group or club or attending an appointment at the hospital or GP surgery, getting there efficiently and safely can be so important. Good transport can be a contributor to overall good health and well-being. Every persons needs differ, Forward Mid has tried to collate as much information from individual companies and their services. It’s not easy to find all the correct information in the one place.

What we’ve done here - is bring together all the various transport options and choices that are available across Midlothian.

Forward Mid’s hope would be that having a copy of this newsletter to hand can allow disabled people in Midlothian to have a much better understanding of the transport choices available to them, and to use them well!

Please continue inside and see what’s available!

If you know of some transport option that’s available that we haven’t included here please get in touch and let us know.

**Wishing you safe and happy and rewarding, travelling!**

Iain Tait



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## Accessible Transport for Disabled People in Midlothian

Public transport services in Midlothian are operated by buses that are considerably easier to use than in the past. Legislation required all single-decker buses to be low-floor and fully accessible by standard wheelchairs by 2015, double-deckers by 2017 and coaches by 2020. Lothian Buses has been 100% low-floor since 2009, several years before the target date set by the law. A standard wheelchair must not exceed 700mm wide by 1500mm long. Smaller vehicles, such as those operated by HcL and LCTS, mostly have special access facilities such as lifts.

Midlothian Council helps to fund Dial-a-Ride, a special door-to-door service for people who have mobility restrictions. This includes those who cannot physically manage to board a standard bus vehicle, as well as those who live too far from a standard bus service to reach it comfortably. Dial-a-Ride services are operated by HcL (formerly Handicabs). For Dial-a-Ride bookings and enquiries Tel: ☎ 0131 447 9949



Dial-a-Bus offers once-a-week trips to selected shopping centres from most towns and villages. An easy-to-board bus calls at your door, and brings you back after your shopping trip. You can have a carer with you. There is a flat rate fare for these trips. Dial-a-Bus services are operated by HcL. For Dial-A-Bus bookings and enquiries Tel: ☎ 0131 447 1718

Midlothian Council also supports Lothian Community Transport Services [LCTS] which provides five community bus routes R1, R2, R3, R4 and R5 [shown on page 7]. If you are a non-profit making voluntary or community group and need to arrange transport, LCTS can hire you a minibus for 15 passengers. All vehicles can take wheelchair users, although the number of other passengers falls as space is created for a wheelchair. Vehicles can be with-driver or self-drive. For LCTS vehicle bookings and community bus network enquiries, contact LCTS on 0131 663 0176.

## Wheelchair on public transport

### Before you Travel!

The majority of wheelchair users will be able to travel on public transport. Wheelchairs that cannot fit on public transport:

- If your chair is more than 700mm wide by 1500mm length. A normal chair approx 660mm wide by 1065mm length when you are in it. Unless otherwise stated.
- If your chair is very heavy, chair and Passenger exceed 220 Kilograms. As public transport do not carry scales it is the wheelchair users responsibility to know the combined weight, scales can be found in most hospitals.
- If you need to travel with your legs fully extended or the backrest reclined.
- If you use a scooter difficult to manoeuvre and may be unstable in a vehicle.

### You must ensure that your wheelchair is in a safe condition to travel.

This means, for example, making sure that it is correctly maintained, that the tyres are properly inflated, that you have not overloaded the back of the chair with bags (this can cause the chair to tip over backwards on a ramp).

If you have a powered chair you must ensure that the battery is secure.

If your chair has adjustable kerb climbers you should check that they are set so that they do not catch on the ramp.

The transport operator has the right to refuse to let you travel if he believes that your wheelchair is not in a safe condition.

A trial is underway to allow Class 2 scooters to travel on Edinburgh Trams, see the tram section.

## National Entitlement Card

The Scotland national entitlement card also known as the bus pass gives 60+ and disabled people free bus travel throughout Scotland.

Application forms are available at all Midlothian libraries. There are different forms for those 60+ years of age, disabled persons and Young Scots – make sure you pick up the appropriate form for your circumstances. Completed forms with relevant proofs and a colour passport-style photo must be taken by the applicant in person to any Midlothian Library for processing. The verification process requires the librarian to confirm that the photo submitted is a true likeness of the applicant. If the application form is handed in by anyone other than the applicant, it will be rejected.

Your bus pass is printed in Hull, England, and sent by second class Royal Mail from there direct to your home address. On the front of your card will be your name and 16-digit card number, your photo and the oakleaf logo of Midlothian Council.

The expiry date is shown on cards issued to the disabled and this will continue. Expiry dates used to be printed on cards for those 60+ years old.

However, once you have proved you are 60 or over, you will never fall out of eligibility [you won't be 59 again] and so cards for the over 60s issued during the past couple of years no longer have an expiry date. The bus pass is not transferable and can only be used by the cardholder.



Various symbols can appear on the lower right side of the card. The symbols most likely to be seen on a Midlothian card are:-



“C” in orange stands for **“Concessionary Travel”**

“+1” with the “1” in black, and the “+” in orange superimposed on the “1” stands for **“plus one”** and tells the bus driver that you are entitled to have a companion travel free with you on your bus journey



An “eye” symbol in black indicates that the cardholder is blind or partially sighted and is entitled to the additional travel concessions of the Scottish Blind Scheme in addition to free bus travel.



- Free train travel within Scotland and across the border as far as Berwick-upon-Tweed in the east or Carlisle in the west.
- Free travel on Edinburgh Trams. Free travel on the Glasgow Subway.
- Free travel on most ferries within Scotland such as the Clyde and Hebridean services.

### Local buses that accept this card:

<b>First Bus group</b>	Tel: 01324 602200	<a href="http://www.firstgroup.com">www.firstgroup.com</a>
<b>LCTS</b>	Tel: 0131 663 0176	<a href="http://www.lcts.org.uk">www.lcts.org.uk</a>
<b>Lothian Buses</b>	Tel: 0131 554 4494 [select option 2]	<a href="http://lothianbuses.com/">http://lothianbuses.com/</a>
<b>Perryman's Buses</b>	Tel: 01289 308719	<a href="http://www.perrymansbuses.co.uk">www.perrymansbuses.co.uk</a>
<b>Prentice Coaches</b>	Tel: 01620 822620	<a href="http://www.prentice.info">www.prentice.info</a>
<b>Stagecoach</b>	Tel: 0300 111 0001	<a href="http://www.stagecoachbus.com">www.stagecoachbus.com</a>

Long distance coach services within Scotland also accept this card. Some coach companies offer seat reservation but charge for this. The seat reservation cost is not included in the concession, but may well be worth paying if you need to travel on a



particular journey and cannot wait for a later departure if your chosen trip is already full when you arrive to board without a reservation.

<b>Megabus</b>	<b>Tel: 0900 160 0900</b>	<b>www.megabus.com</b>
<b>National Express</b>	<b>Tel: 0871 781 8178</b>	<b>www.nationalexpress.com</b>
<b>Scottish Citylink</b>	<b>Tel: 0871 266 3333</b>	<b>www.citylink.co.uk</b>

## Renewal of NEC

Elderly concessionary cards issued with no expiry date printed on the card are currently valid until 2041. Elderly concessionary cards still with an expiry date will be updated to be valid until 2041 at the next issue. The Midlothian Travel Team send out a reminder letter and renewal form to holders of cards for disabled people 6 to 4 weeks before the expiry date. The renewal form plus any supporting written evidence must be presented to any Midlothian library. Photocopies of proofs will be taken and then sent by internal mail to the Travel Team in Dalkeith. Here the database is updated and an order sent digitally to Hull, England, for a fresh card to be printed and despatched by second class mail to your home address. Blank renewal forms are available in all Midlothian libraries if you mislay the one sent by post.

## Replacement of lost or stolen NEC

You can go to any Midlothian library in person and ask the librarian to order up a replacement of a card that has already been issued to you, but is now lost or stolen. Part of the verification process is that the librarian will check that you are the person whose photo image is held in the database. This cannot be done if you do not call at the library personally.

## Changes

An online application process will be introduced nationally across Scotland within the next 12 months. This will add another option – the paper application method described above will continue to be offered for those who are not online.

Travel Team:

Midlothian Council Travel Team

2nd Floor, Midlothian House

Buccleuch Street

Dalkeith, EH22 1DN

Tel: ☎ 0131 561 5455 or

Email: ✉ ptu@midlothian.gov.uk .

**Thanks to Midlothian Travel team for this section**



## Bus Users Scotland

If you have experienced problems on a bus and have not had a satisfactory response from the bus company in the dispute then you can ask Bus Users Scotland.

**Bus Users Scotland is part of Bus Users UK a non-profit organisation which works on behalf of all bus users to ensure that operators meet your needs. Think of us as the voice of passengers.**

Bus Users Scotland works with partners across the country including

- Scottish Government
- Local transport authorities
- Bus companies

To drive up standards in bus travel and put the needs of bus passengers at the heart of transport policy.

The Scottish economy is hugely reliant on bus services. More than 400 million passenger journeys are made on local buses each year. Buses provide links to remote, rural communities and offer vital access to families, employment, education, health and social facilities.

Along with coach travel, bus services also provide the infrastructure for a flourishing market in tourism yet they are facing funding cuts that could threaten services and lead to fare increases. The aim of Bus Users Scotland is to offer bus passengers the same protection and safeguards already available to rail passengers.



Bus Users Scotland has a head office in Edinburgh.

**The focus of Bus Users Scotland is on four key areas:**

- Compliance monitoring to check bus services are running where and when they should be;
- Complaints management, to ensure that complaints are handled efficiently and effectively;
- Good practice development: working with bus companies, acting on complaints and sharing best practice;
- Advocacy: working with government, local authorities, special interest groups, Transport Scotland and bus companies to make sure the views and interests of passengers are properly represented.

Bus Users Scotland is part of the Bus Users family, which also has a successful presence in England and Wales. We champion the interests of bus users and campaign to make bus and coach services the best they can possibly be.

Contact Details:

Bus Users Scotland

Hopetoun Gate,

8b McDonald Road,

Edinburgh EH7 4LZ

Tel: 0131 523 1309

[www.bususers.org/scotland/about-us](http://www.bususers.org/scotland/about-us)

**Complaints Call 0300 111 0001**

## The SEStran Thistle Card Scheme

The SEStran Thistle Assistance Card is available to help anyone who has difficulty in using public transport because of age, disability or illness. [www.sestran.gov.uk](http://www.sestran.gov.uk)

The SEStran Thistle card is designed to make using public transport easier for older people or those with disabilities or illness. The card, which is supported by a wide variety of voluntary organisation in South East Scotland and by most bus operators, is credit-card sized and comes with a supply of peel-off stickers, which advise the driver of your disability and the help you need in an easy-to-read format.

