

Forward

Midlothian

Disabled People

www.forwardmid.org.uk



Equality - Diversity - Inclusion

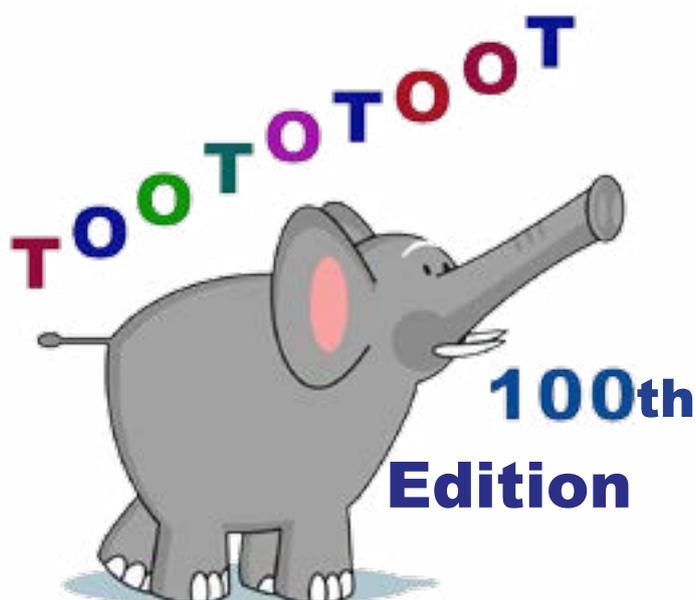
Celebrating a Milestone: Forward Mid - Disability Equality Forum's 100th Newsletter Edition

Reaching this 100th edition of the Forward Mid newsletter is more than just a milestone; it's a testament to the power of information, advocacy, and community support. Since its inception, the Forward Mid newsletter has been a vital resource, championing access to reliable information and fostering a supportive network for disabled people.

Over the years, this publication has evolved into more than just a newsletter. It serves as a platform where voices are heard, stories shared, and critical issues highlighted. From policy updates and accessibility innovations to personal narratives and community events, every edition has contributed to a broader understanding and a stronger push for disability rights and equality for Disabled People living in Midlothian.

As we celebrate this remarkable achievement, we reflect on the dedicated individuals behind each article, the contributors who shared their experiences, and the readers whose engagement supports and fuels our mission. This milestone reaffirms the importance of accessible, inclusive communication in promoting equality and empowering disabled individuals. A special mention to Iain Tait, who creates and edits each edition.

Looking ahead, Forward Mid remains committed to enhancing access to good information and support. Here's to the next 100 editions, continuing to inspire, inform, and advocate for Disabled people as equal citizens, communities and a world where everyone's voice is equal, valued and heard.



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Celebrating with our Community and Partner Organisations

As part of our celebration of 100th edition We invited some Midlothian partner organisations to offer a few words describing their experience of working with Forward Mid. Here are some of the responses.

Colin Beattie MSP

Congratulating on reaching the remarkable milestone of 100 editions of the Forward Mid Disability Newsletter. Thank you for supporting disabled people and championing the rights and lived experiences.

For 100 editions over many years you have informed and empowered the community to get the help and support they need.

“I look forward to seeing the next 100.”

Colin Beattie MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament Midlothian North and Musselburgh

Jeremy R Balfour

I am grateful for the work Forward Mid produces and the consistent, positive impact it has on disabled people across Midlothian. Their newsletters are a wonderful source of up-to-date information, helping people live more connected, meaningful and healthy lives in our communities. It has been a pleasure to work in partnership with Forward Mid and to participate in their public events through the Midlothian Disabled People's Assembly.

As an Independent MSP, I take seriously my responsibility to speak and vote according to my conscience and the values I believe best serve the people of Scotland. Supporting organisations like Forward Mid, whose commitment, professionalism and collaborative approach make a real difference in the lives of disabled citizens, reflects those same values of compassion, integrity and respect for all. As I stand for re-election this year, I will continue to champion policies and partnerships that uphold these principles, and I wholeheartedly recommend Forward Mid's work to anyone seeking to empower and support disabled people in Midlothian.

