

**Forward  
Midlothian  
Disabled People**

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

**Forward  
Mid**

*Equality - Diversity - Inclusion*

## **Winter Ready in Midlothian 2020**

This special newsletter contains some advice and tips to prepare us for this winter.



# **Forward Mid-Supporting Disabled People**

Winter is just around the corner and, as we all know this winter is shaping up to be like no other winter we've experienced before. Notwithstanding the weather, we all have the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic to face as well.

For a number of months, many disabled people will have spent extended periods of time in their home environment shielding or respecting Government advice to stay at home. For many of us this has come at a cost – the deterioration of our health and well-being as a consequence of prolonged isolation particularly those who live alone. If we haven't already, we must now think about what we can do to preserve our physical and mental health along with that of our families, friends, neighbours and work colleagues over the coming winter months.

Forward Mid's winter newsletter aims to give you helpful and practical advice including:- sources of support, creative ideas for good health and well-being, ideas for staying connected and ways of taking care and looking after yourself and those close to you.

We hope you find it useful, and we wish you a healthy safe and enjoyable winter season.



## **Lockdown Loneliness**

In Forward Mid's last winter newsletter we ran an article about loneliness during the winter and how getting through these days and months could be really tough for many people.

Fast forward a couple of months from this publication and we witnessed the arrival of covid-19 (coronavirus). That outbreak has made it harder to be with others. Contact with family and friends continues to be limited, and social and leisure activities are restricted, which can cause feelings of loneliness – particularly if you are advised to stay at home.

You might be missing family and friends, colleagues or other everyday connections you had. It's natural to feel like this, and you should not blame yourself for feeling like you are struggling, now or at any other time. Loneliness has no boundaries on whom it affects. It takes no heed of your age, wealth, race or religion – anyone can be overcome by this dreadful feeling.



Take age for example, before the outbreak of coronavirus 10% of the adult population said they were affected by loneliness. Shortly after the lockdown this more than doubled to 24%. Surprisingly, those aged 16 to 24 are the most likely to be 'lockdown lonely' – 50.8% of the population – whilst those aged 70 years and over were no less likely than average (24%) to report this.

What's the best way to get through this period of isolation? There are many strategies that you can employ to ensure your well-being and good mental health. Most of these involve either finding ways to distract yourself (keep busy.) or finding ways to connect with others (despite the circumstances).

Distraction works to help you avoid thinking about everything that is wrong, which is a risk factor for becoming depressed. In this way, taking on little projects or finding other forms of distraction

can help to keep your mood level.

In contrast, staying social in non-traditional ways can help you to feel less isolated and combat loneliness if you are unable to go places or interact socially with many people at this time, you might be wondering what you can do. The following is a link to a website which has lots of ideas on how to avoid loneliness during the coronavirus.

[www.verywellmind.com/how-to-cope-with-loneliness-during-coronavirus-4799661](http://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-cope-with-loneliness-during-coronavirus-4799661)

Getting through these winter days and months can be tough, physically and mentally. For some, the sense of struggle can overwhelm, and thoughts of ending life can take on hard edges. It is at times like these that those who are lonely – which is not always about being on your own – can find real support in talking to a stranger. Phoning someone at the Samaritans or Breathing Space can help bring light back into your life, hope back into your heart, and help you build a clear path which will take you through to the Spring which is coming next year.

Both the **Samaritans**  **116 123** and **Breathing Space**  **0800 83 85 87** offer free confidential support, listening and being there, for people who are anxious or towards the end of their tether. They will help you realise that you do matter, that the world does care about you, and that drawing on the strength of others at a time like this is proof positive that we can as a community help one another no matter how much darkness surrounds.

Jeff Adamson and Wlad Mejka, Forward Mid

### **Samaritans**

25 Torphican Street, Edinburgh EH3 8HX; 10:00 hrs to 22:00 hrs for a face to face chat  
24/7  **116 123**  [Jo@samaritans.org](mailto:Jo@samaritans.org)

It's worth noting that as this newsletter goes to print, there are some signs of optimism. Whilst the next few weeks and months may be challenging, the promise of new vaccines, new treatments, better testing and greater knowledge, offer causes for hope as we go into 2021.

### **Volunteer Midlothian – The Connect Project – Befriending Service**



The Connect Project is a befriending project and matches a person to a volunteer. At the moment, it is running as a telephone/online befriending service.

If you are feeling lonely or isolated and would like someone to have a blether/chat with on a regular weekly basis - over the coming months, please get in touch with Naomi at Volunteer Midlothian ( **07856 571076**).

## **Destress and Relax**

As we are still living in uncertain times due to Covid pandemic and winter on its way. It's very important we look after ourselves, especially. The Forward Mid team is very aware of our lives being unsettled and also living with various medical issues and just day to day stresses of life, so it's important we take time out of the day to be mindful and listen to our bodies.

A form of relaxation can just be ten minutes out of the day and find a technique or method you find useful. This can be sitting with our eyes closed and practicing breathing techniques or listen to a guided meditation, music, massage techniques or anything you may find that helps you.

We have put together some useful links as a guide to get started. Remember one persons relaxation type can be totally different to another persons, and that's ok.



YouTube has lots of videos and can be quite overwhelming, so we have listed some we like to use.

These are just recommendations:-

- ▶ Relaxing sounds
- ▶ Relaxing sleep music
- ▶ Mindful breathing meditation (5 minutes)
- ▶ Progressive muscle relaxation
- ▶ 5 – minute meditation you can do anywhere
- ▶ Daily calm 10 minute mindfulness meditation/be present

### **Ways to work around winter tiredness**

Do you find it harder to get out of bed when the mornings are darker and the temperature drops?

You may feel more tired and sluggish, you are not alone!!

Here are 5 tips to help prevent this with some easy solutions.