The SEStran Thistle Card is free and available in Midlothian from:

- Midlothian libraries at Dalkeith, Danderhall, Gorebridge, Lasswade, Loanhead, Mayfield, Newtongrange, Penicuik, Roslin
- Midlothian Council offices – Fairfield and Midlothian Houses in Dalkeith, Rosewell Development Trust
- Lothian Buses Travelshop in Dalkeith [Jarnac Court/South Street]
- Sheriffhall Park and Ride terminal
- Midlothian Community Hospital
- Health Centres at Pathhead and Penicuik
- Midlothian Voluntary Action, 4-6 White Hart St, Dalkeith



Please wait for me to sit down

Please talk slowly and clearly

Let me know when we arrive at:

The card is about the size of a standard credit card and comes with a supply of peel-off stickers. You select those that are most appropriate for your circumstances and stick them to the card. Show this to the driver to advise him of your disability and the help you need in an easy-to-read format.

## Lothian Community Transport Services (LCTS)

Lothian Community Transport Service relies on **Volunteers** to drive it's vehicles and deliver important services within communities of Midlothian.

### Are you:

- Between 21 and 70 and hold a driving licence with D1 entitlement?
- Want to broaden your experience and develop skills and able to spare a couple of hours?
- Feel you could put something back into the community and are interested in meeting and helping people?

Have you thought about volunteering or doing something worthwhile to help others?

### We offer:

- Out-of-pocket expenses
- Additional training opportunities
- An opportunity to enhance the quality of someone's life.



For more information and enquiries contact Lothian Community Transport Services:

LCTS, 6b Newmills Road, DALKEITH EH22 1DU Tel: 0131 663 0176 or  
Edinburgh Tel: 0131 669 9959 Email: [info@lcts.org.uk](mailto:info@lcts.org.uk)

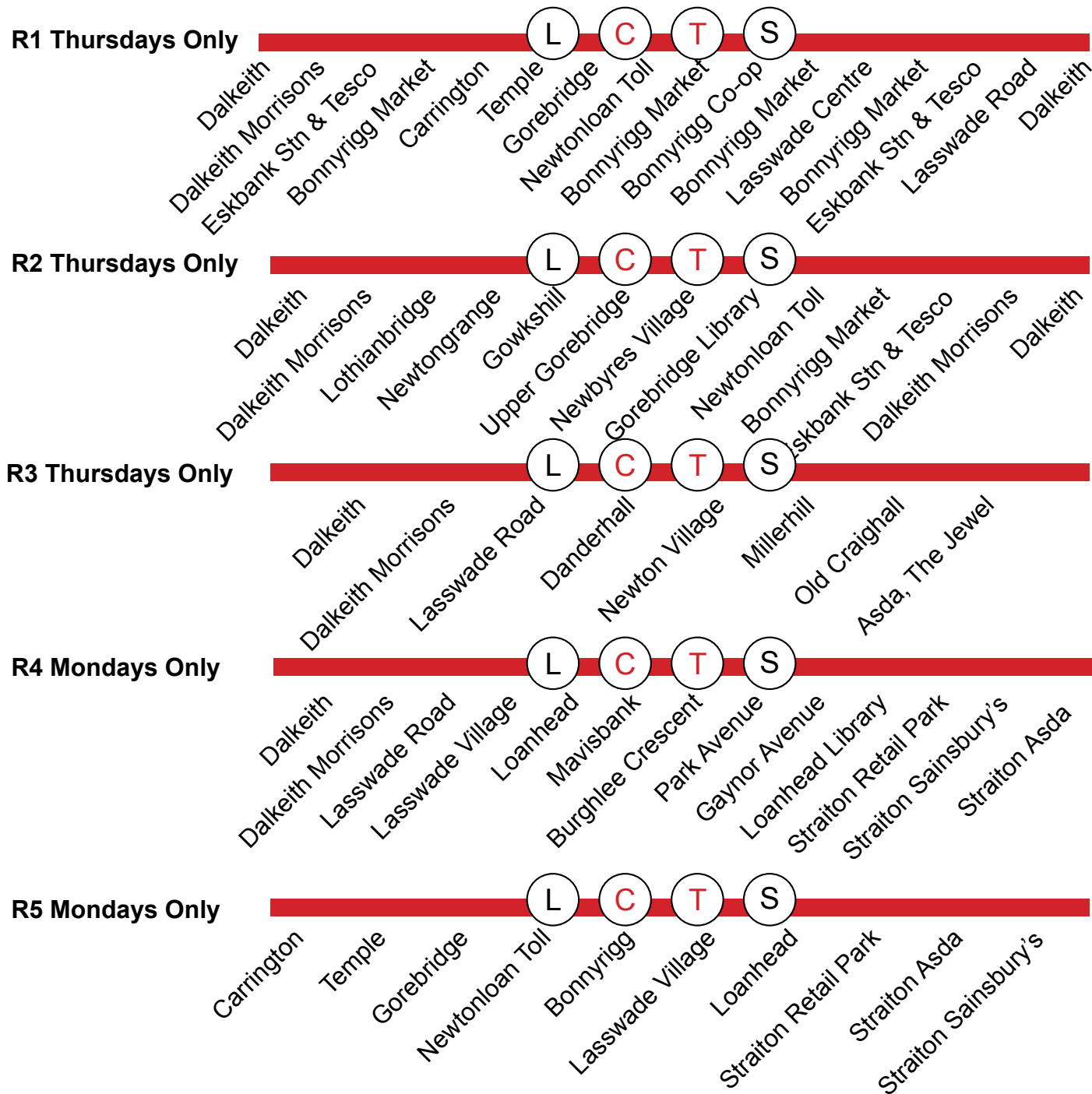
Lothian Community Transport Services is an independent organisation that provides, promotes and supports high-quality passenger transport services including:

- Accessible minibus hire services to over 230 member organisations
- High quality training for transport operators
- Support services for transport providers

Lothian Community Transport Services minibus hire services operate from bases in Edinburgh and Dalkeith and are available to not-for-profit organisations in Edinburgh, Midlothian and West Lothian. All our minibuses are available for hire on both a “Self-Drive” and “With-Driver” and our charges are mostly mileage-based.

Bookings are subject to vehicle and driver availability. Minibuses can only be hired by member organisations and full details are available in our Vehicle Hire Policy. Anyone driving a vehicle in the LCTS fleet must be on the LCTS Register of Approved Drivers.

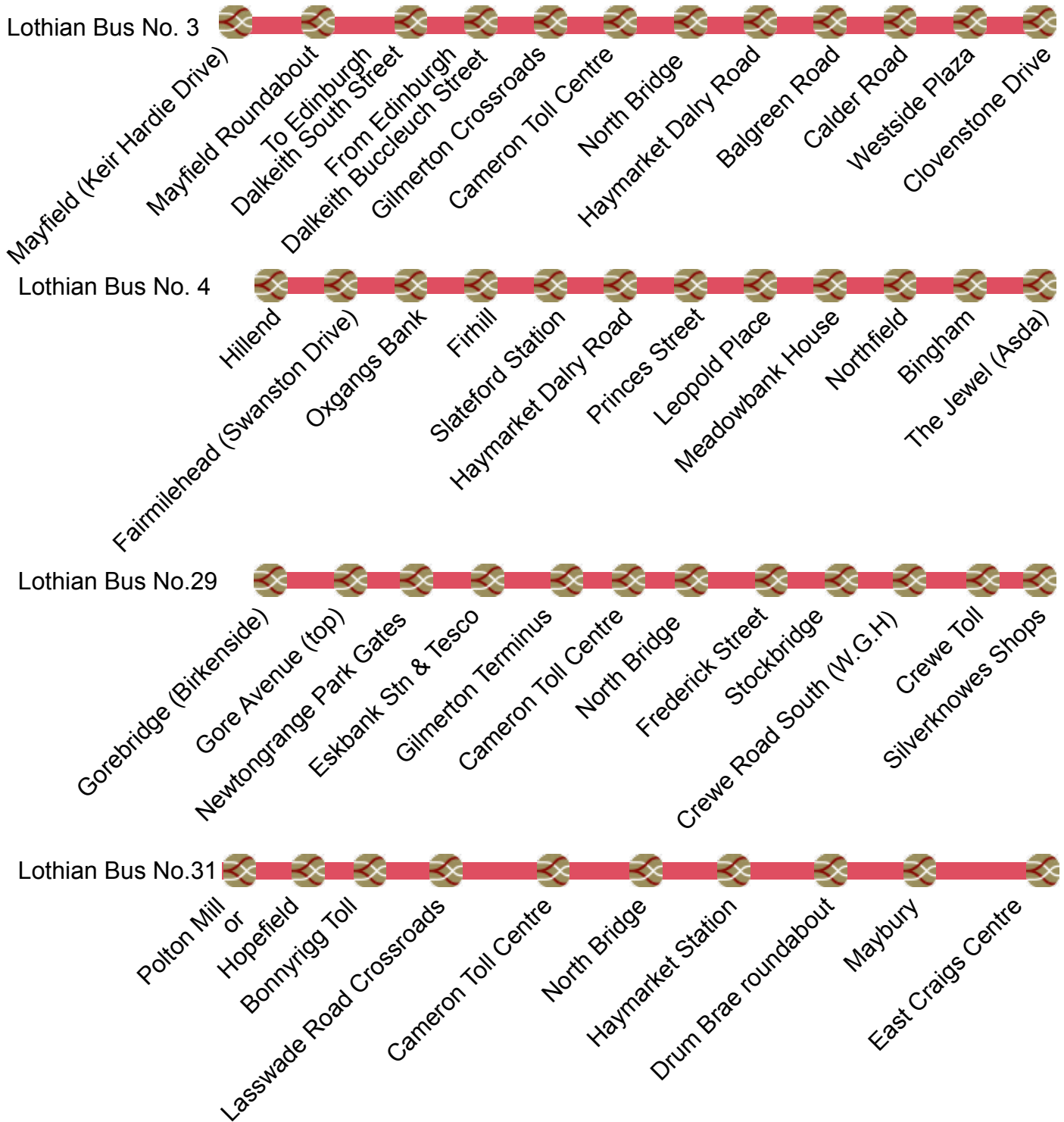
## LCTS Community bus routes



# Buses Across Midlothian

4 bus companies in 2016 run buses across or through Midlothian, The biggest bus company is Lothian buses, 100% of the fleet is now wheelchair accessible, Lothian buses can carry one wheelchair passenger at a time. If a person with a wheelchair is already aboard the next bus will only be a short while behind. For more information and complete timetable please visit <http://lothianbuses.com/> or Tel: 0131 555 6363