Jeremy R Balfour MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for the Lothian Region

Midlothian Climate Action

We have loved working with forward Mid over the last year, discussing the intersection of climate change and disability. The effects of climate change, such as very cold or hot weather and flooding, will particularly affect the disabled people in our communities. It was fantastic talking to the members of forward mid on how this extreme weather has affected their lives. In the future, we look forward to working with forward mid on making our communities more accessible and resilient.



As part of our outreach and collaborative work over the past few years our Service Development Manager Elizabeth has enjoyed participating in the Midlothian Disabled People's Assembly events providing information stalls in order to highlight HcL's Dial-A-Bus, Dial-A-Ride and group transport services in Midlothian. Our services support people of any age who experience mobility challenges. This includes people with disabilities, additional support needs and health issues (long term or short term) . It is therefore always a pleasure and a fantastic opportunity to come along and have a chat in person. These public events are always well organised, really busy and have a great atmosphere with contributions from lots of groups and organisations. It is always great to see so many disabled people from across Midlothian popping in to get useful and up to date local information.

We have also been delighted to contribute a number of written articles and updates for the Midlothian Directory for Disabled People and the Forward Mid Disability Equality Newsletter which are an excellent source of information and a very interesting read.

Taking part in these events and publications has been of great benefit to us resulting in us raising our profile, increasing enquiries and receiving invitations to visit a variety of local groups to further share our information.

We are grateful to Forward Mid for inviting us to participate in their positive approach to supporting a good life for disabled people in Midlothian. Thank you!



Specsavers

It has been a real privilege to work alongside Forward Mid over the past few years. Your commitment to amplifying the voices of disabled citizens across Midlothian and creating spaces where lived experience drives meaningful change has always stood out. I've valued every opportunity to participate in Midlothian Disabled People's Assembly and to represent Specsavers Home Visits to raise awareness for the access available at home for eyecare and hearing needs within the community. It is great to be part of a collective effort toward a more inclusive and connected community. Congratulations on your 100th edition and thank you for the vital work you continue to lead.

Warmest Regards Laura and the team



“I would like to start by saying congratulations to Forward Mid for their 100th newsletter, these have lots of great information for people in them and shares all the excellent work that Forward Mid do over the years.

As Local Area Coordinators in Midlothian, we have had the privilege to work alongside Forward Mid. We work in partnership with the Café Connect which runs monthly and enables individuals to come along and meet new friends. We also attend regular Forward Mid meetings, which enables us to contribute to work that is currently going on. We have also been involved with the Midlothian Disabled People's Assembly over the years. This has always been a great event to be part of. These are well attended and gives us the opportunity to raise the profile of Local Area Coordination in Midlothian and share

what it is we do.

Over the years we have also contributed to the newsletter with written pieces of work that we are doing as LACs and advertise our service in the Midlothian Forward Mid Directory, which we have shared widely with people we work with as this is a great source of information for people.

Local Area Coordination are looking forward to continuing working in partnership with Forward Mid in the future. Thank you for all you do as a team, and all the excellent work you achieve in making sure that people with a disability, have a voice and can live a fulfilled life in their community.

Midlothian LAC Team, Stuart, Caroline and Maria.”

VOCAL

VOCAL (Voice of Carers Across Lothian) is proud to have worked in partnership with Forward Mid for many years. The Midlothian Disabled People's Assembly is a much-needed forum, offering a welcoming and positive atmosphere for everyone.

Congratulations to everyone at Forward Mid on reaching your 100th newsletter! You're an essential part of the Midlothian community, and we look forward to reading many more editions for years to come.

Naomi - Vocal

CAB

What an incredible milestone! Forward Mid continues to deliver powerful, practical, and inspiring information that supports both the public and Third Sector organisations across our community.

Your hard work, passion, and dedication shine through every edition — and it makes a real difference.

Here's to the next 100 — bigger, bolder, and brighter than ever!

Julie Podet - Bureau Manager

Congratulations to ForwardMid on reaching your newsletter century! That's 100 instances of sharing insightful and useful information.

Callum Madge - EIF

The work you do is an invaluable way for us to connect with people, and to share resources and information about how we are working to make the Edinburgh International Festival a more welcoming and accessible experience. You have also helped us make connections with other local companies, such as Lothian Council for Inclusive Living, enabling us to build on the work we do and ensure it best supports people.