#### **LET THE LIGHT IN**

We need at least 15 minutes a day of sun light and over the winter months we can become more tired and this can effect your sleep cycle. Lack of sun light means the brain produces more of the hormone called melatonin, which makes you more sleepy. To prevent this happening let as much sun light in. Open curtains and blinds to get as much natural light in.

#### **GOOD SLEEP**

Sleep is such an important part for our bodies to do the things it needs to do while we sleep, so good sleep hygiene is so important. During the winter feeling sleepier does not mean we should sleep more as it can have the opposite effect and we feel more sluggish during the day. Aim for eight hours of sleep a night if possible and a bedtime routine is so important as you train the body to recognize a sleep routine. Try to go to bed at the same time and get up at the same time every day. Good sleep hygiene can include having your sleeping space comfortable, warm bedding and having the TV off will help. More information [www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/sleep-hygiene](http://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/sleep-hygiene)

#### **EXERCISE**

This will be the last thing on your mind in the winter months, but doing some form of activity will boost your energy levels and mood and will help with any sleep problems. Just trying to be mobile will help. It could mean going a walk out in the fresh air or some seated exercise. Yoga or some muscle stretches will give you a boost and make you feel good and you have achieved a task in your daily routine. Its what works for you.

## **Chair Exercise Workout.**

There are 6 exercises shown below. Start with a couple and build up as your strength and balance improves. Start by repeating each exercise 5 times and build up to 10 – or more if you feel steady, balanced and able.

If you are prone to pain, start slowly with only a few repetitions of exercise and build up slowly as you get stronger.

It is important to keep moving throughout the day. Limit your time sitting down, even if it's just walking from the back to the front of the house a few times each hour.

Don't listen to the news all day. Play some music that makes you smile and exercise to the music.

Regularly doing these strength and balance exercises will reduce your risk factors for having a fall. If you have a fall it is very easy to lose your confidence in doing everyday activities and that, in turn, has a knock on effect on your level of function and independence.

A fall can easily result in injury or worse still, a fracture which then results in needing to attend hospital. Avoiding having a fall in the first place is the key i.e. prevention, by staying as fit and as

active as possible and improving your strength and balance with these exercise below.

"An energy-boosting routine for wheelchair users that helps to increase upper body strength and ease joint stiffness."

## 20 Punches



Sit tall in a chair, bend your elbows and bring your fore arm as if to protect yourself and clench your fist, as fast as you can punch one hand forward rotating your shoulder to extend the reach and return to the protect position. complete up to 10 on each arm.

20 is the recommended number, do not rush as you can build your strength slowly.

## 20 Side Arm Raises

Sit tall in a chair, place your arms out to the side, raise both or one arm as high as you can manage. Breathe in through your nose. Hold for a few seconds and breathe out through your mouth while returning your arms to the side.



20 is the recommended number, do not rush as you can build your strength slowly.

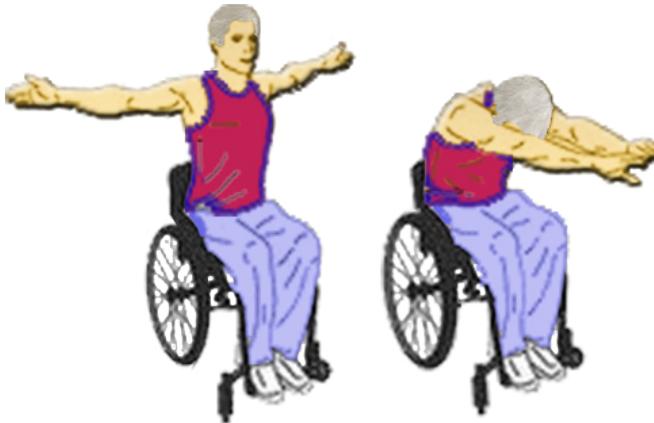


## 10 Raised Arm Circles

Sit tall in a chair, place your arms out to the side, keep arms as straight as possible, complete 5 rotations in a forward motion from the shoulder and complete 5 rotations in a backward motion. Remember to breathe.

10 is the recommended number, do not rush as you can build your strength slowly.

## **10 Dives**



Sit tall in a chair, place your arms out to the side, in one movement bring both arms into the front lean forward and tuck your head as far down as possible. Breathe in through your nose. Hold for a few seconds and breathe out through your mouth while returning your arms to the side and sit up.

10 is the recommended number, do not rush as you can build your strength slowly.

## **20 Overhead Punches**

Sit tall in a chair, bend your elbows and bring your fore arm as if to protect yourself and clench your fist, as fast as you can punch one hand upwards and return to the protect position. complete up to 10 on each arm.

20 is the recommended number, do not rush as you can build your strength slowly.



## **20 Chest Expansions**

Sit tall in a chair, place the palms of your hands together in outreach position. Slowly pull your arms as far back on each side as you can and push your chest out, breathe in through your nose. Hold for a few seconds and breathe out through your mouth while returning together in the outreach position.

20 is the recommended number, do not rush as you can build your strength slowly.



## **RELAX**

With just normal daily pressures of life combined with the winter months this can contribute to feeling stressed and this can effect how tired you are and cause you to feel fatigued. There is no magic cure but we can do things to reduce it. Relaxation, breathing, yoga or mindfulness are just some things you can add into your day to help you keep calm and feel more relaxed.

## **EATING THE RIGHT FOODS**

Getting the right diet daily will have a massive impact on how you feel also. During the winter months it can become easy to ditch the salads and fill up on starchy foods, but if you try and include fruits and vegetables in your winter comfort meals, it will increase your energy. Putting together a weekly meal plan and shopping list will give you that feel good factor of what you are eating and you want to enjoy what you eat.