## Lothian bus routes



### Alternate Terminus for Lothian No. 31

Beyond Bonnyrigg Toll, 31 buses serve either Hopefield or Polton Mill, but not both on the same journey




Lothian Bus No. 33



Gorebridge (Birkenstone)  
 Gore Avenue (top)  
 Newtongrange Park Gates  
 Mayfield Roundabout  
 Dalkeith Roundabout  
 To Edinburgh  
 Dalkeith South Street  
 From Edinburgh  
 Dalkeith Buccleuch Street  
 Sheriffhall Park & Ride  
 Danderhall  
 Old Dalkeith Road  
 Royal Infirmary  
 Cameron Toll Centre  
 Commonwealth Pool  
 North Bridge  
 Haymarket Dalry Road  
 Balgreen Road  
 Longstone  
 Westburn

Lothian Bus No. 37



Penicuik Deanburn  
 Penicuik Town Centre  
 Roslin  
 or  
 Easter Bush  
 Bilston roundabout  
 Loanhead  
 Straiton Retail Park  
 Kaimes Crossroads  
 Cameron Toll Centre  
 North Bridge  
 Queensferry Street  
 Crewe Road South (W.G.H)  
 Crewe Toll  
 Silverknowes

**Alternative routes for No. 37** Some 37 buses run from Silverknowes to Bilston and terminate at Easter Bush Campus.

Lothian Bus No. 39



Woodburn Jean Armour Drive  
 Thornybank Roundabout  
 Dalkeith Jamac Court  
 Eskbank Stn & Tesco  
 Midlothian Community Hospital  
 Bonnyrigg Toll  
 Bonnyrigg Brixwold  
 Newtongrange Park Gates  
 Lady Brae (Top)  
 Gorebridge Inn  
 Gore Avenue (top)

Lothian Bus No. 40



Penicuik Town Centre  
 Auchendinny  
 Roslin Hotel  
 Bilston roundabout  
 Loanhead (Muirfield Gardens)  
 Lasswade  
 Bonnyrigg Toll  
 Eskbank Stn & Tesco  
 Dalkeith South Street  
 Newbigging  
 Musselburgh Police Station  
 Newhailes Road

Lothian Bus No.47



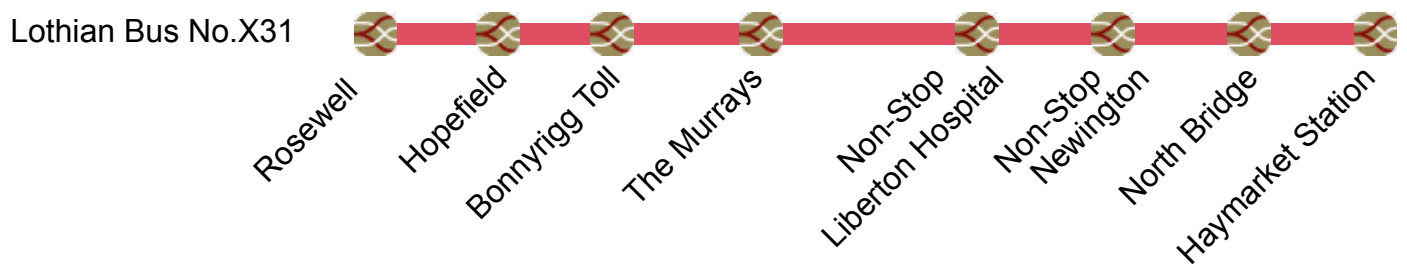
Ladywood Wyvis Park  
 Penicuik Town Centre  
 Bilston roundabout  
 Straiton Park & Ride  
 Kaimes Crossroads  
 Cameron Toll Centre  
 Lothian Road (foot)  
 West End Queensferry Street  
 Crewe Road South (W.G.H)  
 Crewe Toll  
 Granton Harbour



**Alternative Routes for No. 49** The 49 runs to either Rosewell or Dalkeith Campus until 18:50 hours as a 15 Minute service, after 18:50 it reverts to a 30 minute service. All serving Rosewell



**Lothian Buses Express buses**



Lothian Bus No.X33

Mayfield (Keir Hardie Drive)  
 Mayfield Roundabout  
 To Edinburgh  
 Dalkeith South Street  
 From Edinburgh  
 Dalkeith Buccleuch Street  
 Sheriffhall Park&Ride  
 Danderhall  
 Non-Stop  
 Commonwealth Pool  
 Non-Stop  
 Surgeons' Hall  
 North Bridge  
 Lothian Road (Foot)  
 Semple Street

Lothian Bus No.X37

Penicuik Deanburn  
 Penicuik Town Centre  
 Bilston roundabout  
 Straiton Park & Ride  
 Non-Stop  
 Kaimes Crossroads  
 Non-Stop  
 Surgeons' Hall  
 North Bridge  
 Queensferry Street  
 Crewe Toll  
 Granton Harbour

Lothian Bus No.X47

Ladywood Wyvis Park  
 Penicuik Town Centre  
 Easter Bush  
 Bilston roundabout  
 Straiton Park & Ride  
 Kaimes Crossroads  
 Cameron Toll Centre  
 Lothian Road (foot)  
 West End Queensferry Street  
 Crewe Road South (W.G.H)  
 Crewe Toll  
 Granton Harbour

### Night Buses.

Lothian buses also run Night Buses the N3, N31 and N37 service Midlothian. The National Entitlement Card is **not** valid on night buses for times please visit <http://lothianbuses.com/timetables-and-maps/night-buses>

### Other bus companies that transit Midlothian.

First Group travel, for time tables please visit [www.firstgroup.com/ukbus/scotland\\_east/](http://www.firstgroup.com/ukbus/scotland_east/)

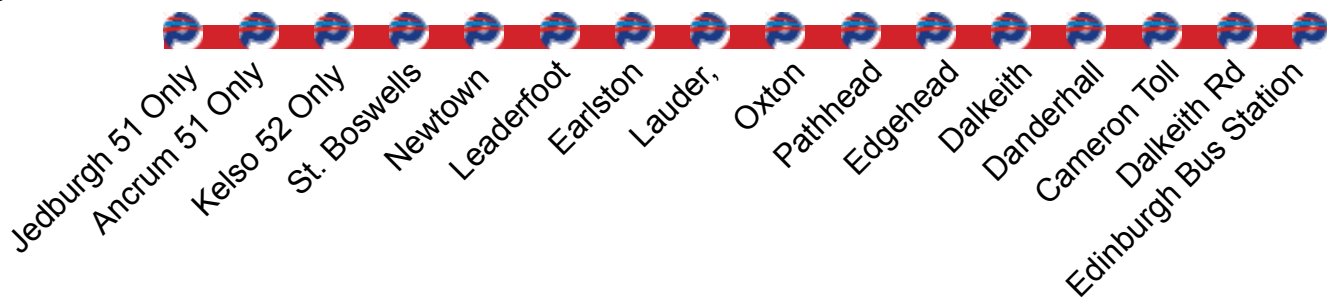
First Bus No. X62

Melrose  
 Borders General Hospital  
 Tweedbank Rail Station  
 Galashiels interchange  
 Balnakiel (Wood Street)  
 Clovenfords  
 Caddonfoot  
 Walkerburn  
 Innerleithen  
 Cardrona  
 Peebles  
 Eddleston  
 Leadburn  
 Penicuik  
 Glencorse Barracks  
 Asda Straiton  
 Edinburgh Bus Station

First Bus No X95

Carlisle (English Street)  
 Kingstown Rd  
 Longtown  
 Canonbie  
 Langholm  
 Mossburn  
 Hawick  
 Ashkirk  
 Bannerfield  
 Selkirk  
 Tweedbank  
 Borders General Hospital  
 Kingsknowes  
 Galashiels interchange  
 Stow  
 Heriot  
 North Middleton  
 Newtongrange  
 Eskbank  
 Old Dalkeith Rd  
 Dalkeith Rd  
 Edinburgh Bus Station

Perryman Buses for time please visit [www.perrymansbuses.co.uk/timetables](http://www.perrymansbuses.co.uk/timetables)  
 Perryman's Bus No 51/52



Stagecoach for time please visit [www.stagecoachbus.com/timetables](http://www.stagecoachbus.com/timetables)

Stagecoach 101/102

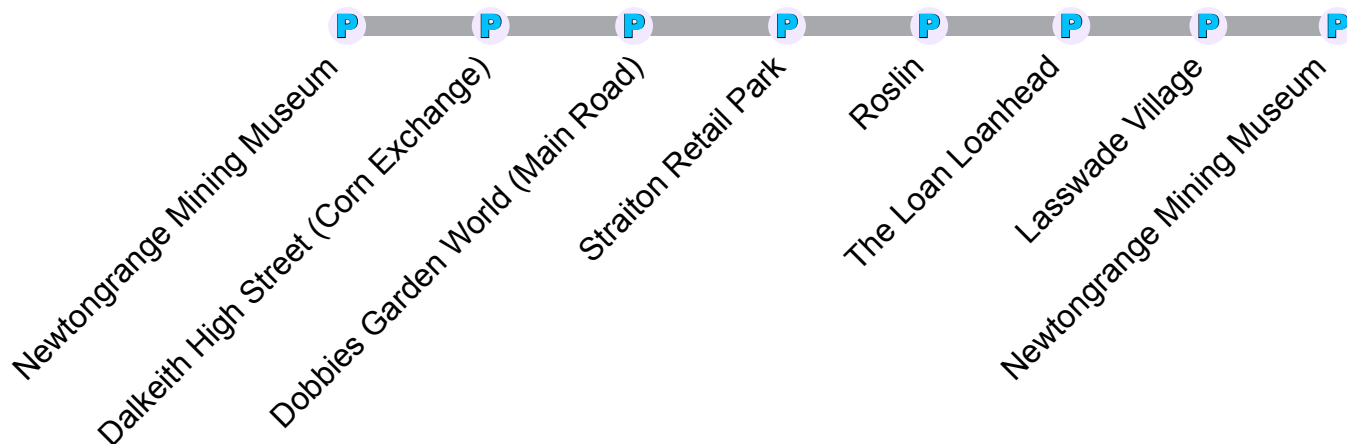


Prentice Of Haddington for times please visit [www.prentice.info/](http://www.prentice.info/)

Prentice 111



Prentice 527 Midlothian Explorer





## Buses and Trains at Midlothian Community Hospital

Lothian Buses 39 is the only bus service that enters the hospital grounds and stops at the main entrance to the hospital, Lothian Buses 40 and 49, and LCTS R1 and R2, all call at bus stops on Eskbank Road from where there are both stepped and step-free access to the hospital main entrance.

