

Forward

Midlothian

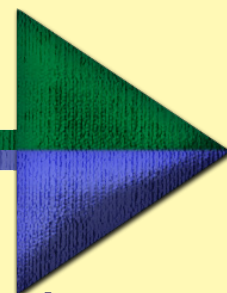
Disabled People

www.forwardmid.org.uk

Forward

Mid

Equality - Diversity - Inclusion



Winter Newsletter 2025

This newsletter is full of information on what support is available for disabled people during winter – for many the most challenging season of the year. Inside you'll find out about local organisations that can give you practical help – from saving money on your energy bills to keeping your home and bank balance safe. There are tips on how you can look after your own physical and mental health as well as how you can help yourself and your neighbours with an extensive list of emergency contact numbers.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of winter is keeping in contact with people regularly and safely, feeling the warmth that a good conversation can have. Bad weather can put paid to physically meeting people but, inside Forward Mid's Winter newsletter you'll find options that can overcome this barrier.

We wish you a healthy and safe winter. Be as active as you can be. Keep talking. Take advantage of the support that is available. Take care.

Preparing for Winter

Steps you can take to get ready for winter. Make a household plan and prepare an emergency kit by collecting essential items that you or your family might need.

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



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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 ☎ 0808 808 2282.

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.

Looking after yourself

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. **Be careful not to combine products which exceed the maximum daily limit.** 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 or packaging. 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.

NHS

During the holiday season, most GP practices will be closed on the 25th and 26th December 2025 and on 1st, 2nd and 3rd January 2026.




Most pharmacies will also be closed during the holidays. Please refer to the NHS24 website,  : 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.

NHS Pharmacy First Scotland is an NHS service provided by your local community pharmacy. If you have a minor illness, a pharmacy is the first place you should go for advice.

Pharmacists are experts in medicines and can help with minor health concerns.

To find out more call the NHS Inform helpline on ☎ : 0800 22 44 88 (calls from a landlines are free), or visit NHS Inform website  : www.nhsinform.scot


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.

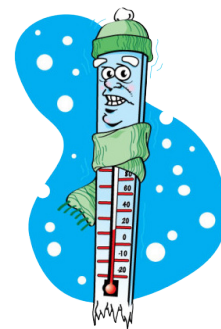
Communities throughout the country are being urged to follow Scottish Water's Winter Wise - a set of simple steps you can take to protect your pipes and protect your home. Read Scottish Water's Winter Wise at  : www.yourwateryourlife.co.uk/campaign/winter/.

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 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;
- ☺ Books, magazines, crosswords and puzzles;
- ☺ Fully charged mobile phone, traditional plug-in phones will continue to work;
- ☺ Any pet food required;
- ☺ Long life or powdered milk;
- ☺ 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;

Being prepared, staying safe indoors, and checking in on one another can make all the difference when the weather turns.

Keeping Affordably Warm this Winter

Many people will struggle this winter by living in a cold home or getting 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 is Scotland's leading environmental charity delivering solutions for low carbon living and supporting people keep affordably warm at home.

Changeworks are currently working in Midlothian to help people tackle fuel poverty issues and can help with things like: energy efficiency, billing issues, debts, warm home discount applications, ETC.!

If you would like help from a Changeworks Energy Advisor, you can fill out the  : **online referral** form or call Changeworks freephone at ☎ : 0800 008 7766, available 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday.

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 - Online form  : www.changeworks.org.uk/contact/  : www.changeworks.org.uk/

Going Digital

Landlines are going DIGITAL.

Many households are moving from traditional copper landlines to new digital phone services. Unlike the old system, digital phones may not work if there's a power cut, which often happens in storms. If you rely on a landline, check with your phone provider about back-up options – for example, a battery unit (power bank) – and keep a charged mobile phone or handy just in case.

Open reach will be switching off the existing analogue network by 31st January 2027 and most people in the UK will need to have a digital phone line before then.

If you have other devices or services connected to your existing phone line, like a care alarm, smoke or security alarm, we recommend you check whether the device or service will work over the new technology. You can check by contacting the company who provided the device or service or by checking the manufacturer's website. Midcare are changing their clients to a new digital system, if this has not happened yet please contact  : www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/1350/getting_care_and_support/66/midcare_alarm_service

Open Reach state most of Scotland will be Digital by 2027, However, other digital providers are available:

Things to consider: -

- **The cost:** Some offer an entry price that looks good then after that period the price will increase.
- **The internet speed:** You will need a minimum of 10Mb per second. To make phone calls and any alarms.
- **Set up costs:** Vary from company to company, some offer free router and some charge a monthly rental fee.
- **Reliability:** Check with neighbours and ask if they have experienced any problems. The smaller providers may use Open Reach or third party contracts for repairs.