## **FAMILY TIME OR FRIENDS TIME**

Back when all this started we were subjected to lockdown and forced to spend time indoors, We could merely telephone a friend or arrange a zoom call. With restrictions still happening and lots of uncertainty around Covid-19. This is the time to return to what we initiated. We got into a place of trying new things with the family. It could have been cooking together, doing some form of exercise or merely enjoying a movie together. Having that quality time with people that we would ordinarily be with but in a cheerful way. More so in the present circumstances we should try maintaining the things we enjoy or try new things. We all need that support because of the upcoming dreary months. We don't comprehend what our future will provide, everything is still so uncertain. Enjoying good mental health and trying to complete just one task you set a day will urge you to feel good. Look after yourself be kind to others and we will gather with you when it is safe to do so.

### **[www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing/stress/breathing-and-relaxation-exercises-for-stress](http://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing/stress/breathing-and-relaxation-exercises-for-stress)**

This gives a broad spectrum of different techniques, including:- a description of why do these, how often, preparation, breathing, simple exercise, quick muscle relaxation and cued relaxation.

### **[www.healthdirect.gov.au/relaxation](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au/relaxation)**

Relaxation and mental health. How relaxation can improve mental health. Techniques used and ways to include relaxation into your life.

### **[www.painconcern.org.uk](http://www.painconcern.org.uk)**

Explanation of stress, pain and relaxation. Why relaxation is so important for people with chronic pain. What techniques they use. Breathing techniques and a step by step guide for muscular relaxation.

There is so many different techniques for relaxation and mindfulness but here is the 3 most common types used for relaxation.

## **BREATHING – PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION-MINDFULNESS**

### **Red Cross**

If you are over 55 years old with a long term medical condition and need advice, information and practical support to live as independently as possible in your own home and/or access your local community please contact the Red Cross ☎ 0131-654-0340.

We can assist with for example - food shopping and prescriptions collections if older people have no one to support them, benefit checks particularly Attendance Allowance and Pension credits, applications for Blue Badges, energy advice, adaptations for the home such as external and internal grab rails, referral for welfare/befriending calls if you are feeling lonely and isolated etc





Wee Breaks in Midlothian is open for applications and can support any unpaid carer who is providing support for someone who lives in Midlothian (out with a long-term residential care setting).

An unpaid carer is anyone who provides or intends to provide care for another individual, whether this is a family member, neighbour or friend.

Given the current restrictions traditional breaks like holidays and weekends away may not be as easy to organise just now so we are encouraging carers and the staff who support carers to be creative and think of other ways to take a break in the house, garden or closer to home.

This might include, a day out for lunch or visiting a local tourist attraction, purchasing garden furniture/equipment, subscriptions to TV/movie channels, attending relaxation therapies or buying a kindle, reader or tablet. We are open to all ideas and will consider anything that ensures carers get some time away from caring role.

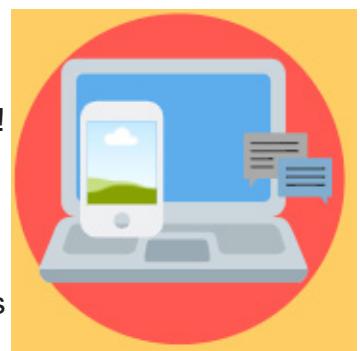
Applications are quick and easy to complete and health and social care staff and other supporting professionals are well placed to provide the support and encouragement that is needed to complete and application.

For more information and to find a copy of the application form and guidance notes visit [weebreaks.com](http://weebreaks.com). Alternatively, you can call VOCAL Midlothian on ☎ 0131 663 6869

### **Volunteer Midlothian – Connect Online**

Would you like help to keep connected while not leaving the house? Connect online can help you keep in touch with family and friends via email, social media, calling from your smartspeaker and many more ways!

Connect online can help setup online grocery shopping to have shopping delivered to your home. Looking for winter weather updates connect online can help you access Midlothian Council's website or Facebook for the latest information via your device. Connect online can help you access electronic books, audiobooks or newspapers and magazines for free online via the library apps?



Support is over the telephone or via video call - connect online can help set that up! Or join an online group via Zoom.

Contact: Una Paterson Email: [una@volunteermidlothian.org.uk](mailto:una@volunteermidlothian.org.uk) or mobile: ☎ 07856573694

### **Preparing for Winter**

Steps you can take to get ready for winter. Just make a household plan and collect together the items for an emergency kit that may be essential for you and your family.

It is time to think about winter-proofing your home. Do you know what action to take if a water pipe bursts? Do you know where your stop valve is and how to turn it off? Do you know how to turn your electricity supply off at the mains?

If cold weather is forecast, and during a cold snap, keep your heating on at a low temperature to

help prevent pipes from freezing.

Making your home energy efficient will make it cheaper and quicker to heat during cold weather. For further information, please call the Scottish Government's Home Energy Scotland Helpline on 0800 512 012.

Remember to check the terms of your household insurance policies to find out what cover you have for risks such as flood or storm damage or for the costs of temporary accommodation if your home is not habitable. Consider taking out insurance if you don't currently have any.

It is also important to not only prepare your home, but to prepare your body for winter! Preventative measures can be taken to avoid colds and flu.

People aged over 65 years or those who have a medical condition can check with their local medical practice to get advice on a seasonal flu vaccination.

Keep a supply of remedies at home. Paracetamol, ibuprofen or aspirin all help to reduce raised temperatures and relieve the aches and pains associated with coughs, colds and flu. Many cold and flu remedies already contain paracetamol, ibuprofen or aspirin. Using several products together can be very dangerous and can lead to an overdose. Products are labelled to indicate their contents, so always check before using them. If you do have a cough, cold or flu, drink plenty of water or other non-alcoholic liquids to replace the fluids lost after sweating. Keep warm and rest as much as you can.

It is best to periodically check that the medicines in your home are up-to-date. This is why it is important to keep them in their original containers. Always follow the instructions on the box or label. If you are unsure about taking any medicines, consult with your doctor or pharmacist first. To combat the cold, layers of thin clothing are far more effective than one thick layer. Choose clothes made of wool, cotton or fleecy synthetic fibres. Remember to wear a hat when outdoors and ensure you wear footwear with a good grip.

During the holiday season, most GP practices will be closed from the 25th until 28th December and from 1st until 5th January 2021.