Walk south from the hospital main entrance and join the footpath that runs from Bonnyrigg to Eskbank Station. Turn East and the path crosses the A7 via a footbridge, this path leads to the bus stop at Tesco and Eskbank Station; Alternatively take Lothian Buses 39 and change at Tesco for Lothian Buses 29, 39, 40 and 49, and LCTS R1 and R2 and Eskbank Rail Station. First X95 calls at Eskbank Toll, a walk of about a mile, or take the 39, 40 or 49 to Eskbank Toll and change.

Midlothian Council's Travel Team produces a map showing the buses and pathways around the Community Hospital, Tesco and Eskbank Station. Printed copies are available at all Midlothian libraries, main offices and Midlothian Community Hospital.

## Buses To and From Edinburgh Royal Infirmary

There is a six bay Bus Hub on the southern side of the ERI between the hospital and the new Bio Quarter. Three bus services link the ERI directly with parts of Midlothian

**Lothian Buses 33 to Dalkeith, Mayfield, Newtongrange and Gorebridge**

**Lothian Buses 49 to Dalkeith, [Dalkeith Campus], Bonnyrigg, Rosewell**

**Prentice 111 to Newton Village, Millerhill, Musselburgh, Roodlands Hospital, Haddington**

Other bus services run from the ERI Hub giving a choice of links from Midlothian via the ERI to points across Edinburgh and beyond.

Lothian Buses 7 to Newhaven

Lothian Buses 8 to Muirhouse

Lothian Buses/First 18 to Gyle Centre

Lothian Buses 24 to West Granton

Lothian Buses 33 to Baberton

Lothian Buses 38 to Granton via Western General

Horsburgh 40/X40 to St John's Livingston

Lothian Buses 49 to The Jewel

NHS Shuttle to Sick Kids, Western General

Two services do not enter the ERI grounds, but call at bus stops on the main road  
Perryman 51/52 – Edinburgh to Dalkeith, Pathhead, Lauder, Jedburgh/Kelso

First Borders X95 – Edinburgh to Newtongrange, Galashiels, Selkirk, Hawick, Carlisle

There is a diagram of the ERI stops on the Sheriffhall Park and Ride leaflet published by Midlothian Council and available from libraries, main Council offices and some health centres.

## Buses To and From Edinburgh Western General

Two bus stops within the grounds of the Western General Hospital are served by

Lothian Buses 38 [Granton-WGH-ERI] Lothian Country 113 [WGH-City-Pencaitland]

NHS Shuttle to Sick Kids, ERI

Other services call at bus stops on Crewe Road South. Three of these bus services link the WGH directly with parts of Midlothian

Lothian Buses 29 to Gorebridge

Lothian Buses 37 to Penicuik Deanburn

Lothian Buses 47 to Penicuik Ladywood

Other bus services run from the WGH giving a choice of links from Midlothian via WGH to points across Edinburgh and beyond

Lothian Buses 19 to Granton Square

Lothian Buses 19 to King's Road

Lothian Buses 24 to West Granton

Lothian Buses 24 to ERI

Lothian Buses 29, 37 to Silverknowes

Lothian Buses 47 to Granton Waterfront/Harbour

## Midlothian Taxi Card Participating Companies



Forward Mid asked the taxi companies for a list of Vehicles that they operate that can carry wheelchair passengers .



### Bonnyrigg and Lasswade

- P Jack \_\_\_\_\_ ☎ 0754 585 4449  
Not confirmed
- Town & Country \_\_\_\_\_ ☎ 0131 660 2666, 0131 663 2666  
Listed as Wheelchair access, Not confirmed
- United Private Hire \_\_\_\_\_ ☎ 0131 660 0011  
Not confirmed



### Dalkeith

- 1212 Taxis**  \_\_\_\_\_ ☎ 0131 654 1212  
1212 Taxis can accommodate 1 wheelchair plus 4 passengers
- Aerial ABW Cabs  \_\_\_\_\_ ☎ 0131 663 2000, 0131 663 3232, 0131 663 9666  
Aerial ABW cabs say they have the large fleet of wheelchair accessible vehicles in Midlothian.  
Aerial ABW cabs have 28 wheelchair accessible vehicles, and 33 private hire cars in a fleet of over 60 vehicles.  
Important When booking a taxi, please state that you need a wheelchair accessible cab.
- Antonio Palys \_\_\_\_\_ ☎ 0131 660 2000  
Not confirmed
- Dial-A-Cab Direct \_\_\_\_\_ ☎ 0131 516 4141  
Cannot Carry wheelchair passengers
- Freewheeler Taxis \_\_\_\_\_ ☎ 0131 660 3880  
Cannot Carry wheelchair passengers
- Ian Diamond \_\_\_\_\_ ☎ 0771 133 6884  
Not confirmed


### Danderhall

- Aztec Cabs \_\_\_\_\_ ☎ 0131 663 0999  
Not confirmed

### Edinburgh

- Central Taxis  \_\_\_\_\_ ☎ 0131 229 2468  
Every Central Taxi can carry 1 wheelchair
- Computer Cabs  \_\_\_\_\_ ☎ 0131 272 8000  
Every Computer Cab can carry 1 wheelchair

### Gorebridge

- D&D Private Hire  \_\_\_\_\_ ☎ 01875 820477  
D&D Private Hire have 1 taxi that takes wheelchairs,  
When booking a taxi, please state that you need a wheelchair accessible cab.
- Gore Cabs** \_\_\_\_\_ ☎ 01875 822233  
Gore Cab do not have any wheelchair accessible vehicles. We operate private cars and a minibus we carry a small step to assist people getting in and out of our minibus as the step in can be quite high for elderly/disabled people.

### Loanhead

- Chauffeur Drive**  \_\_\_\_\_ ☎ 0131 440 1192  
Chauffeur Drive say they have the large wheelchair accessible fleet in Midlothian as follows:

For one wheelchair user and 3 passengers they operate VW Caravella  
 For two/three wheelchairs plus passengers Mercedes Sprinter with ramp  
 We also have Mercedes Vitos x 3 that can take one or two standard size wheelchairs  
 Our fleet is involved in contract work so availability can differ from week to week, it is best to call in advance particularly for the larger vehicles.

We provide transport for days out, holidays but also journeys to hospitals, shops, banks, meals out or visiting friends.

Fountain Private Hire  -----  0131 440 1688

Can accommodate 1 wheelchair plus 4 passengers

Midlothian Taxi Hire -----  0131 440 2985

Not confirmed

## Newtongrange

Grange Cabs -----  0131 663 9220

Not confirmed

Swift Taxis  -----  0131 654 1004, 0131 660 1031

1 wheelchair taxi, please book in advance.

Ring and go service for Newton village, Danderhall and Cousland.

## Penicuik

JC Taxis -----  01968 676161

Not confirmed

Penicuik Private Hire Ltd -----  01968 679600

Not confirmed

## Rosewell

Jed Taxi & Private Hire -----  0131 440 3733

Not confirmed

Have you experienced a good or bad incident with a Taxi Forward Mid would like your view Email [info@mvacvs.org.uk](mailto:info@mvacvs.org.uk)

## Midlothian Taxicard

From 1 April 2015, the Midlothian Taxicard Scheme has been closed to all new entrants. Those people who already had a Taxicard can continue to use them, and their Taxicards will be renewed when they reach their expiry date. Also from April, Taxicards are now issued for 4 years.

### Travelling in a taxi with a Taxicard

There is a maximum £3 discount per single taxi journey - you pay the first £2, then the Council pays up to the next £3, and you pay anything over the £5.

Each year you will be allowed to make 104 single journeys using your Midlothian Taxicard (equivalent to 1 return journey a week).

<b>Taxicard fare example</b>		
Examples	Fare on the meter	Price you pay
Examples 1	£4.90	£2.00 Flat Fare
Examples 2	£6.00	£2.00 Flat fare plus £1.00 The amount over £5.00

### When and where can the Taxicard be used?

You can use your Taxicard whenever you like and for whatever purpose, for example: a trip to the shops, visiting friends or going to classes. It's valid day and night, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

We recommend that you keep a note of the number of trips you have made.

**Remember**, you are only allowed 104 trips per year.

If you use up your full allocation before the year is up, you should stop using the Taxicard until the anniversary comes round and you can start using the next year's allocation.

Not all taxi companies are part of the Midlothian Taxicard scheme. It is a voluntary arrangement whereby taxi operators apply to be part of the scheme. The Council does not compel taxi operators to join.

### **What happens if I lose or damage my Midlothian Taxicard?**

Collect a blank Taxicard replacement/renewal form from any Midlothian library, main Council office or some health centres. Post your completed form, along with a fresh passport-style colour photograph and any damaged Taxicards, to the Travel Team in Dalkeith.

A fresh Taxicard will be issued with the same expiry date as your original Taxicard. The replacement card will have the word "REPLACEMENT" written on it. Should the previously lost or mislaid Taxicard subsequently turn up, please do not use it. Continue to use the "Replacement" card, and return the newly rediscovered original Taxicard back to the Travel Team in Dalkeith.

### **How do I renew my Midlothian Taxicard when it expires?**

You will receive a letter and form inviting you to renew your Taxicard from the Travel Team in Dalkeith.

This is sent out at the beginning of the month when your Taxicard expires at the end of the month. The form contains the details we have on our system for you. Please check those details and make any corrections necessary. The Travel Team require a colour passport-style photograph to be sent with the completed renewal form to the Travel Team at Dalkeith.

Taxicard holders often comment that they have not received their renewal letters. In the majority of cases, this is because they have moved house and forgotten to let us know that they have changed address. The renewal letter will be sent to the most recent address we have on our system.

If you have changed address, or are about to change address, then please don't leave it until your renewal is due, but let us know as soon as possible.