Thank you for everything you do and I look forward to reading the 200th Newsletter.

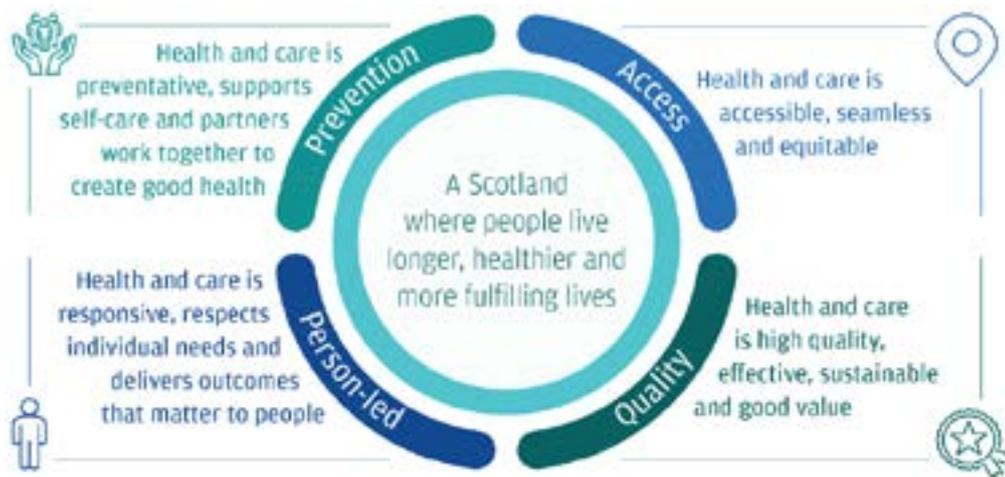
Midlothian Libraries

“Midlothian Libraries are delighted to celebrate Forward Mid’s 100th edition of the Disability Equality Newsletter. Over many years, we have valued our partnership with Forward Mid and the opportunity to take part in the Midlothian Disabled People’s Newsletter and Assembly. Forward Mid and Midlothian Libraries have the shared aim of providing clear, practical and useful information and we are proud to work alongside you in supporting a more connected, informed, and accessible future for our communities. Congratulations on this milestone and thank you for the vital work you continue to do.”

Reforming social care

Carers to help shape local services

Unpaid carers, disabled people and people with lived experience of social care will have a say on local services after Scottish Parliament regulations come into force.



Social Care Minister Tom Arthur tabled an order giving service users and third sector organisations a vote during integration joint board decision making. This ensures their perspectives carry equal weight in shaping decisions about services, such as care in the community to enable people with disabilities or long term conditions to remain at home.

The 31 boards bring together the NHS and local councils with key community and service representatives to oversee planning and delivery of social care and community health services. Until now only members appointed by the NHS health board and local councils can vote.

The draft regulations will come into force in September after the Scottish Parliament’s Health, Social Care and Sport Committee’s scrutiny of the legislation concluded today.

Mr Arthur said:

“I am determined to ensure those who access and support community health and social care services have an equal say in making decisions that affect their communities.

“These regulations extend voting rights to unpaid carers, service users and third sector representatives, collectively representing the voice of lived experience. It is only fair that these voices carry equal weight alongside other members - to help ensure local services are funded properly to meet the needs of people.

“People with lived experience provide valuable insight into challenges and opportunities which should be considered during planning. This change will bring decision making closer to the people we all serve. We expect to see more inclusive, collaborative and improved choices as a result.”

From The Chair

Forward Mid's aim for 2026 is to continue being dedicated to empowering our disabled community. We want to continue working collaboratively to support growth and opportunity alongside with our many organisations we work with, and for future organisations to get involved with.

Whether you're looking for support, connection, or opportunity, Forward Mid is here and we welcome new members to our team.

Sheree Muir (Chair) and Ted



Forward Mid Newsletter.

New sign up to receive Forward Mid Newsletter.

Forward Mid Newsletter and Contact database is to be updated

If you would like to receive a free copy of the Forward Mid bi-monthly newsletter, please Email IainTait_01@protonmail.com or contact us via the website.

Please state the Your Name, Email address where to send it and an end date.