Most pharmacies will also be closed during the holidays. Please refer to the NHS24 website, [www.nhsinform.scot/scotlands-service-directory/pharmacies](http://www.nhsinform.scot/scotlands-service-directory/pharmacies) for opening times.

Remember to order and collect any repeat prescriptions you may require in sufficient time prior to the holidays. Hospital Accident and Emergency services (A&E) are for emergency and urgent situations only. A&E is not an alternative to G.P.s. Please don't go to A&E if your doctor can't see you immediately or when your surgery is closed.

## Winter in the Community

In recent years severe winter weather struck quickly leaving some people vulnerable. A little planning now can help keep people warm and safe this winter.

Identify family or neighbours who may need an extra helping hand if severe weather strikes. Have their 'phone numbers to hand, and offer to help with grocery shopping or other essential tasks.



Equally if you think you may feel isolated or alone during a patch of bad weather, equip yourself with a few useful local contact numbers - a neighbour who can help, the local minister or your local community council.

Be a good neighbour and clear paths of ice and snow during cold weather if you are able to do so. A helping hand with this can make all the difference for people who may be unable to clear their own paths or who need to use local paths to access services.

Communities throughout the country are being urged to follow Scottish Water's winter code - a set of simple steps you can take to protect your pipes. Be prepared and heat, insulate and protect your home. Download the Scottish Water winter poster to display in your local community to help people know where to find more winter information and advice.

Your community can get ready for winter by agreeing what you, your neighbours and your colleagues can do on your own and collectively to minimise the effects of winter weather where you live and work.



You can volunteer to help others during winter by contacting Volunteer Midlothian ☎ 0131 660 1216. Midlothian Council will do all they can to keep essential services running during periods of severe weather. However, severe weather may cause some changes to routine local services, such as the temporary closure of schools, changes to refuse collections and a greater emphasis on gritting and route clearance. Information about local services is kept up to date on Midlothian Council's website, so it's important to check with them for the latest information and advice during severe weather.

Although not exhaustive, here is a list of items you may wish to consider storing in case of bad weather when you may not be able to leave your home. It is also worth considering supplies you may need in case of a power cut:

- ☺ Canned/no-cook food (bread, crackers, dried fruits);
- ☺ Drinking water and bottled water;
- ☺ Non-electric can opener;
- ☺ Prescription drugs and other medicine;
- ☺ First-aid kit;
- ☺ Rock-salt to melt ice on walkways;
- ☺ Flashlight and extra batteries;
- ☺ Battery-powered radio or wind up radio;
- ☺ Fully charged mobile phone, traditional plug-in phones will continue to work;
- ☺ Any pet food required;
- ☺ Long life or powdered milk;
- ☺ Books and magazines;
- ☺ Crosswords and puzzles;
- ☺ Emergency contact list
- ☺ Battery-powered lamps or lanterns (To prevent the risk of fire, avoid using candles);
- ☺ Blankets and extra clothes should your heating not work;
- ☺ Juice and enhanced waters in boxes and plastic bottles;
- ☺ Supply of unused cat litter or bag of sand to add traction on walkways;

# Keeping Affordably Warm this Winter



Midlothian  
Health & Social Care  
Partnership

## Extra Cash In your pocket

Many Disabled people do not receive the money they should.

You might be one of them.

Midlothian Council and Citizens Advice can check to see if you should be getting more. Even if you have savings you maybe entitled to more.

Midlothian Council and Citizen's Advice can help with:



DLA/PIP



Housing Benefits



Attendance Allowance



Council Tax Reduction

## Who Can Help?

No one will ask for your password, Leave a message and someone will call you back.

Midlothian Council  
📞 0131 270 8922

Citizen's Advice  
Dalkeith ☎ 0131 660 1636  
Penicuik ☎ 01968 675 259

Energy prices keep rising and many people will struggle this winter living in a cold home or will get into fuel debt.

There is help out there to support people who are struggling to keep their home warm. To identify if someone needs help ask these four key questions:

- ❖ Is their home cold?
- ❖ Is their home damp?
- ❖ Is their home draughty?
- ❖ Are they concerned about affording energy in their home?
- ❖ If the answer is 'yes' to any of these, what next?

Support is available through:

1) the Scottish Government's Energy Assistance Package. Just ring the Energy Saving Scotland advice centre on ☎ 0808 808 2282 for more information.

2) Changeworks' Warm and Well Midlothian provide support to people who struggle with heating costs. Warm and Well supports anyone in Midlothian whose health may be affected by living in a cold, damp or draughty home. Older people, young families and people with health difficulties are particularly vulnerable, so we work with health and social work professionals, amongst others. We provide tailored advice on affordable warmth through video calls, talks and events. VOCAL are offering free 45 minute appointment at a safe venue, through Changeworks for Energy Advice Surgeries once a month. Carers can book by email on [Midlothian@vocal.org.uk](mailto:Midlothian@vocal.org.uk) or on ☎ 0131 663 6869.

3) The Scottish Government says: "A person is living in fuel poverty if, to heat their home to a satisfactory standard, they need to spend more than 10 per cent of their household income on fuel."

If you would like to contact one of their advisors - email: [ask@changeworks.org.uk](mailto:ask@changeworks.org.uk)  
[www.changeworks.org.uk/client/midlothian-council](http://www.changeworks.org.uk/client/midlothian-council)



## Warm Home Discount Scheme

For winter 2020 to 2021, you could get £140 off your electricity bill through the Warm Home Discount Scheme.

The money isn't paid to you - it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill, usually between September and March.

The discount won't affect your Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel Payment.

### Pre-pay or pay-as-you-go meters

You can also qualify for the discount if you use a pre-pay or pay-as-you-go electricity meter.

Your electricity supplier can tell you how you'll get the discount if you're eligible, eg a voucher you can use to top up your meter.

