

**Forward**

**Midlothian**

**Disabled People**

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



**Equality - Diversity - Inclusion**

## **The train has arrived at platform 3 and I'm still stuck on board!!**



I recently travelled on the Scot Rail Borders train from Eskbank to Waverley Station. As a wheelchair user, I was assisted by the guard who also enquired about my intended destination. When he later came to check tickets he re-iterated that I was leaving at Waverley.

As I require a ramp to disembark and am naturally, last to leave the carriage, I am therefore dependent on staff remembering I require assistance. Sadly, the guard by this time appeared to have forgotten and had disappeared. Fortunately, on this occasion, another passenger was late in leaving the train and realised I needed help. She very kindly went out of her way to alert staff and stayed with me until assistance arrived, some 10 minutes after the train arrived at Waverley Station.

This is the second time I have been left in this situation on the same train line. I have not mentioned the date or time of travel as I have no desire to have anyone getting into trouble over this incident, rather, I write to suggest - as is available on other forms of public transport - it would be helpful to have a buzzer or other means of alerting and reminding staff when I am intending to leave the train. This would provide me with some control, and your staff a reminder that I am on the train, thus, I take responsibility for my travel as much as is reasonably possible, confident that I will not be stranded at any point during future journeys.

As a matter of interest, I have been fortunate enough to have travelled to many parts of the world, including parts of Europe, Canada, Alaska, America and Australia. I have used many different forms of transport, with varying degrees of success. Of course, I have had to be adaptable, patient with my sense of humour and adventure having to come to the fore. I have generally tackled these with good

### **Getting on the train**

There will be a carriage with a wheelchair symbol on the door. If you are in a wheelchair/scooter or you need a ramp, Contact ScotRail Assisted Travel beforehand, and a member of staff will put a ramp in place.



## **Contents**

<b>National Insurance Contributions and ESA.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Cab Outreach.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Volunteering with Greig.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Black Diamond.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Self-Directed Support.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Collective Voice.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Neatebox.....</b>	<b>7</b>

**grace, indeed grateful to have had the opportunity to experience so many interesting locations, see amazing sites and meet people.**

It is therefore regrettable and ironic that the main problem I have had so far has been in going from my home in Midlothian to Edinburgh!

I enjoy travelling by train and have a positive attitude toward public transport, but to have this uncertainty would add an unnecessary anxiety to a disabled person who may be trying a journey for the first time, only for the lack of a buzzer.

I look forward to hearing your response to my suggested and I think, simple solution.

Yours sincerely,  
**Marlene Gill**

## **National Insurance Contributions and ESA**

Forward Mid recently received the following communication;

*“A thing I wanted to let you know about was that I have discovered there is a shortfall in my National Insurance Contributions since I was changed over from Incapacity Benefit to Employment Support Allowance for the past 5 years. As by law since I get the Contribution based ESA, according to their own regulations they should continue to pay my National Insurance Contributions. I have been trying for the last year to get them to change it so it reads 33 years Contributions instead of 28 years. Please can you ask anyone in the Support Group to check their National Insurance Contributions in case they also have a shortfall in them.”*



**And another from an online blog for disabled people;**

*“I’m currently receiving ESA support group and enhanced PIP daily living. I am 59 and was curious to know how my receiving these Benefits could eventually have any bearing on my pension when I retire. I have read on my recent letter from DWP regarding ESA update, that the DWP credit me with National Insurance contributions. Are these contributions any different to that of a person working? I have no understanding of how all this plays out in terms of what I may or may not be losing out on by the time I retire. Any advice”?*

Hi as long as you are getting ESA support group you will get your National Insurance contributions. In full, you need 35 years full National Insurance contributions to receive the maximum state pension.

We publish these to bring it into your awareness and to encourage people to clarify their own situations. **Are you clear about which benefit you are currently receiving and how it may affect your national insurance contributions?**

**IF IN DOUBT - PLEASE CHECK IT OUT!**

Welfare Rights Officers Midlothian Council;  
Tel:  0131 270 8922

Fax: 0131 271 3594

Fairfield House  
8 Lothian Road  
Dalkeith  
EH22 3AA



## Cab Outreach

**Dalkeith CAB** runs 'drop-in' sessions (no appointment necessary) on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 10.00am – 12.30 pm. These sessions can get busy and you may have to wait to see an Adviser. There is also a maximum number of people we can see in any one session, so we cannot always guarantee you will be seen.