You can write to us at Forward Mid, MCA, 4-6 White Hart Street, Dalkeith, EH22 1AE with your request.

Treasure Tree

Treasure Tree is VOCAL's social enterprise that helps people access affordable second-hand mobility and accessibility equipment.

Are you looking for mobility aids to support your caring role, and help the person you care for to be more independent? Treasure Tree is our shop and social enterprise where you can buy scooters, wheelchairs, hoists and more at discounted rates.

These are second-hand items donated by other unpaid carers who want to help us promote



independence, safety and quality of life for carers and the people you care for.

You can browse our offers on eBay or in person at our shop in Ocean Terminal. The shop is on the first floor, near the internal lift (you can access this floor easily by parking in car park level C). Our opening hours are Monday to Thursday, 10am to 4pm.

If these times don't suit you, you can also book an appointment by emailing Debbie : sell@vocal.org.uk or calling us on ☎: 0131 622 6666



TreasureTree
Keep it local. Sell through VOCAL

We sell and accept donations of:

- Mobility scooters and electric wheelchairs (either working ones, or ones needing new batteries)
- Manual wheelchairs
- Hoists
- Commodes or shower chairs/stools
- Riser recliner chairs
- Walkers and rollators
- Specialist footwear in good condition
- Other items related to mobility, disability, care or improving quality of life.

For the full list of what we currently have in stock, please visit the : [Treasure Tree eBay](#) page.

we can only accept donations of items which have been bought privately. If you have borrowed an item from a Physio or Occupational Therapist (OT), these should go back to your local council: Midlothian Council social work : SWContactOfficers@midlothian.gov.uk

How the process works

If you would like to donate or sell items to us, please contact : sell@vocal.org.uk with the details. For larger items, we may be able to pick them up for you.

We will then photograph the items, list them on : [Treasure Tree eBay](#) page, and display them in our shop in Ocean Terminal.

When donating an item to be sold by Treasure Tree, you can choose whether you'd like to receive up to 50% of the profit. The other 50% will go back to VOCAL to fund support services for local carers.



MIDLOTHIAN DISABLED PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY

DIRECTORY LAUNCH 2026

Join us at our Assembly, where you can learn about services, support, and resources that support a good life for all disabled people and people with long term conditions in Midlothian.

May 2026



ST JOHN'S & KING'S PARK CHURCH

**31 Eskbank Road, Dalkeith, Midlothian, EH22 1HJ
(opposite Morrisons)**

Pop in, have a browse of our information stalls, and collect your free copy of the newly updated Directory for Disabled People and People with Long-Term Conditions.

There will be staff and representatives from various organisations that can assist you to achieve the kind of life you want to live. You can drop in on the day, but if you can let us know your coming, please do – it helps with organisation and catering!

Find out more:  : info@mvacvs.org.uk  : www.forwardmid.org.uk



Drop In



Free of Charge

Linking Loanhead

Loanhead Library

- **Wednesday 11/03/26 & 25/03/2026 - 14.00hrs to 16.00hrs,**
- **Wednesday 18/04/26 & 22/04/2026 - 14.00hrs to 16.00hrs,**
- **Wednesday 06/05/26 & 20/05/2026 - 14.00hrs to 16.00hrs,**

CAFÉ CONNECT

Dalkeith Arts Centre

- **Thurs 05/03/26 - 14.00hrs to 15.30hrs,**
- **Thurs 02/04/26 - 14.00hrs to 15.30hrs,**
- **Thurs 07/05/26 - 14.00hrs to 15.30hrs,**

All Welcome
- Inclusive for
everyone.

We focus on what
can do not what
they can't do.
Plan together.

Meet or make
friends and share a
blether, take part
in a quiz or board
games.
Find out what's
available with LAC.

Link in with Local Area
Co-ordination, Enable
Communities, Based on a
vision of a society where
disabled people are valued
as full and equal members
of the community



Community Connections

Connecting Disabled People, those with long term health conditions and carers to peer support focused on all areas of social care



Online via Zoom

Our peer support groups provide a safe space to connect with others through shared experiences with the aim to strengthen knowledge, skills and confidence in all aspects of Self-Directed Support (SDS) and available social care options.