### Eligibility

You qualify for the discount if on 12 July 2020 all of the following apply:

Your electricity supplier was part of the scheme

Your name (or your partner's) was on the bill

You were getting the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit (even if you get Savings Credit as well)



- \* Have a child living with you who was born on or after 01 April 2008;
- \* Receive Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance;
- \* Receive Disability Living Allowance or you receive Disability Living Allowance on behalf of a child living with you;
- \* Receive War Disablement Pension;
- \* Receive Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit;
- \* Receive an additional payment (such as the work-related activity group or support; component of Employment and Support Allowance) because of sickness or disability.



**Check with your supplier to see if you're eligible and how to apply.**

Electricity suppliers. The following suppliers are part of the scheme:

- Atlantic ☎ 0800 300 111
- British Gas ☎ 0800 072 8625 [www.britishgas.co.uk/energy/energy-saving/warm-home-discount.html](http://www.britishgas.co.uk/energy/energy-saving/warm-home-discount.html)
- Co-operative energy ☎ 0800 954 0693 [www.cooperativeenergy.coop/warm-home-discount-eligibility/](http://www.cooperativeenergy.coop/warm-home-discount-eligibility/) have an online tool to check eligibility.
- EDF Energy ☎ 0800 072 8625 [www.edfenergy.com/for-home/help-support/warm-home-discount](http://www.edfenergy.com/for-home/help-support/warm-home-discount)
- E.ON ☎ 0843 506 9877 [www.eonenergy.com/for-your-home/saving-energy/need-little-extra-help/warm-home-discount/warm-home-discount-form](http://www.eonenergy.com/for-your-home/saving-energy/need-little-extra-help/warm-home-discount/warm-home-discount-form)
- Equipower (Ebico) ☎ 0800 458 7689
- Equigas (Ebico) ☎ 0800 458 7689
- Manweb - see Scottish Power ☎ 0800 027 0072
- M&S Energy ☎ 0800 294 3263
- Npower ☎ 0808 172 6999 [customerservices.npower.com/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/490](http://customerservices.npower.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/490)
- OVO: Only online [www.ovoenergy.com/help/warm-home-discount](http://www.ovoenergy.com/help/warm-home-discount)
- Sainsbury's Energy - see British Gas
- Scottish Gas - see British Gas
- Scottish Hydro: ☎ 0800 300 111
- Scottish Power: ☎ 0800 027 0072 [www.scottishpower.co.uk/customer-services/support/warm-home-discount](http://www.scottishpower.co.uk/customer-services/support/warm-home-discount)
- Shell Energy Online only [help.shellenergy.co.uk/hc/en-us/articles/360001043758-How-do-I-apply-for-the-Warm-Home-discount-](http://help.shellenergy.co.uk/hc/en-us/articles/360001043758-How-do-I-apply-for-the-Warm-Home-discount-)
- Southern Electric: ☎ 0800 300 111
- SSE: ☎ 0800 300 111 [www.sse.co.uk/help/accessibility/warm-home-discount#item1](http://www.sse.co.uk/help/accessibility/warm-home-discount#item1)
- SWALEC: ☎ 0800 300 111
- Utilita: ☎ 03452 072 000
- Utility Warehouse: Online only [www.utilitywarehouse.co.uk/clubhouse/warmhome](http://www.utilitywarehouse.co.uk/clubhouse/warmhome)

## How to claim

If you qualify for the discount, you'll get a letter this autumn or winter telling you either:

- You don't have to apply - you'll get the discount automatically
- To apply by 29 January 2021 - the letter will tell you why and how

You'll receive your letter by 24 December at the latest.

## Severe Weather

SP Energy Networks manage the electricity network in Midlothian so if you have a power cut it's there engineers who attend to make repairs and they want to make sure that in the unusual event of a power cut that you are well supported.

They can be reached 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on either our Freephone number ☎ 0800 0929290 or on the new single emergency number of ☎ 105. This new number is free from all landlines and mobiles and will connect you to the correct network operator for your property, no matter who you pay your bills to.

If your electricity goes off unexpectedly there are a few checks that it's useful to do if you can, before you call us.

- Have your neighbours lost their supply?
- Are the streetlights out?

If electricity is crucial to your health (for instance if you use medical equipment at home) or if you are over 60, ask to be included on the Priority Services Register. You can do this via online at [www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/prioritieservices](http://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/prioritieservices) by phone ☎ 0330 10 10 444 or by email  [customercare@spenergynetworks.com](mailto:customercare@spenergynetworks.com) or by text to 61999.

SP Energy Networks on ☎ 0330 1010 154 can offer free & impartial energy efficiency advice and access to grants where available. It is important that everyone keeps in contact with any friends and neighbours who might require assistance during periods of severe weather. Older people particularly value the information and support they receive from neighbours during these times. Someone they know popping round can help to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.

If you would like to help any elderly or vulnerable people in your area, you could contact your local community council, Red Cross or Volunteer Midlothian.

Other key phone numbers in Midlothian:

<b>Useful Telephone list</b>	
Emergency Services	☎ 999
Non Emergency Police	☎ 101
NHS24	☎ 111
Midlothian Council	☎ 0131 270 7500/663 7211
Midlothian Social Work Services	☎ 0131 271 3900
National Gas Emergency Service (if you smell gas)	☎ 0800 111 999
Scottish Power Energy Networks	☎ 0800 092 92 90 / 105
Scottish Water	☎ 0845 601 8855
Midlothian Council Housing repairs	☎ 0131 663 7211
Midcare (Telecare) Midlothian	☎ 0131 271 3900
Carers VOCAL Midlothian	☎ 0131 663 6869
Dementia Helpline	☎ 0808 808 3000
Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living	☎ 0131 475 2350
British Red Cross	☎ 0131 654 0340
Midlothian Community Hospital	☎ 0131 454 1001
Midlothian Council – Housing Benefits	☎ 0131 271 3201
Midlothian Council – Direct Payments	☎ 0131 271 3900
Midlothian Council - Social Work (out of hours)	☎ 0800 731 6969
Midlothian Waste & Recycling	☎ 0131 561 5284
Deaf Blind	☎ 07715 421399
RNIB	☎ 0303 123 9999
Hearing aid batteries	☎ 0131 270 7500
Lothian Buses	☎ 0131 555 6363
Traveline Scotland	☎ 0871 200 2233

Dial-a-Bus Midlothian	0131 447 1718
Dial-a-Ride Midlothian	0131 447 9949
Citizens Advice Bureau Dalkeith	0131 660 1636
Citizens Advice Bureau Penicuik	01968 675 259
Breathing Space	0800 83 85 87
Samaritans	116 123
My Doctor	
My Plumber	
My Emergency Contact	

## Moving About

If there's heavy snow, police have powers to remove vehicles parked on bus routes.