CAB also offer appointments at other times – you can book an appointment in person or by phoning Reception any morning 10.00-12.30 or Mon-Thurs afternoons, 1.00-3.00 pm.

Dalkeith CAB is **not** wheelchair accessible, the outreach is the best way to make initial contact:

**Danderhall Library:** (☎ 0131 663 9293), Tuesday, 10.00-12.00, drop in, No appointment necessary.

**The Orchard Centre, Bonnyrigg:** (☎ 0131 663 1616), Tuesday, 1.30 – 3.30,  
By appointment-service users only.

**Newbyres Medical Centre, Gorebridge:** (☎ 01875 820405), Wednesday, 9.30 – 12.00,  
By appointment-for registered patients.

**Gorebridge Library:** (☎ 01875 820630), Thursday, 10.00 -1.00, drop-in,  
No appointment necessary.

'Changeworks' hold monthly clinics at Dalkeith CAB (usually first Monday of every month) and can assist with any issues relating to gas/electricity. One of our Advisers can book an appointment for you or make a referral.



**Dalkeith & District CAB, 2-8 Buccleuch Street, DALKEITH, Midlothian, EH22 1HA**  
Tel ☎ 0131 660 1636

Penicuik Citizens Advice Bureau

Penicuik CAB **is** wheelchair accessible.

Penicuik CAB also run Outreach clinics throughout Midlothian, some of which operate a drop-in system.

**Loanhead Library:** Monday 10.00 – 13.00, drop in,  
No appointment necessary.

**Loanhead Miners Welfare:** Wednesday 10.00 – 13.00, drop in,  
No appointment necessary.

**Lasswade Library:** Tuesday, 9.30 – 11.30, drop-in,  
No appointment necessary.

Please note - for confirmation of the above clinics and/or to arrange appointments at Loanhead or Penicuik, please contact PENICUIK CAB on 01968-675259.

**Penicuik Citizens Advice Bureau, 14A John St, Penicuik EH26 8AB**  
Phone: ☎ 01968 675259

More information can be found at [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/)

## Volunteering with Greig

My name is Greig and I have been involved with Midlothian Local Area Co-ordination for a number of years now. During this time they have worked with me to gain my confidence to go on and get involved with things I may not have done in the past.

As my confidence increased I was happy to look at arranging social activities with people I had met through Midlothian Local Area Co-ordination and they had become my friends. We had the same interests, we liked to swim and go for walks. I spoke to Stuart (LAC) about maybe looking at going on a regular basis to the swimming and also arranging some walks locally. Stuart thought this was a great idea and was sure that I could arrange a get together with my friends and organise this myself. He gave me advice on what I needed to do and left me to do it.



I got in touch with all the people that would be keen to come along to the swimming and we arranged what day and time would suit. We then met to get started, and are still going. I also looked at some local walks and again we made a day and time that was best for this. For these activities, we all get ourselves there and back independently. This has been a great success and has made me feel good about myself and has helped with my health and well being.

When we were chatting on a walk, some people said they enjoyed golf, so we spoke about maybe going along to the golf range first and asking people along that may not have tried golf so see if they liked it. So every fortnight we meet on a Thursday at the local Melville golf range. We have a great time and as we are all at different stages of playing golf we help each other out with some tips on how to stand and swing the club. Then we go and have a little refreshment after and this gives us a chance to chat on what we have been up to and what we are doing later in the week.

I have a very active life now and love getting out and about, meeting new people who now I would definitely call my friends.

**Stuart LAC:** Greig is very helpful to our work – when we have met someone new to LAC who feels a bit uncertain or uncomfortable about taking the step to join others, we turn to Greig. He volunteers to meet them and tells them about his experience. Greig makes people feel at ease and is very encouraging to anyone who wants to try a new activity. His enthusiasm and people skills have enabled people who were at risk of being isolated to become active members of the community.