There is a special "Change of Circumstance" form available for the purpose in all Midlothian Travel Team information carousels located at:

- All Midlothian libraries
- Main Council offices
- Midlothian Community Hospital
- Health Centres at Pathhead and Penicuik
- Rosewell Development Trust

### **Is there a charge to obtain my Midlothian Taxicard?**

There is no charge for the issue of a new Midlothian Taxicard, a replacement card (if you lose one before it expires) or a renewed Taxicard.

Completed forms should be sent by post to the Travel Team at:

Midlothian Council Travel Team  
2nd Floor, Midlothian House  
Buccleuch Street  
Dalkeith, EH22 1DN

Tel:  0131 561 5455 or Email:  [ptu@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:ptu@midlothian.gov.uk) .





# The Borders Railway

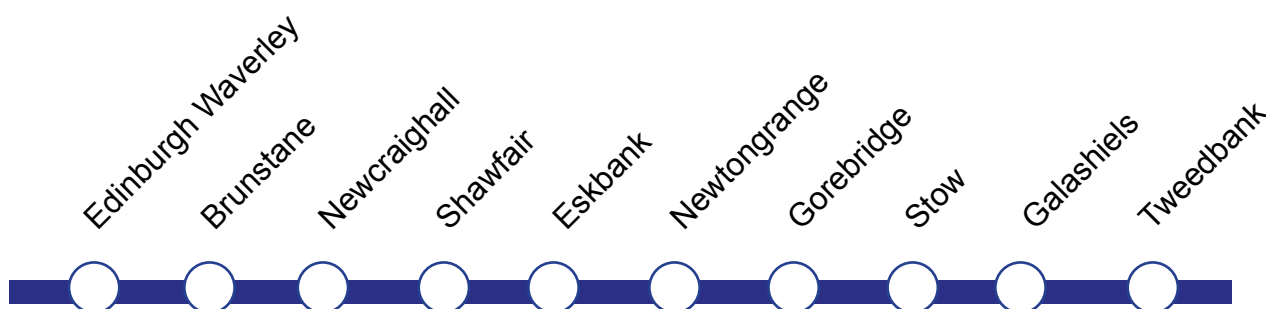
It has been over half a century since there has been a working railway in Midlothian to Edinburgh or the Scottish Borders.

The railway operates a half hourly service between Tweedbank and Edinburgh Waverley. If you travel to Edinburgh you will find connections to the rest of the rail network.

Tickets can be bought in advance from [www.scotrail.co.uk](http://www.scotrail.co.uk), by calling the ScotRail Telesales team on 0344 811 0141 between 0700 and 2200, seven days a week.

**Disabled Assistance** If you would benefit from a little extra help when using the trains, you can arrange disabled assistance by advising ScotRail at least 24 hours in advance by:

- Calling 0800 912 2901
- Calling Textphone 18001 0800 912 2901 if you are hard of hearing
- Completing an online assistance request form on [www.scotrail.co.uk/form/assisted-travel](http://www.scotrail.co.uk/form/assisted-travel)
- Making arrangements with a member of staff at a staffed railway station [only Edinburgh Waverley on this line]



## Wheelchair users

Edinburgh Waverley is the only staffed station on the Borders' Railway line, in order to provide disabled assistance at all other stations from Brunstane to Tweedbank, there will be a set of ramps on each train managed by the train conductor. To ensure you can travel please complete the assistance request form [www.scotrail.co.uk/form/assisted-travel](http://www.scotrail.co.uk/form/assisted-travel). The wheelchair accommodation on trains is restricted to standard wheelchairs not exceeding 70cm wide, 120cm long and with a combined weight of less than 300 kilograms of user and wheelchair. These dimensions are in accordance with Interoperability PRM-TSI legislation. (Technical specifications for interoperability relating to accessibility of the Union's rail system for persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility).

If you hold a bus pass with an "eye" symbol on the front, then you are eligible to travel free on trains throughout Scotland, including journeys starting/ending at the four Midlothian stations. If you hold a valid Midlothian Taxicard, then you can present this for free travel by train but only within the Edinburgh and three Lothian's area including Shawfair, Eskbank, Newtongrange and Gorebridge. The Midlothian Taxicard is not valid for travel south of Gorebridge.

In both cases, you do not need to obtain a rail ticket from the station travel office. Show the card at the gate barrier. Do not attempt to enter via one of the automatic gates. Do not try to push your NEC or Midlothian Taxicard into the slot on the automatic gates – it will damage your card and

may put the automatic gate out of action for other travellers. Instead, approach one of the staff at the manually controlled gate and show your card. Where there is no gate, show the card to the conductor on the train.

## Scottish Blind Scheme

This scheme was created in the year 2000 and applies to blind persons resident anywhere in Scotland including Midlothian. Cardholders enjoy free travel on buses, trains, ferries, Glasgow Subway and Edinburgh Trams for themselves. There is free travel for a companion on buses [denoted by the two symbols of an eye and a “+1” on the card], but this companion entitlement does not extend to the other modes. SBS is financially supported by the 32 Scottish local authorities, but as far as the cardholder is concerned, the scheme is co-produced with the Scottish Government using their National Entitlement Card [NEC]. Application forms are available at all Midlothian libraries where completed forms must be handed in by the applicant in person [part of the process of verification is that the face of the applicant and the photo image supplied must be cross-checked by the librarian before the application is accepted].



## Disabled Persons Railcard

If you have a disability that makes travelling by train difficult you might qualify for the Disabled Persons Railcard. The Disabled Persons Railcard allows you to get 1/3 off most rail fares throughout Great Britain. If you're travelling with an adult companion they also can get 1/3 off their rail fare. It costs £20 for a one-year Railcard. £54 for a three-year Railcard.

You can apply online at [www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/](http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/)

## Going Forward

There is a robust campaign for the extension of the Borders Railway from Tweedbank to Hawick and ultimately Carlisle. Revenue from passenger trains alone may not be sufficient to make a business case for the southern end of the line. Any feasibility study will need to look at the contribution freight trains could make, particularly bringing out timber from the Kielder Forest area.

## Steam Trains

Following the success of steam train journeys 2015 Steam Train Experience are delighted to announce that more steam train experiences will be available to the public in 2016. Each service will feature both first and standard class options on board the trains recently refurbished carriages, and is the perfect way to experience the new borders railway.

ScotRail are still to confirm dates and prices for their journeys this year. We will reveal these details here, once they have been confirmed. For more information please visit [www.scotrail.co.uk/scotland-by-rail/steam-trains](http://www.scotrail.co.uk/scotland-by-rail/steam-trains)



# Transport For a Health Appointment


## What to do if you need transport for a health appointment?

If you have an appointment at a hospital or other health venue, or you are visiting someone in hospital you may find that you need to arrange transport. Feedback we have received indicates that people don't always have clear information about how to do this. Information to help is below.

## Using Public Transport

If you are planning to travel by public transport, information is included in this newsletter about buses that serve the Royal Infirmary (page 13) and Midlothian Community Hospital (page 13).

## Traveline Scotland Journey Planner

For other destinations; Traveline Scotland journey planner can assist. This can be found at [www.travelinescotland.com](http://www.travelinescotland.com) or by calling Traveline Scotland Tel:  0871 200 22 33. Give details of your start point and destination, along with journey times, the journey planner will give details of bus times, route numbers, bus stop locations and journey times.

## Midlothian Community Hospital

A public transport guide for Midlothian Community Hospital has been produced, giving information about bus routes from across Midlothian to the hospital. Copies are available at all Midlothian libraries, main Council offices, the Midlothian Community Hospital [MCH] and the health centres at Pathhead and Penicuik. The bus stop at MCH is closer to the main hospital entrance than the free main car park. Special parking spaces marked for the use of Blue Badge holders are closer to the main door than the bus stop.

The free car park at the hospital, includes disabled parking areas close to the hospital entrance.

## Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh

The Royal Infirmary site is undergoing development at present due to the building of the new Royal Hospital for Sick Children and the Department for Clinical Neuroscience. Car parking at the site will continue to be provided, the building work will mean changes to where car parks are located. As a result of the site development the bus stop has been relocated to the rear of the Royal Infirmary, closer to outpatient departments (see page 13). For more information please visit [www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk/riecampus](http://www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk/riecampus)

## Transport between the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh and other Hospitals

If you can reach the ERI Bus Hub easily by using the 33 or 49, there are links from the ERI to both St John's [Horsburgh 40/X40] and Roodlands Hospital [Prentice 111]. The St John's service 40 must not be confused with Lothian's 40 service that links Penicuik with Musselburgh via Loanhead and Dalkeith. Neither service can be described as frequent, and you would need to check the timetables for details.

## General anaesthetic + driving?

Please use public transport, if possible, or arrange to be dropped off at the hospital and picked up again by car. Car parking spaces are limited at some hospitals. There are 'drop off' zones at our hospitals.

## The Scottish Ambulance Service Patient Transport Service

If you are not able to use public transport and do not have your own private transportation, you may qualify for support from the Scottish Ambulance Service Patient Transport Service

## Ambulance transport is available for patients who:

- ➡ Require assistance from skilled ambulance staff



- Have a medical condition that would prevent them from travelling to hospital by any other means
- Have a medical condition that might put them at risk from harm if they were to travel independently
- Have mobility difficulties that require the assistance of ambulance care staff
- Are attending hospital for treatment that might have side effects and require ambulance care on the return journey

## Can I be accompanied by my carer?

There are circumstances when you may be accompanied by a carer or escort:

- If you are under 16 years old
- If you have learning difficulties
- If you require more specialist personal support from a carer due to your medical condition or a mental health condition



## How can I request ambulance transport?

To request an ambulance, call the Scottish Ambulance Service Booking Line. Booking line: 📞 0300 123 1236 OR Text Relay: 📠 18001-0300 123 1236 for patients who may be deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired

Calls will be charged at local rates for mobiles and landlines.

You may request bookings up to 28 days in advance of your appointment. You will need your appointment letter when you call with the 10 digit CHI number at the top of the letter. Due to limited space on the ambulance, you will only be able to travel with one piece of hand luggage.



A lot of time is wasted by people not cancelling a journey no longer needed. If you need to cancel a journey which has been booked, please call 📞 0800 389 1333 (freephone from landlines).

## What is the NHS Travel Costs Scheme?

If you travel to hospital by other forms of transport, you may be entitled to get help with your costs. More information is available at [www.scotland.gov.uk/healthcosts](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/healthcosts) or call 📞 0845 850 116 (calls charged at local rates).