Warm Spaces

Bonnyrigg and Lasswade

Lasswade Library, 19 Eskdale Drive, Bonnyrigg, EH19 2LA

During normal opening hours,

Free tea, coffee or a cup of soup available.


St Leonard's Church Lasswade & Bonnyrigg, Dobbie's Road Lasswade EH18 1BJ

Mondays, 10:00hrs - 12:00hrs.

Free food and drink, people to chat to.

Dalkeith

The Grassy Riggs, 10 Woodburn Road, Dalkeith, EH22 2AT

A service for older people and their carers in Woodburn, Dalkeith. The service is based in the Woodburn Community Hub building and provides a warm, supportive environment where people over the age of 65 can come together to experience meaningful social engagement, make friends and try out new opportunities. The main purpose of The Grassy Riggs is to alleviate social isolation and exclusion. The service also offers a drop-in cafe, providing homemade soup, scones, desserts, tea & coffee, at a small cost.  :**The Grassy Riggs - Midlothian Community Action (MCA)**



St Mary's Church, High Street, Dalkeith EH22 2NA

Tuesdays, 12:00hrs - 15:00hrs.

Danderhall

Danderhall Library, 59 Edmonstone Road EH22 1QL

During normal opening hours,

Free tea, coffee or a cup of soup available.

Newton Parish Church Hall, Edmonstone Road EH22 1QE

Tuesdays: 10:00hrs - 13.30hrs

Wednesdays: 10:00hrs - 12:00hrs

Gorebridge

Gorebridge Beacon, Hunterfield Road, Gorebridge, EH23 4TT

Monday - Saturday, 8am - 5pm, Wi-Fi.

Community Cafe

09:00hrs - 14:00hrs Tuesday to Saturday. All welcome. If you would like a bowl of soup (free) please say 'Robert Sent Me' when you order.

Loanhead

Loanhead Library, George Avenue, Loanhead EH20 9LA

During normal opening hours

Free tea, coffee or a cup of soup available.

Free wi-fi, toilets, books, jigsaws and card games. Staff can also advise on getting all the support you are entitled to during the cost of living crisis.

Loanhead Parish Church, 118 The Loan, Loanhead EH20 9AJ

Friday 10.30hrs - 12:00hrs

Tea, coffee, snacks and chat

Mayfield and Easthouses

Mayfield and Easthouses Church, 2 Bogwood Road

Wednesdays: 10:00hrs to 12:00hrs

Cafe (£1.50 unlimited tea and coffee)

Men's group (free, donation basket for anyone who can afford to donate)

Friendship lunch Last Tuesday of each month: 12:00hrs to 14:00hrs.

Newbattle

Newbattle Library, 1 Newbattle Way, Easthouses, EH22 4SX

During normal opening hours.

Free tea, coffee or a cup of soup available.

Pathhead

Pathhead Community Cafe, Pathhead Pavilion, Callander Park, EH37 5YN

Tuesdays. 10:30hrs - 12:00hrs

A great warm space for a coffee and a good blether. £1 for coffee and biscuits, no charge for refills.

Penicuik

Food Fact Friends, 42 John Street EH26 8AB

Monday to Friday, 10:00hrs - 15:00hrs free hot soup, something to eat, tea & coffee.

Saturday: 11:00hrs - 13:00hrs free hot soup, something to eat, tea & coffee.

St James the Less, 23 Broomhill Road, Penicuik, EH26 9EE,

Tuesdays: 10:00hrs - 12:00hrs

Tea and coffee and biscuits, free. Free wi-fi TV or other online entertainment.

Penicuik Storehouse, 22 High Street EH26 8HW

Café and community group meeting space.

Monday to Wednesday, 10.00hrs - 16:00hrs, Thursday to Saturday 10.00hrs - 17:30hrs,

Sunday, 11.00hrs - 16:00hrs.

Trinity Community Church Hall, Kirkhill Road EH26 8HX

Thursdays, 10:00hrs -12:00hrs

Free tea, coffee and biscuits.