## Midlothian's community radio station now has 12,500 listeners each week\*.

Formed in 2007, We are committed to providing the people of Midlothian with a radio station dedicated to the local area.

We work in partnership with local schools and colleges to provide a training ground in media and confidence building.

We offer sponsorship and promotional opportunities to help boost your business. Listen out for Forward Mid shouts!

If your target market includes **Newtongrange, Gorebridge, Dalkeith, Bonnyrigg, Loanhead, Penicuik, Pathhead and Roslin**, then we can help you contact potential new customers.

\*Midlothian Citizens Panel



**Black Diamond**  
107.8 FM  
107.8 FM

# Self-Directed Support

Forward Mid is proud to announce after the launch of A Guide to Self-Directed Support in Midlothian, that it has received praise from many quarters, unfortunately, until now, many people are still unaware of what self-directed support is or what can be done with support that you can apply for.

Self-Directed Support lets you take more control over the money available to meet your agreed care and support needs. It allows you to make choices about your support based on the things that are important.

- To you, and to goals you want to achieve,
- To help you stay safe and well.

Since 1 April 2014 – the commencement date of the Social Care (Self Directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 – all local authorities have a statutory duty to give people who are eligible for social care more choice about how they receive support – they must offer self-directed support.

There are four options within self-directed support for you to choose from:

**Option 1** – The person receives a direct payment and arranges the support themselves, often with the support of an advice and support organisation.

**Option 2** – The person chooses how their individual budget is spent while the local authority or a third party (such as a support organisation or service provider) manages the money and arranges the support on their behalf.

**Option 3** – The person asks the local authority to decide and arrange the services and support they receive.

**Option 4** – A combination of two or all of options 1, 2 and 3. For example, the person may choose to use part of the budget as a direct payment to employ a personal assistant and another part to receive a service decided and organised by their council.

Find your copy on the Forward Mid hub in Main libraries, at the MVA 4-6 White Hart Street Dalkeith EH22 1AE or Tel: Eric Johnstone ☎ 0131-663-9471

If you prefer an electronic copy of A Guide to Self-Directed Support in Midlothian, to print or for a computer:

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

or you can download a copy suitable for a mobile phone or tablet at:

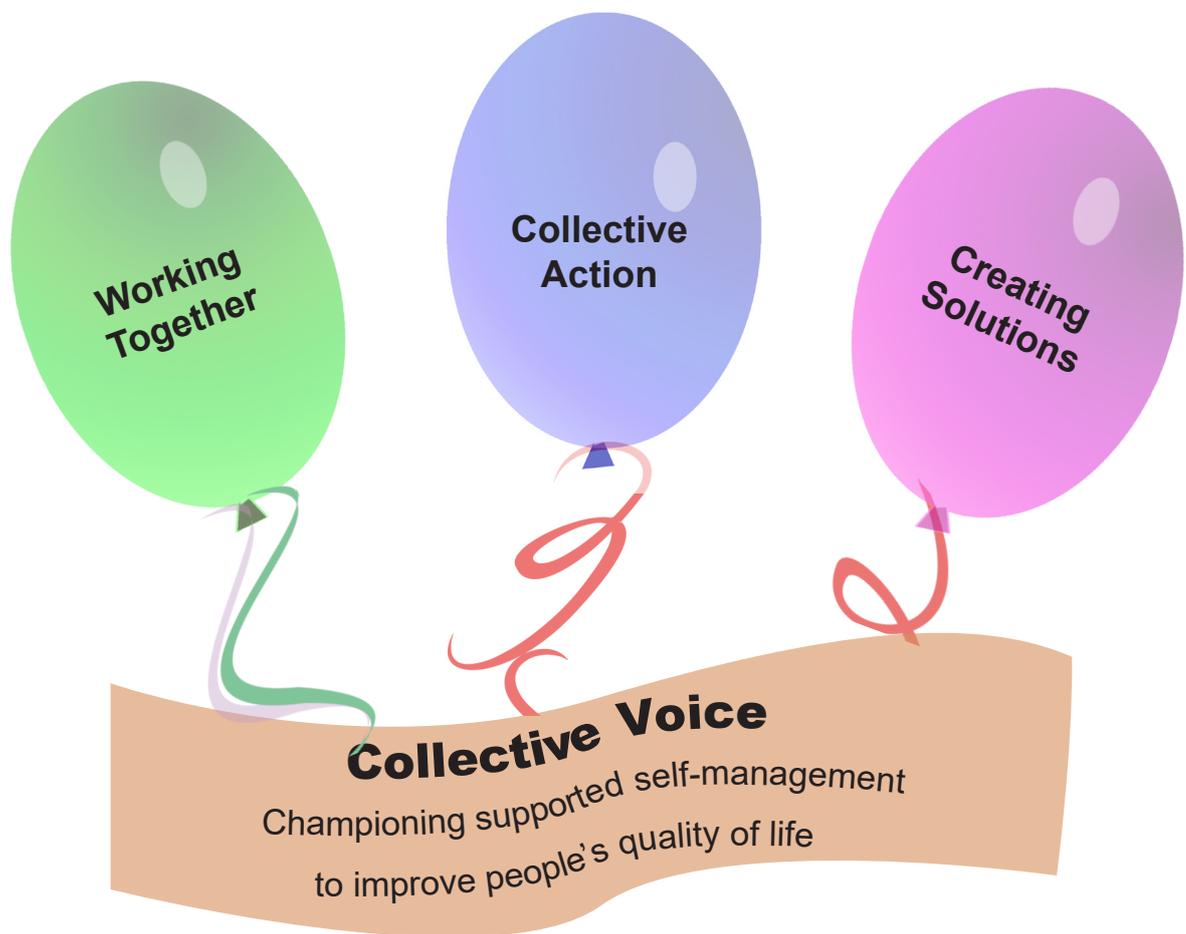
[www.forwardmid.org.uk/pdf/sdssmallest.pdf](http://www.forwardmid.org.uk/pdf/sdssmallest.pdf)

If you prefer to have your PDF documents read out to you Foxit is a free software for all platforms [www.foxitsoftware.com/pdf-reader/](http://www.foxitsoftware.com/pdf-reader/)



## A Guide to Self-Directed Support in Midlothian





## Everything is possible with a Collective Voice

History shows us when people come together by talking, sharing ideas, discussing issues and feel safe to do so, positive changes happen.

This is the Collective Voice ethos. Bringing people together to share experiences and develop strategies for self-management when life's hurdles present themselves. Whether you have a physical or invisible condition which has impacted on your health and well-being, peer support is a fundamental and non-judgemental comfort.

Collective Voice is a collaboration between Thistle Foundation, Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland and Midlothian Health & Social Care. A partnership to develop support within our community, driven by those who have personal experience and care about supporting when times get tough.

### What is self management?

- A portfolio of techniques and tools to support us when we need them,
- Recognising the rhythms and routines in our lives and when they are disrupted,
- Learning when we can or can't do something and not feeling pressured,
- Transforming the relationship between the person and caregiver so that we are truly working together,
- Identifying the resources that exist within our community to help us to stay well.

Collective Voice offers workshops over six weeks with the next ones starting in late September. The topics and lifestyle strategies are diverse and can be life changing when the shared experiences across the group are heard.

Championing relations with Midlothian Council and NHS Lothian on health and well-being for physical and mental health is a positive impact that Collective Voice has had so far. Members have spoken at training events for Midlothian staff, raising awareness of how peer support and encouraging good conversations can be in some ways the “best medicine”.



Collective Voice gives a voice to those who have felt, because of a disability, that they don't feel heard and have a need to share their thoughts in a non-judgemental environment which is secure.

If you feel you need this support or would like to give assistance to others, come along. There are opportunities for learning the strategies for taking control back and enjoying life and also training for giving support.

Everything is possible with a Collective Voice.