## Other transport options

If you contact the Patient Transport Service and you do not qualify for an ambulance, they will advise you about alternative options. One option available locally is the British Red Cross Transport Service.

## British Red Cross Transport Service

The transport service offers freedom and independence for people who cannot get about easily or use public transport. British Red Cross help people to get to medical/hospital appointments

### How do we help people?

British Red Cross can provide a driver with a vehicle to offer door-to-door assistance for those in need. The service aims to:

- Enable clients to keep appointments safely and efficiently





- Provide freedom of travel for those with mobility problems.

The British Red Cross ask for a contribution to our costs, based on mileage used. The charge for the service is 55p per mile which we ask you to pay in cash at the time of the journey. You will be informed as to how much the journey will cost when you book it.

It is best to give as much notice as possible as this is a popular service.

### **What skills and training do our volunteers have?**

The British Red Cross volunteers are fully trained in helping people who have difficulty travelling and those using our specially adapted vehicles must complete accredited driver training.

### **Could I volunteer for this service?**

Without volunteers, the British Red Cross would never be able to give people the help they need in a crisis. Because we offer so many services across the UK, we depend on people who generously give up their time to help others. Please contact us if you would like to become a transport volunteer.

### **How do I get in touch?**

For further information, please contact our West Lothian branch Tel:  01506 654 652. Our West Lothian branch manage the service for Midlothian.

## **Travelling Home from Hospital**

When being discharged from hospital, the first option to travel home should be family or friends. You should make the staff in the ward aware as soon as possible if you have someone who can collect you from hospital when you are being discharged.

If you have a clinical or mobility need and require assistance, staff in the ward can contact the NHS Lothian Transport Hub. There is limited access to transport and this is prioritised for patients who require assistance and for transfer to other hospitals.

### **NHS Lothian Transport Hub**

NHS Lothian Transport Hub is a single point of contact for patient transport and can only be accessed by NHS Lothian staff.

When a patient needs transport to leave hospital or be transferred to another hospital, nursing staff will call the Transport Hub on the patient's behalf.

Call handlers within the Transport Hub have access to various transport options including ambulances, patient transport buses, Royal Voluntary Service patient transport drivers and taxis. The Hub uses the same assessment as the Scottish Ambulance Service to decide what the most appropriate transport solution is for each patient.

### **The Hub benefits for each patient are:**

- Staff are able to access the most suitable type of vehicle when the patient is ready for discharge or transfer
- The waiting time for transport outwith Lothian has reduced from 2-3 weeks to 2-3 days. This means that bed capacity is available much sooner.
- Nurses only have to make one 5 minute phone call to arrange transport. Previously this could take up to an hour. This frees up nursing time which can be used for patient care.
- All transport is used more efficiently and all patients that need the assistance on an ambulance crew will receive this assistance.

Thanks to Catherine Evans for this section.



## The Blue Badge Scheme

The Blue Badge Scheme provides parking concessions nationally and across Europe for people with a permanent and substantial disability, whether that person is the driver or a passenger. The holder of a Blue Badge is permitted to park in areas normally subject to restrictions and benefits those who are unable to walk great distances.

Brand new applicants for a Blue Badge can apply either online or by paper application form [BB 001]. If you use the printed form, you can send the completed form [with one colour passport-style photo with your name printed on the back] along with the supporting documents and £20 fee [except for those completing Section 3 payment is taken later] direct to the Travel Team at Midlothian House.

The fee can be paid by cheque or postal order if sent with your completed form by post to the Travel Team. The fee can be paid by cash, cheque, postal order or credit/debit card if you personally hand in the form at the counter at Buccleuch House in Dalkeith. The fee can be paid by cheque, postal order or credit/debit card if you personally hand in the form at the Mayfield Hub at the Library. A handling charge of £2.50 is added to all credit card transactions, but not to debit card transactions. Cheques must be made payable to "Midlothian Council".



Online application is done via [www.mygov.scot/apply-blue-badge](http://www.mygov.scot/apply-blue-badge). You will be able to enter personal details, answer an array of questions and arrange payment by credit/debit card. However, there is no facility to scan and store all the documents the Council needs to see, and at the conclusion of the online process, the system will create a list of items that you will need to take to the Council at either Buccleuch House, Dalkeith or Mayfield Hub at the Library.

For Blue Badge Renewals [after an existing Blue Badge expires] use the white form BB 002. Please do not attempt to use the online screen for anything other than brand new applications as this will result in delays in processing your request. Remembering to renew a Blue Badge is the badgeholder's responsibility – no reminder letter is sent out by the Midlothian Travel Team.

For Blue Badge replacements [for lost, stolen or damaged cards] use the pink form BB 005. For Blue Badge Renewals [after an existing Blue Badge expires] use the white form BB 002. Please do not attempt to use the online screen for anything other than brand new applications as this will result in delays in processing your request. If the Blue Badge has been lost or stolen, this fact must be reported to Police Scotland. Contact a local police station or Phone 112. You will be required to make a statement. The Police will give you a reference number to be quoted on the pink form. The Blue Badge is a legal document. Should it reappear you must inform the police. A damaged badge **must** be handed in with the pink form.

If you move address, then there is a form for that too! You need a green "Change or Circumstances" form [CC 001]. Use this to advise any changes in your personal details, from a change of address, to a change of name [getting married or divorced, for example]. Please use this form as soon as the circumstances change – do not wait until you need a Blue Badge renewal, for instance, before sending in the "Change of Circumstances" form. Complete and return your form and the Travel Team will update records for your Blue Badge, Bus Pass, Taxicard and Ring & Go.

## **ALL APPLICANTS COMPLETE SECTIONS 1 AND 7 ON THE FORM.**

Applicants will be automatically eligible for a Blue Badge if they can produce appropriate documentation dated within the previous 12 months. Complete sections 1, 2 and 7 if any of the following apply.

1. Registered blind
2. High Rate of Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance [DLA]
3. Personal Independence Payment [PIP] 8, 10 or 12 points in the "Moving Around" category
4. PIP – 12 points in the "Planning and Following Journeys" category
5. War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement
6. Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Compensation Scheme Tariffs 1-8
7. Special arrangements for those in transition from DLA to PIP

Applicants should bring the original documents with their form if handing them in personally at Buccleuch House or Mayfield Hub. Original documents will be handed back to you after being checked by staff. Arrange for a certified photocopy of the documentation if you are posting the application form direct to the Travel Team at Midlothian House as originals sent by post will not be returned.

For those with a disability in both arms who have difficulty using parking meters or pay machines, please complete sections 1, 4 and 7.

For parents or guardians of applicants under the age of three who have a specific condition as detailed in the form, please complete sections 1, 5 and 7.

Further assessment will be needed for all applicants who do not fall within one of the above categories. Please complete sections 1, 3 and 7.

Circumstances covered by Section 3 "Subject to Further Assessment" include

- If you have a temporary mobility impairment which makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for you to walk and which is likely to last for a period of at least 12 months
- If you have been supplied with a wheelchair by the NHS
- If your disability is substantial and means you are unable to walk or you experience considerable difficulty in walking.
- If you cannot walk far without severe discomfort, stopping or receiving support from another person.

Applicants completing Section 3 may be invited to an "Independent Mobility Assessment" with a medical professional appointed by the Council. Assessments do not involve any physical examination. The applicant can take a spouse or companion with them for support.

All assessments in Midlothian take place at Bonnyrigg Health Centre. You will receive a letter from the Travel Team giving you a date and time to attend. If you cannot make the appointment, please let the Travel Team know as soon as possible as they may be able to offer your time slot to someone else. A couple of assessment sessions are held each month and most Section 3 applicants are seen within four to six weeks.

The doctor will decide to accept or reject the application. You will be notified of the result by the Travel Team by email, phone or letter. If your application is accepted, you will need to make arrangements to pay the £20 Blue Badge fee. If the application is rejected, you will be advised of the appeal procedure if you are unhappy with the outcome.

A new pilot scheme is running from April 2016 to March 2017 for those with a Mental Disorder or Cognitive Impairment. The Scottish Government has introduced an experimental addition to the Blue Badge scheme. There is no online version of the special application form created for this pilot scheme. Paper forms BB 003 for the pilot scheme, along with any of the other forms mentioned in this article, are available at all Midlothian libraries, main Council offices, health centres at Pathhead and Penicuik, the Midlothian Community Hospital and the Rosewell Development Trust.

# Edinburgh Trams

We want as many people as possible to be able to use our trams in safety and comfort. All our trams have dedicated wheelchair spaces. If there is no wheelchair user occupying or requiring to occupy a wheelchair space, other passengers including those travelling with a buggy or with bulky luggage may occupy a wheelchair space. Any passenger using a wheelchair space must vacate that seat if requested to do so by a Company official.



Our trams have certain seats which are designated as 'priority seats' and are intended for use by those passengers who are less able to stand throughout their journey. Any passenger using a 'priority seat' must vacate that seat if requested to do so by a Company official.

## Travelling as a wheelchair user or with a wheelchair user

All of our trams have dedicated wheelchair spaces. These spaces are designed for wheelchairs which are no bigger than 700mm wide, 1200mm long and 1350mm high. A wheelchair user will not be able to board a tram if the tram is full, or if there are already wheelchair users occupying the wheelchair spaces.

## Mobility scooters on tram - trial from 1st January 2016

From 1st January 2016, tram passengers will be able to carry mobility scooters on board tram services on a trial basis. To ensure the safe operation of mobility scooters, a permit scheme will be introduced - applications get be downloaded at [http://edinburghtrams.com/uploads/general/ET\\_~\\_Mobility\\_Scooter\\_Application\\_Form.pdf](http://edinburghtrams.com/uploads/general/ET_~_Mobility_Scooter_Application_Form.pdf) or from the Dalkeith Tavelshop, Jarnac court, Dalkeith, EH22 1HU. To qualify for the permit you are required to hold a Blue Badge or National entitlement card and The scope of this permit is for mobility scooters. To be eligible, the mobility scooter must correspond with the measurements of: 600mm wide, 1000mm long with a turning radius not exceeding 1200mm, a maximum combined weight (mobility scooter and user) of 300kg and it must have a Brake release / free wheel operation to enable safe egress off the tram if the scooter breaks down. It will take around 10 days for the permit to arrive.