The sessions are welcoming, relaxed and informal. We focus on bringing people together to discuss the aspects of SDS that matter to them.



Visit Eventbrite

SCAN HERE ↙



Upcoming Dates Midlothian



SDS Peer Support Group

**31
MAR**

SDS Peer Support Group

Online via Zoom
11.00am - 1.00pm

**26
MAY**

SDS Peer Support Group

Online via Zoom
11.00am - 1.00pm

CONTACT US

PSL@lothiancil.org.uk

Our Open Meetings

Forward public meetings are open to everyone. Held monthly in the Justinlees Inn, 1-5 Dalhousie Road, Dalkeith, EH22 3AT. From 12:00 hrs (noon) until 13:30 hrs. Forward Mid look forward to welcoming you. Our team meetings have a positive social aspect as well as engaging discussions around Forward Mid priorities and always focusing on work we are involved in to promote a better life for Disabled people living in Midlothian.

Dates:

17th March 2026

14th April 2026

12th May 2026

16th June 2026

14th July 2026

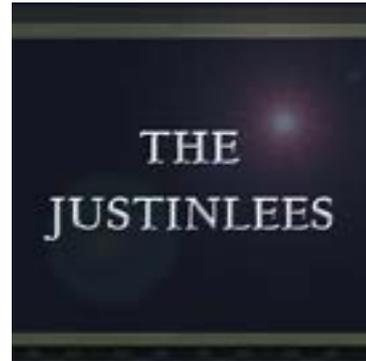
18th August 2026

15th September 2026

13th October 2026

17th November 2026

All Public Meeting held in



If you cannot manage to attend a public meetings, we will also have team meetings on zoom, so we can try cover everyone Let us know .in advance so we can email you a zoom link.

Objection To Wheelie Bins

An Email to midlothian council objecting Wheelie Bins

I am writing to inform you that I object to green wheelie bins in Midlothian. At present there is insufficient room on the foot paths and the village to allow the safe passage of perambulators and wheelchairs. As a wheelchair user who has expressed his displeasure to the existing amount of wheeled bins already being used.

Limiting my accessibility is a breach of my human rights, so before issuing a new Wheelie Bins please widen the footpaths to the minimum width which the highways act



1980 state as 3 meters. The east side of Powdermill Brae does not come close, The footpath outside 87 Birken side is the same, the footpaths on Station Road, Gorebridge east side does not exist. The footpaths on east side of Gorebridge main street, near to bus stop already have wheeled bins blocking the foot path. Meaning I have to manoeuvre the wheeled bin onto highway to get past.

There is an idea lets put all wheeled bins on the public highway.

There has been no consultation with people living in the villages in Midlothian. There needs to another method of collecting waste that does not block footpaths.

This is just a waste of money.

Iain Tait

A reply from Councillor Ellen Scott, Ward 6, Midlothian South

Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Young People

I have now had a reply from the Head of Placemaking. As you have copied the email to the appropriate contact [the green bin email address] you should get a response in due course. However, he has asked the Service Manager to look into your complaint and make sure we are doing everything we can to balance the need to collect refuse and recycling while we maintain access especially for those with mobility limitations.

Please let me know that you have had a reply. I do appreciate how difficult it is for wheelchair users and would like to ensure we are doing as much as we possibly can to make journeys as easy as possible.

Kind regards

Ellen

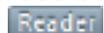
There is also a petition on Facebook about Midlothian Bin Collection

 : www.change.org/p/stop-midlothian-council-from-changing-grey-bin-collection-frequency?recruited_by_id=dceef0c0-ef0f-11f0-9ca9-cd935b237def&utm_source=share_petition&utm_campaign=psf_promote_or_share&utm_term=psf&utm_medium=facebook

Have you been affected by this issue? Please get in touch.!

Alternative Publications

Please like us on Facebook www.facebook.com/forwardmid/

Forward Mid newsletters are available in large print on request from Eric Johnstone ☎ : 0131-663-9471 or ✉ Eric.Johnstone@MCA.scot write to him at MCA, 4-6 White Hart Street, Dalkeith, EH22 1AE with your request. Electronic copies can be found on 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, Sheree Muir and Tamzin McDonald for Forward Mid