If you would like to know more or want to come along to the sessions then please contact [collective.voice@thistle.org.uk](mailto:collective.voice@thistle.org.uk) or contact Scott Tel: ☎ 0131 661 3366 or Deborah Tel: ☎ 0131 225 6963



Midlothian

**Neatebox**

## Striving to make equality a standard.

The biggest milestone in the company's history has been the official launches of 'Button' and 'Welcome' in Summer 2017. Both products are free for their users and have been designed to support as many of the 13 million disabled people and their carers as possible. Their development is a direct result of Neatebox striving to promote equality and the provision of services which support both the user and the people whose job it is to provide them with a service.



### Button by Neatebox

With Button, you can use your mobile phone or smartwatch to press the buttons at pedestrian crossings. It addresses the issue of inaccessible crossings for a person with a mobility or visual impairment.

The free app from the App Store or Google Play Store allows pedestrians to focus on positioning and alignment prior to crossing the street. Because of Button, you will be able to cross the road

safely and with more confidence.

The aim is to encourage people to walk more and to decrease the anxiety associated with the crossing process.

The Button App provides an alternative to the traditional button push at pedestrian crossing boxes. Over 10% of the UK population (6.5 Million) have mobility impairments that could result in an inability to press or even find pedestrian crossing boxes and cross safely.

With Button, the user can press the pedestrian crossing button with their phones or smart watches. This allows the user to focus on positioning and alignment ensuring a safe crossing.

### **AUTOMATIC PUSH ENABLED**

Users can put the button press on an automatic loop to allow them to activate crossings while leaving their devices in their pocket.

### **MORE TIME TO CROSS**

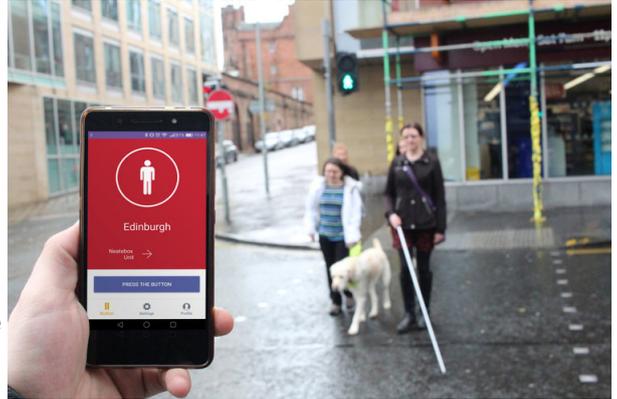
Users will start to cross from the edge of the pavement being perfectly aligned for a safe crossing. This will give them effectively more time to cross.

### **ACTIVATE AUDIBLE SIGNAL**

The next update of the app will allow for users to activate the audible signal when they cross, which will be particularly useful for those with visual impairments.

### **DATA-DRIVEN DECISIONS**

The system collects usage data with every interaction which can be used for the provision of more efficient traffic management and infrastructure planning.



## **Welcome by Neatebox**

Welcome addresses the issue of inadequate customer service for visitors with specific accessibility requirements caused by a lack of disability awareness and confidence of staff members.

This free app from App Store or Google Play Store allows you to request visits to participating venues, indicating the areas you need customer service to have awareness of and the specific assistance you require. Venues are notified of the visit request and receive an overview of your condition and top tips to aid their interaction with you.

The aim is to facilitate the communication between customers and customer service staff to create long-lasting and mutually respectful relationships.

More information available at [www.neatebox.com/](http://www.neatebox.com/) and discover all that Neatebox has to offer and where the crossings can be found

## **Alternative Publications**

Please like us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/forwardmid/](http://www.facebook.com/forwardmid/) 

Forward Mid newsletters are available in large print on request from Eric Johnstone Tel: 0131-663-9471 or email [eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk](mailto:eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk) write to him at MVA, 4-6 White Hart Street, Dalkeith, EH22 1AE with your request. Electronic copies can be found on [www.forwardmid.org.uk](http://www.forwardmid.org.uk). The latest Firefox browser has the reader symbol  in the address bar, click and select narrate from left menu. The latest Safari Browser has the reader symbol  but does not read aloud. These only work on websites without errors. If you require help please contact Forward Mid and we will arrange to help you.

**Edited by Iain Tait for Forward Mid**