## Guidance on Using the Tram

This guidance on how to use your mobility scooter when boarding, on-board, and alighting our trams in a safe and easy manner. The guide will show you the best way to manoeuvre your mobility scooter on the tram and the ideal positioning at tram stops and where to park once on board.

Please note that there are only two disabled priority bays per tram, if these are occupied, you may need to wait for the next available tram.

## Platform Positioning

When you arrive at the tram stop, look for the wheelchair symbol located in the middle of the platform. Position your scooter near the tile, with your scooter facing onto the track. This will make access onto the tram much easier.

For your safety, make sure you are behind the white line.





Due to platform layout it may be difficult to reach the 'open doors' button when the tram arrives. In order to prepare for this, if you are travelling alone, please press the green help point button to contact tram control. Advise them of your location and your destination, and that you wish to board the next tram. They will try to ensure that the on-board Ticketing Services Assistant will be available to assist you in boarding. Alternatively, you can ask a fellow passenger to open the door when the tram arrives to allow you to board.

## Boarding the Tram

When boarding the tram, please ensure that you are entering through the doors at the centre of the tram displaying the wheelchair symbol – this is the only section of the tram which contains the designated disability priority bays.

Please board safely by driving forward onto the tram. Be aware of other passengers and tram furniture (i.e. seats, grab rails and panels).

Upon entering the tram, please park in one of the priority disabled access bays, ensuring that you are not blocking the gangway. Apply the brake on your scooter. Take extra care when doing this as the tram may now be in motion.

Once parked, please have your permit ready for inspection by our tram crew.

## Alighting the Tram

When you wish to alight, please press the stop button prior to the tram stop – this will let the driver know to allow extra time for you to disembark.

Please alight the tram in forward motion. For safety reasons, it is strictly prohibited to reverse out of the tram.

Once you are out of the tram, please ensure you keep away from the platform edge. If you need to cross the tracks, remember to look both ways for oncoming trams and listen out for the bell.

Scottish National Entitlement Cards that do not have City of Edinburgh Council as the issuing Local Authority are **NOT valid on tram services**. Scottish Blind Scheme card holders can travel on the Edinburgh Trams free of charge.

As part of the Scottish Blind Scheme [SBS]. This scheme was created in the year 2000 and applies to blind persons resident anywhere in Scotland including Midlothian. Cardholders enjoy free travel on Edinburgh Trams for themselves. There is free travel for a companion on buses [denoted by the two symbols of an eye and a "+1" on the card], but this companion entitlement does not extend to the other modes.



## On the Bus by Mike Harrison

Mike is Secretary of the Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance and Chair of the Midlothian Disability Access Panel. Following a spinal injury in 2006 he is a tetraplegic wheelchair user who relies on buses for about 90% of travel (trains for the other 10%). Hopefully, it's a mixture of bits of information and tips which could help someone who does not use buses to reconsider and experiment.

### Legislation

The legislation requiring all single-decker service buses to be 'accessible' came into operation on Jan 1st this year. The definition of 'accessible' is misleading. What it requires is that there is one wheelchair space. Not more than one, not that there shall be a separate buggy space, not that ambulant people who have difficulty with steps can access the vehicle.

### Operators

There are four main operators with services running in or through Midlothian.

1. Lothian Buses provide the most frequent services in Midlothian – generally radially from Edinburgh out to Mayfield, Gorebridge, Rosewell and Penicuik. There is also the 'bus in search of a destination', the number 40 which goes between Penicuik and Musselburgh by a very circuitous rural route. Lothian Buses have all been fully wheelchair accessible for a few years, and the ones on the most used routes now also have a second space for a buggy.
2. FirstGroup also operates between Edinburgh and some Borders towns. It advertises that low-floor buses with a wheelchair space is now the standard, but that occasionally circumstances may mean that one which does not meet the criteria may be substituted rather than cancelling a service.
3. Perryman operates services between Edinburgh and some Borders towns. All of their buses now have low floors, ramps and wheelchair space.
4. Stagecoach has services to Dumfriesshire which run through Penicuik. Its website is particularly un-helpful as all it says about users with special needs is 'contact the local operator' but gives no information as to who the local operator is or how you contact them. While its fleet has been upgraded significantly recently, and its drivers are now trained to be more friendly to the disabled, many of the upgrades are of the coach-style. Access to the wheelchair space is often by lift rather than ramp, and for walking passengers there are steps to the passenger deck. Check before travelling.

All operators have conditions of carriage which set out their policy about numbers and types of chairs. All trying to juggle constraints to be as fair as possible to most of the users. So we may not get what we want all of the time, but should expect it most of the time.

### Reliability

Buses do occasionally break down. In the last year I've experienced two engine failures and two halts caused by windows being broken by jobs throwing stones – that's an average of 1 in 250 journeys.

In Edinburgh we seem to have passed the period of aggro between wheelchairs and buggies. There's rather more difficulty over chair space. More wheelchairist are travelling by bus, and recently I have had some long waits – one day 3 consecutive buses already had one on board, and another Sunday morning where I need 2 buses I had to wait for a second bus in each case. You may just have to wait for the next bus – not a problem if it's the No. 3 with a 10-minute service, but a 40 or in the evenings when it's 30' it's a pain. In my cycling days I always used to allow 'puncture time' to a journey to allow for changing an inner tube. Now I allow 'congestion time', just as a car driver has to, by taking one bus earlier than the one I need to arrive at my destination in time. This means that most of the time I arrive at places 20 to 30 minutes before I need to be

there. Reduces stress no end.

## At home

How hard are your tyres? How are your brakes? On a bus you are protected against a sudden stop by the backrest, but if your brakes are not well adjusted you may be liable to some skidding when a bus starts off from a stop and this is much more a significant problem in wet weather. There is no need for restraints in trams or trains, but the modern bus does accelerate quite quickly. It is not a problem if the brakes are well set and the tyres are dry. Most buses have a grab rail, but Lothian have recently bought some without this safety feature. (I have complained!)

## At the bus stop

At every stop there is a board which details the kinds of ticket available and the price. If you don't have an entitlement card, READ THIS(!). And remember that, for driver safety reasons, Lothian Buses drivers do not have any access to cash to give change.

The drivers will usually stop if there is anyone waiting even if they don't look as if they are waiting for that particular bus, but it's always best to signal. If you are obviously physically disabled and have a wheelchair or a stick the driver will do his best to get in close to the kerb.

The convention is that a wheelchair user goes to the front of the queue and gets on first so that they have time to position themselves and get the brakes on before the bus sets off, and generally other passengers are on the side of the disabled and those with buggies. Most buggy owners will fold the buggy if it is in the wheelchair space, or even get off the bus without being asked.

## Ramps

The ramps are generally reliable, although slightly oversensitive and will retract automatically if they hit an obstacle, but there are various tricks the drivers will use and generally will make three or four attempts to get a ramp out before they will come out of their cab and assist manually with a wheelchair.

My old chair had its centre of gravity too far forward, and the chair tended to tip backwards going up a bus ramp. I always tried to make sure there was somebody behind me in the queue (see next paragraph) and would ask them for help, but I learnt that if I said "please stop me tipping backwards" it panicked them, but if I said "can you help me up the ramp?" They were happy to help. My new chair is balanced better.

## On the bus

If you have an entitlement card and are in a wheelchair you will not be able to reach the card reader. For driver safety reasons they will usually have their window closed, in which case the card has to be passed through the small slot at the front so the driver can scan it. At busy times very often the driver will just offer to enter the 'fare' manually, as long as he/she has seen the card (I always have mine round my neck).

If you are not a wheelchair user but have difficulty in walking, it's probably a good idea to have a Thistle card which can indicate to the driver that you need time to sit down before the bus moves. If you say where you are getting off, it will also enable the driver to give you time to get to the front of the bus. One of the disadvantages of the additional space for the



Mike Harrison Embarking a bus

buggy is that it has reduced the number of handholds for getting to the front.

The wheelchairist has an additional problem on some of the older single deck buses which have four inward facing seats on the left-hand side. These are very popular with those who have reduced mobility, but unfortunately the space is quite narrow and it is very difficult to get a chair past without running into people's shins, and of course these are the people who have the most difficulty in getting out of the way. On these buses there is also a slope from front to back so as well as trying to avoid people's legs you are going uphill.

## **Getting off the bus**

Sometimes this is harder than getting on. Firstly you have to do a 180° turn usually around the pillar that has the blue bell on it. Diagonally opposite are usually the seats for disabled people but these are also very popular with people who have shopping trolleys or walkers. Generally they are not aware of how much space is needed for a wheelchair's footrests, and a polite "Watch your legs I don't want to hit them" is in order.

Go squarely down the ramp, keeping control of your speed. Again people don't realise that you need to go to the end of the ramp before turning and will stand there blocking your exit. Speak nicely to them! A 'Thank you ' at this point can be both to the driver and the people who are giving you space to get off. Be careful in wet weather where you may not have the normal grip on the rims.

## **Finally**

If you have not used a bus because you think you may not be able to, get a friend or a carer to go with you who can help if you need it and just give you confidence anyway. Don't be frightened, don't be dissuaded. It can be an adventure and a sense of humour and a relaxed attitude is an advantage. Always allow more time than you think you will need. You have all the time in the world.

## **Postscript**

Lothian Buses are considering trialling the carriage of mobility scooters. Up to now they have said 'no' to all scooters for, I think, three reasons:

- Many are not manoeuvrable enough to get into the space in a reasonable time
- A significant number have a narrow width wheelbase and stability going round corners could be an issue
- It's unfair to expect drivers to have to make a snap decision about whether or not to let any particular scooter try to board

The Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) scheme which some operators use gets round these issues. Anyone who wants to take a scooter on a bus has to do four things

1. Go to a designated place (usually a bus depot) with the scooter and have it assessed for size, weight, turning circle and stability
2. Be trained in getting on and off a bus – without the pressure of a live journey and other passengers waiting to board
3. Be assessed on handling skills and the time taken
4. Receive a permit to show to the driver of a bus on routes operated by the company that issued it.

The last point is significant, because there are many different bus configurations, and what might fit on to one type will not go on another.

Hopefully, Lothian Buses will go for something like this. To just say, 'we are going to have a trial' and allow anyone just to turn up at any bus stop with any kind of scooter would cause a lot of confusion, delays and aggro towards both drivers and the disabled. This could destroy the goodwill and encouragement that currently prevails.