"No parking" cones will be placed along specific lengths on the streets but only when prolonged and heavy snow is forecast.

A temporary one way system may also operate, if required, around the upper estates at Mayfield.

Lothian Buses can request assistance from Police Scotland to have a car or van removed if it is obstructing a bus route.

For maps of routes affected visit see below or [www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200270/severe\\_](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200270/severe_)

**The streets affected so far by the traffic regulations are:**

### Dalkeith:

**Woodburn Park:** 107, 35041, **Salters' Road:** 17021, **Woodburn Road:** 24032, 64068,  
**James Lean Avenue:** 107, 33039, 45,47, 75081, **Woodburn Avenue:** 105, **Eskbank Road:** Outside the Kings Park.

### Loanhead:

**Fountain Place:** West side of Fountain place from No. 10 27

### Gorebridge:

**Powdermill Brae:** 47049.

### Bonnyrigg:

**Polton Road West:** Entrance to Cameron Crescent and Gordon Avenue, Number 66 060.

**Lothian Street 0 Dundas Street:** Bonnyrigg High street Traffic control and Waverley Crescent Cockpen Road Roundabout.

**Polton Avenue Road:** Entrance to Polton Hall Sports complex, Outside Numbers 6A,6B, 6C, 6D. Also 20,21,22,23. Hawthornden Primary School, entrance to Argyll Place.

### Rosewell:

Carnethie Street: 49053, 73079, 1030107, 1370141 also bus terminus Rosewell.

Police have powers to remove vehicles parked on the coned areas. Please, do not park your cars



on these roads when the snows arrive.

Lothian Buses Website: [lothianbuses.com](http://lothianbuses.com) Twitter: [twitter.com/on\\_lothianbuses](https://twitter.com/on_lothianbuses)

## Bus “apps” for smartphones

Most bus operators have their own presence in the digital world, offering a range of information from journey planning to real time information about bus departure times from any/every bus stop in their operating area. “Transport for Edinburgh” embraces East Coast Buses, Edinburgh Trams, Lothian Buses and Lothian Country. The “Borders Buses” app gives info about the X62, X70, X95 and 339. “Prentice of Haddington” has details for their 111 service. “My Bus Edinburgh” is another App. It is restricted to information on East Coast Buses, Edinburgh Trams, Lothian Buses and Lothian Country.

Apps can be found in the Play Store, AppStore or Microsoft Store. These Apps can keep you up to date with bus information during bad weather.

“**Traveline Scotland**” is the national service for all modes of transport information. If you’re going further afield, there are links to Traveline Cymru and Traveline England.

Getting winter ready is something we all need to do – it only takes a few simple steps. It’s time to start thinking about how you could be affected by severe weather, and what you need to do now to be better prepared.

Whether it’s at home, in the community or behind the wheel, we all need to consider what might help. By thinking about how we can all be ready, we can help Midlothian be better prepared. Previous years severe weather caught many people out.

Make sure you will be able to have your footpaths and driveway cleared if severe weather strikes. It is a good idea to keep a shovel (specially designed snow shovels are particularly good) and some salt or grit at home. Remember to find out where your nearest local authority grit bin is located. Information about local services is kept up-to-date on Midlothian Council’s website ([www.midlothian.gov.uk](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk)), so it’s important to check for the latest information and advice during severe weather. Stay tuned to local radio stations such as Black Diamond and Forth FM as they also provide advice and updates during bad weather.



Clearing snow from a vehicle, clean the snow from the roof as well as the windscreens and also make sure your number plate is visible both front and rear,

Here are some recommended items to keep in your car over winter:

- 😊 A blanket,
- 😊 Warm winter clothing (including boots),
- 😊 Ice scraper and de-icer,
- 😊 Battery jump leads,
- 😊 A map for any unplanned diversions,
- 😊 A first-aid kit,
- 😊 A torch and spare batteries,
- 😊 A mobile phone and charger,
- 😊 A shovel for snow; food and drink that will last (and a warm drink in a flask before each journey).



## A message from Midlothian Council

Councillor John Hackett, Midlothian Council's Cabinet Member with responsibility for roads and winter services, said the council is, as usual, hoping for the best but preparing for the worst this winter, said:

"It's too early to say how severe the winter is going to be but our gritting teams have already been out treating priority routes such as main roads and roads to hospitals and schools."

"I think local people realise by now that with hundreds of kilometres of priority routes to look after we rely on residents, who are able, to clear paths outside their door."

"There are currently more than 460 grit bins placed throughout Midlothian for public use. We politely remind residents the grit is for footpaths and roads rather than private driveways."

"If adverse weather leads to the closure of a school or nursery then Midlothian Council will ensure all residents are informed as soon as possible, via its website, radio and social media, allowing everyone to plan ahead accordingly."

"We have all pulled together during the pandemic and I'm sure we'll all do the same in severe weather."

For more information, including gritting routes, visit [www.midlothian.gov.uk/severe-weather](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/severe-weather). For latest updates follow the council on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/MidlothianCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/MidlothianCouncil) and on Twitter at [twitter.com/@midhelp](https://twitter.com/@midhelp) [twitter.com/@midgov](https://twitter.com/@midgov)

Midlothian Council Coronavirus advice and support: [www.midlothian.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/coronavirus) or in Twitter [twitter.com/hashtag/KindnessMidlothian?](https://twitter.com/hashtag/KindnessMidlothian?)

Midlothian Libraries has many services to support older residents in the community. Currently we have 3 open branches – Dalkeith, Newtongrange and Penicuik Library. Alongside the branches, our Mobile Library is making weekly visits to areas without open branches, including Danderhall and Roslin. In every branch we are running a Reserve & Collect service; borrowers inform us of the books they want/like, then we arrange a pick up time for them. Think of us as your personal shoppers! We have a great selection of stock, including accessible reading stock including Large Print books and Audiobooks.



You can also get Hearing Aid batteries and Dog Bags when you visit, and apply for your National Entitlement Card and Blue Badge in branch.

If you don't want to venture out but miss reading, use our free eResources! Borrowers can read daily newspapers and the latest editions of your favourite magazines for free on PressReader. Or read books and listen to audiobooks on BorrowBox. Plus lots more!

To use our services or find out any information, including our opening times and Mobile Library Map

Call: ☎ 0131 663 2083 Dalkeith Library,

Call: ☎ 01968 664 050 Penicuik Library,

Call: ☎ 0131 663 1816 Newton Grange Library

Visit: [www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/427/libraries](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/427/libraries)

Email library.hq@midlothian.gov.uk

## Winter Information

### Social Media

Midlothian Council: Website: [www.midlothian.gov.uk/](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/)



Twitter: [@midhelp](https://twitter.com/@midhelp) and [@midgov](https://twitter.com/@midgov)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/MidlothianCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/MidlothianCouncil)



### Midlothian Voluntary Action

Website: [www.mvacvs.org.uk/](http://www.mvacvs.org.uk/)



Twitter: [@MVACommunity](https://twitter.com/MVACommunity) or [@MVACommunity](https://twitter.com/@MVACommunity)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/MidlothianVoluntaryAction](https://www.facebook.com/MidlothianVoluntaryAction)



### Other Essential Contacts

For all other essential contact details see the Ready Scotland Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/ReadyScotland](https://www.facebook.com/ReadyScotland)

**VOCAL** Christmas opening times; Midlothian Carer Centre will close at noon on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and re-open at 9am on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

**VOCAL** Midlothian has a Winter Programme of events, activities and support available to carers - ☎ 0131 663 6869 or email: [midlothian@vocal.org.uk](mailto:midlothian@vocal.org.uk)

## ■■■ A message from Police Scotland ■■■

### Winter Driving:

With winter approaching are you prepared for challenging driving conditions?

- Ensure you check the weather forecast prior to any journey.
- Check windscreen wiper fluid is topped up, your tyre tread is correct for driving and tyres are correctly inflated.
- Always clear any snow or ice from the windscreen and the rest of the vehicle prior to any journey.
- Consider packing a shovel, bottled water and blanket into the boot should you become stranded.
- If you have a mobile phone ensure it is fully charged, and make someone aware of your intended journey, as well as when you leave and arrive at your destination.

- If in doubt consider rescheduling any journey or travel plans if the weather is poor.

## **Home Security:**

As winter draws closer and the nights get darker remember to review your home security:

- Use timer switches on lights and radios to make it look as though your home is occupied.
- Ensure all your windows and doors are secure before going to bed.
- If possible use security lighting at the front and back of your property.
- Make sure all garden tools and ladders not being used are locked away and secure.
- Use a good quality lock on any garden sheds or out buildings.
- Make a note of all makes and serial numbers of your property.



**POLICE**  
**SCOTLAND**

Keeping people safe

**POILEAS ALBA**

## **Scams:**

Anyone can be the victim of doorstop crime and cold callers to their property.

Be aware of the following when answering your door:

- If in doubt; keep them out
- Keep front and back doors locked
- Use a door chain or bar
- Only let callers in if they have an appointment and you have confirmed they are genuine
- Always ask for ID
- Don't keep large sums of money at home
- Ensure your doors and windows are locked
- Look out for those in your community
- Report any suspicious, Call 999 and ask for the police if you feel scared or threatened.

## **Getting Help With your Health**

Flu is serious. With coronavirus (COVID-19) around it's more important than ever to get the seasonal flu vaccine to protect yourself, others and the NHS.

Shielding patients should have received a letter from their GP saying they are eligible for the shielding clinics. Those most at risk will be prioritised.

### **Who will be offered the flu vaccine**

Vaccination for the different groups has now passed. However, if you have not received your seasonal flu vaccine call 0800 22 44 88 or check at your local pharmacy.

The following groups are eligible for the flu vaccine in the first phase began in October this year:

- All primary school children,
- Children aged 2 to 5 (children must be aged 2 years or above on 1 September 2020 and not yet in school),
- Anyone aged 65 and over (by 31 March 2021),
- Anyone with an eligible health condition,
- Pregnant women,
- Healthcare workers,
- Unpaid and young carers,
- Those living in the same home as people previously shielding from coronavirus,
- Social care workers who provide direct personal care,



The second phase is planned to begin in December, and will include those aged 55 to 64 (by 31 March 2021) who would not usually be eligible.

### **What if I'm not in one of the eligible groups?**

If you're 16 years old, or over, and not in one of the eligible groups for the free flu immunisation, you can get the vaccine in many community pharmacies for a fee.

Midlothian residents can either go on their practice website or NHS Inform ([www.nhsinform.scot/flu](http://www.nhsinform.scot/flu)) for accurate information on this years flu clinic. They can also call NHS Inform on ☎ 0800 22 44 88

## Where you can go for help with your health

Think about what your health problem is before you phone your GP and try one of these alternatives:

### NURSE

Nurses are experienced in dealing with many conditions such as high blood pressure, asthma and diabetes and a range of minor illnesses such as chest, urine and ear infections and skin conditions. Many can prescribe medication and arrange investigations. Nurse appointments are often easier to get than a doctor's.