## Helen's Handy Hints

I enjoy traveling on the train and will continue to in spite of some of the obstacles. Once you've decided where you want to go and when, the next thing you need to do is think about what assistance and support you may require to get there. The train company need to know that you are in a wheelchair, can you transfer to a seat or do you need to remain in your wheelchair. You must phone 0845 722 5225. At least 24 hours in advance sometimes it can be difficult to get a wheelchair space if others have already been pre-booked as there are limited wheelchair spaces available. You then need to contact either the train company you are travelling with or National Rail direct and they will book your tickets and any assistance you may require, for example, If you need ramps to get on or off the train or help whilst on the train. They also ask how much luggage you have as you may need assistance, both with getting on the train and when you arrive at your destination. Help to take your luggage to the transport you have arranged to pick you up? There is a lot of planning involved and the best way to do this is to break it down into manageable stages.

- ➔ Stage 1 Where and when am I going
- ➔ Stage 2 When I arrive at the station, what support do I need
- ➔ Stage 3 What support do I need to get on the train
- ➔ Stage 4 What support do I need when on the train
- ➔ Stage 5 What support do I need to get off the train
- ➔ Stage 6 What support do I need once I am off the train but still in the station

Book your tickets on line or by phone, I prefer to phone the company direct and get them to send my tickets out to me. It takes around 7 to 10 days to enable them to do this but I find they are sent out very quickly. There is an additional cost for this but it is well worth the peace of Mind it gives you to know you don't have to panic about buying tickets at the station or trying to get them from the automatic machines they have within the station forecourt. I usually arrive 30 to 45 minutes before departure even though they would only normally require you to be there 30 minutes before. This gives you that little extra time to make sure you are prepared for your journey. If you intend to travel a lot I suggest you get a disabled railcard; the Disabled Persons Railcard allows you to get 1/3 off most rail fares throughout Great Britain. If you're travelling with an adult companion they also get 1/3 off their rail fare - so you can save money for your friends too! The railcard cost £20 for one year or £54 for three years so, use your Railcard for a £60 fare and you'll save £20 on the journey. A one year Railcard has paid for itself in just one trip! Take a friend with you and you've saved enough for lunch, a visit to the cinema or whatever you both enjoy!

Getting into Edinburgh Waverley by wheelchair is now a lot easier, there is wheelchair access via lifts from Market Street, left hand side at the entrance, and Princes Street, two lifts on top of Waverley Mall. On going improvements now no taxis can gain access to the station. Coming by car or a Midlothian Taxi you are dropped at the Calton entrance There is a telephone available for use at this entrance and you can contact the East Coast train provider direct to let them know you have arrived at the station and could they send the support that you have previously arranged, to meet you.



Once on the train there is a refreshment service provided, either in the buffet car or brought to all passengers via a trolley service. Try and have some change with you as it just makes life easier but they also accept some bank cards. The toilet facilities are usually very clean and accessible but I prefer to take my foot plates off as it makes things more manageable for me negotiating the narrow carriages. You can call for assistance if you need it to get to the toilet as there is a button at the table beside your seat. Someone will then take you to the toilet and wait outside the door or you can tell them that you will call them on the assist button which is inside the toilet to come back for you when you are ready to return to your seat.



Trailblazers is a group of young disabled campaigners from across the UK who tackle the social issues affecting young disabled people, including transport. We aim to fight these social injustices to ensure young disabled people can gain access to the services they require.

Trailblazers are part of Muscular Dystrophy UK, the charity for individuals and families living with muscle wasting conditions.



Trailblazers launched their first investigation into public transport throughout the UK in 2009. This an extract from the follow up investigation has highlighted which aspects of public transport have become more accessible, which barriers still remain and what still needs to be improved.

Trailblazers is a network of young disabled people, Trailblazers know how important it is to our independence to be able to use public transport in the same way as our non-disabled peers. As with all young people, we need to get to school, college and university, to go to work and to socialise with our friends. Being unable to use public transport immediately denies us access to these opportunities.

As Trailblazers, we believe everyone should be able to access and use public transport safely, confidently and whenever they wish. However, as many disabled people still experience difficulties when trying to use public transport, we find ourselves at a significant disadvantage over our non-disabled peers.

For many disabled people, in comparison with the experience of our non-disabled peers, a journey using public transport is often:

- Longer – having to take an accessible route or wait for assistance adds to journey time
- More expensive – having to pay for additional carers, taking taxis or purchasing accessible vehicles if local public transport is inaccessible, adds to the cost
- More stressful – these barriers add stress to any journey.

Trailblazers compiled a snapshot of data from Transport for London's online journey planner by comparing journeys with no access requirements with journeys requiring full level access. The findings were staggering. **On average, journeys requiring full access took 4.5 times longer than 'ordinary' journeys.**

Overall, our evidence shows that although there continues to be progress made, there is much further to go to make public transport fully accessible for disabled people across the UK.

## Buses

Trailblazers tell us that physical accessibility is one practical aspect of using public transport. However, attitudes, space on buses and the bus driver's awareness of the needs of disabled people can help or hinder access and affect confidence when attempting to use buses.

The UK Government opted out of a European regulation which made disability awareness training mandatory for bus drivers. Trailblazers see this as a missed opportunity to improve attitudes.

One hundred Trailblazers answered our survey asking for their general experience of using public transport over the past three years. The results show that there continues to be a wide variation in the standard of services experienced by disabled people when using buses.

## Wheelchairs v buggies on board – the debate continues

Our investigation highlights one of the major barriers to bus travel for disabled people: being

denied access to the wheelchair spaces because buggies were using them.

Doug Paulley: A disability rights campaigner, In July 2015, was granted permission to take the case to the Supreme Court after some rulings were granted and then over turned.

**Lothian Buses state:** If there is no wheelchair user on the bus, other passengers or one unfolded buggy may occupy the wheelchair space. Please note that wheelchair users have priority over everyone else for use of the wheelchair space, since this is the only space in which they can travel safely. Whenever the space is required by a wheelchair user, other passengers must move to make it available, and any buggies must be folded and stored safely elsewhere. Any buggy user who chooses to get off the bus so that a wheelchair user can travel will be issued with a receipt so that they can continue their journey free of charge on another bus.

**First Bus group:** Wheelchair users have priority over everyone else for the use of the designated wheelchair space, since this is the only place in which they can travel safely. Non-wheelchair users, unlike wheelchair users, will normally have a choice about which part of the bus to sit or stand in.



Wheelchair User new Q'straint on Lothian Buses

Common decency and respect for wheelchair users should mean that other passengers make way for them. Passengers are urged to offer cooperation in allowing proper use of the designated wheelchair area.

If the wheelchair space is occupied with a buggy, standing passengers or otherwise full, and there is space elsewhere in the vehicle, the driver will ask that it is made free for a wheelchair user. Where a pushchair or buggy is occupying the space, the driver will ask that it is repositioned, moved to another part of the bus or folded and stored in the luggage space, where available.

## Trains

The UK's railway network is the oldest in the world; dating back to 1825. It is one of the most widely-used forms of public transport and since the privatisation of the network in 1994/5, rail passenger journeys have more than doubled.

In 2014 alone there were 1.65 billion journeys on the National Rail network. The railway system in the UK has been heavily invested in; the Department for Transport is spending £42.6 billion on the development of the high-speed rail network, HS2.

However, many disabled people still struggle to access the rail network owing to a combination of poor physical access and a lack of understanding about their needs.

The lack of accessible interconnecting public transport infrastructure compounds the problem, as people who are unable to use trains may also be denied access to other modes of public transport.

There have been some recent improvements with the Government's Access for All programme, which seeks to improve accessibility at some of the busiest stations.

However, improving interconnecting infrastructure at smaller stations, and being able to access taxis and buses to get to these stations, are just as important, as people.

### Key findings:

- Over half of respondents find information provided by the train company useful and easy to understand
- A number of disabled people say their local train station is not accessible

- A large number of disabled people would prefer trains to have a 'turn up and go' service, rather than the requirement to book assistance 24 hours in advance
- A small number of disabled people have experienced harassment or verbal abuse on the train in the past three years.

#### **Common concerns include:**

- Train companies do not supply clear and concise information about accessibility
- Local, smaller train stations are not stepfree, forcing disabled passengers to take buses or taxis to the nearest accessible station
- Information is unclear on whether or not disabled people need to book train travel in advance
- Pre-booked assistance restricts spontaneity in making travel decisions
- Pre-booked assistance, when it arrives late or not at all, means disabled passengers miss their trains or are delayed getting off their train
- Lifts are turned off in the evenings, making it a huge challenge

### **Taxis**

Trailblazers survey highlighted three major concerns.

- Firstly, that there are not enough wheelchair accessible taxis in regional areas, meaning many Trailblazers are often unable to use taxis when needed and sometimes never at all.
- Secondly, many Trailblazers, when trying to hail a taxi in the street, were ignored or told the ramp wasn't working.
- Thirdly, some Trailblazers reported being charged more, as a wheelchair user, for using a taxi. This is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.

Trailblazers are calling on the Government to bring Section 165 of the Equality Act 2010 into force, which would place legal duties on drivers of wheelchair-accessible taxis and PHVs to assist wheelchair users into their vehicles and not to make any additional charge for doing so.



The Law Commission published its findings and recommendations to Government in this area in May 2014. Recommendations addressed a number of these concerns. However, we are all still waiting for the official Government response to see if there are any plans to implement changes.

### **Coaches**

It is interesting to note that none of our Trailblazers spoke to us about their experiences with coaches. This is possibly owing to the fact that coaches are not universally accessible, and some coach operators will not take certain types of wheelchair. There is also the issue of the lack of accessible toilets on board. Under the PSVAR 2000, coaches are not legally required to be wheelchair accessible until 2020. With so few Trailblazers ever having travelled by coach, it is evident that the accessibility of the coach network needs major improvement.

To view all the findings please visit [www.mdctrailblazers.org/assets/0001/2622/End\\_of\\_the\\_line\\_2016\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.mdctrailblazers.org/assets/0001/2622/End_of_the_line_2016_FINAL.pdf)

This report is from Trailblazers and covers all of the UK. The Support for wheelchair users using public transport in Midlothian is very good. However if you intend to travel please be aware of the difficulties you can encounter in other parts of the United Kingdom.

### **Alternative Publications**

Editions of 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 Eric Johnstone on 0131-663-9471. Write to him at MVA, 4-6 White Hart Street, Dalkeith, EH22 1AE with your request.