### PHARMACIST

You can get free advice for minor illnesses such as flu, sore ears and throats, acne, constipation, eczema and allergies, hayfever, indigestion, mouth ulcers, warts and stopping smoking. You may also be able to register for free treatment – ask your pharmacist if you qualify. You can also see your pharmacist in private.

Defibrillators are now positioned around Midlothian for the Public to use when someone is in Cardiac Arrest. If you need to use a Defibrillator in an emergency, the 999 call handler will often know where the closest one is and inform you, you will also require the code to access the Defibrillator. By switching on the Defibrillator, it will immediately start to give a series of visual and verbal prompts, informing you of what you require to do. Follow these prompts informing you what to perform.



**NHS 24** can provide you with health information and self-care advice. Call ☎ 111 twenty-four hours a day.

**NHS Inform** ☎ 0800 22 44 88 or [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot) provides comprehensive health information.

Doctors Surgeries are closed over Christmas and New Year, make sure you have enough medication and get your prescription in to the Pharmacy and leave enough time to collect it.

## GP services

Coronavirus has changed the way all our health services work. GP practices are now open, and have been through the pandemic, but services are being delivered differently.

If you need an appointment, contact your GP practice. It may be something you can safely manage yourself, so you may want to get advice from the NHS Inform website, or your local pharmacist, before getting in touch.

Most appointments are being carried out over the phone, or through NHS Near Me, but if you need a physical examination, you'll need to see your GP in person. Practice staff will let you know the options available to you when you call.

If you have a face to face appointment, your GP practice will look a bit different, but please follow the guidance to help reduce the risk of infection.

Some services that happen at GP practices might take a bit longer due to COVID, such as having

blood taken by a phlebotomist.

These changes are in place to protect you, your family and staff. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

For more information visit [nhsinform.scot/gp](https://nhsinform.scot/gp).

## Care for people with dementia – Alzheimer Scotland

Alzheimer Scotland Midlothian are doing their utmost to support people with dementia, their carers and families at this time. Alzheimer Scotland have adapted our services in different ways.

Alzheimer Scotland are preparing to provide a safe, small-scale day service and, where appropriate, one-to-one wellbeing home support.

Alzheimer Scotland have moved many of our physical activities online and provide advice and emotional support by phone and video call to ensure people feel supported and connected.

Members of the digital Tea and Blether group

agreed that the service has made a big difference to them. One member said she “looks forward to a Friday to put the world to rights”; another reflected how important it has been to keep in touch so that “when we get back to meeting in person it won’t feel awkward”. Members provide each other with fantastic peer support and share lots of laughs, helping to prevent isolation and improve well-being.

To make sure people can still access vital support Alzheimer Scotland have increased the number of staff and volunteers supporting our 24-hour Freephone Dementia Helpline - ☎ 0800 808 3000. If people from Midlothian call the helpline they can be connected with staff in Alzheimer Scotland Midlothian Locality Team.

Finally, Alzheimer Scotland have created a Coronavirus Information Hub on Alzheimer Scotland website with podcasts and leaflets on subjects like stress and distress, eating well and care home guidance. Go to [www.alzscot.org](http://www.alzscot.org) or contact our local team on ☎ 0131 654 1114.



## When winter comes.....

This year 2020 has been a strange old year.

No football, No theatres, And no going out for a beer

But as summer draws to the end, And the nights get shorter

The cold and the dark, but we have nothing to fear

We start to look forward. We never look back

Life will be full of abundance and never of lack of

Whatever happens in the world out with our control

Just remember I always have your back

Love is what matters

Those feelings of peace when your all cosy and warm in a nice fluffy fleece

The wind and the rain hits off the window pane

Its quite relaxing hearing the sound of the big sized hailstones hitting the ground

You are safe and well And all is good, Life is treating you well Whatever your mood,  
We all go through periods of highs and lows, Our moods change like the rain and snow  
There is something magical about the Autumn leaves  
Dogs running through the ones that fell from the trees  
The colours change brown and bright, The early darkness taking us into the night  
Do you remember the winters without TV When I was young it was black and white Sat in the  
corner almost out of sight  
No Netflix or Sky, No remote control  
My mum and dad reading books under the flickering light  
My brother and I with our eyes closed with fear  
Watching Dr Who on Saturday nights filled with fright  
Were the cybermen real I was never sure. But my screams were real and my face went white.  
Winter time brings its own memories and charms  
Its time for the seasons to change  
And remind us all, good times are ahead for one and all  
So im thankful with a grateful heart  
When things come to an end, Then they restart  
So love each other and do our best  
Spread peace and happiness to all the rest  
No fights no wars, Lets all be true  
Love other people, Like they love you

**Graham Thomson**

## After the Snow Comes the Thaw

After a period of severe winter weather, the thaw comes as a relief. But it has its own risks and challenges. You can prepare for these by taking some simple steps and keeping up to date on the current situation.

### Burst Pipes

In the coldest days of winter the water pipes around the house can freeze. As the water turns to ice it expands, this will cause the pipe to burst, when it defrosts and the ice has turned back to a liquid is the first indication you have a burst pipe. Make sure you know where to locate the stop valve which controls the water supply entering your home. If you suspect you have a burst pipe, turn off the water supply immediately.

### Icicles and excess snow on roofs

If your property has large amounts of overhanging snow or large icicles, try to make anyone entering it aware of the risk. If you are confident that it is safe to do so, you should try to remove overhanging icicles that pose a threat on your own property - but ladders should not be used in icy conditions, nor should you hang out of windows to reach roof. It is important to let children know of the risks of falling icicles - and of the danger of throwing snow or any other objects onto (or at) icicles or snowy roofs.

## Alternative Publications

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

Forward Mid newsletters are available in large print on request from Eric Johnstone ☎ : 0131-663-9471 or  [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  Reader 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**