Rosewell

Rosewell Development Trust, The Steading, Carnethie Street EH24 9AA

The Trust offers a warm space and an affordable two course meal lunch club.

Tuesday and Thursday, £3.50 for a two course meal

To book, contact Rosewell Development Trust on ☎ : 0131 629 9398.

Roslin

Roslin Church, Penicuik Road EH25 9LH

Wednesdays: 10.30hrs - 12:00hrs

Coffee morning and a blether. Free food and drinks.

Rosslyn Bowling Club, 108 Main Street EH25 9LT

Wednesdays: 14.30hrs - 16:30hrs

Coffee, chat and games. Free food and drinks.

Midlothian Libraries

Midlothian Libraries are warm, welcoming and free for everyone.

You can borrow books and audiobooks, use computers, Wi-Fi, plus more. You can apply for Blue Badges and Bus Passes, and get Hearing Aid Batteries.

We hold lots of groups and events in our libraries, including Reminiscence Groups, Craft and Sewing Groups, and Book Groups. Many libraries hold help & advice


sessions from a range of organisations, including the Citizen's Advice Bureau and Social Security Scotland. Newtongrange Library has a pop-up Post Office every Monday (except Bank Holidays) 11:00hrs – 15:00hrs.

4 Midlothian Libraries have warm and welcoming hubs are friendly spaces where you can find a wide range of cost of living supports and feel part of a caring community.

Our Lend + Mend Hubs

Another great support initiative is the Lend + Mend hubs this initiative is now in our Gorebridge library. We offer free access to equipment to repair, reuse, and upcycle everyday items. Pop in to learn about the many tools available, including sewing machines and embroidery machines.

Find out more at  : www.midlothian.gov.uk/directory/6/libraries_in_midlothian or call: ☎ : 0131 271 3980

Our Mobile Library is dog-friendly! Hop on board with your furry friend. Further information at :  : www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/427/libraries/446/mobile_library

Alzheimer Scotland

Alzheimer Scotland host twice monthly Dementia Cafés in Dalkeith (2nd and 4th Tuesday) and Penicuik (1st and 3rd Thursday). Dementia Cafés are for people living with dementia (or worried about their brain health) and their families and supporters. They are an opportunity to meet others in a similar situation, to make connections and develop friendships, and to support and learn from one another as well as Alzheimer Scotland staff and volunteers.

Attending a Dementia Café can provide:-

- Social connection (helping maintain purpose and communication skills)
- Cognitive stimulation (helping challenge the brain and potentially slowing down the onset of more advanced dementia symptoms)
- Emotional support (helping reduce feelings of depression, anxiety, and loneliness)
- Information and advice (helping you understand more about brain health, dementia, and the supports available improve quality of life)

Please contact Michael Huddleston (Dementia Advisor, ☎ : 07831859490

 : mhuddleston@alzscot.org)

for more information or if you have questions or concerns about any aspect of living or caring for someone with dementia.

Winter vaccines 2025

Winter Flu and COVID-19 vaccinations are being offered to people who are eligible. Flu can be serious for some people. This year's vaccine gives you the best possible protection against the flu viruses likely to be circulating this season. The coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccines help to build up your immunity to the virus, so your body will fight it off more easily if it affects you. While the vaccine may not stop you from getting coronavirus, your symptoms are likely to be milder and



you are less likely to get seriously ill if you have been vaccinated.

Invitations to book or attend an appointment are now being sent. Letters inviting you to get the vaccine will be sent to the address you've registered with your GP and will arrive with clear NHS Scotland branding. You should make sure you update your address with your GP, if you move home. People with a digital preference will receive their vaccine appointment or booking prompt by text and/or email.



Look out for your invitation. For more information visit  : www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/immunisation/winter-vaccines

All Covid and flu enquiries, or any changes to appointments should be directed to the National Call Centre on ☎ : 0800 030 8013

Warm Home Discount Scheme

For winter 2025 to 2026, you could get £150 off your electricity bill through the Warm Home Discount Scheme. This year Scotland has a different Warm Home Discount Scheme the application forms are due to be out in November or December.

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, e.g. a voucher you can use to top up your meter.

Eligibility

You qualify for the discount if on 21 August 2025 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:

British/Scottish Gas	Online service
 : www.britishgas.co.uk/energy/energy-saving/warm-home-discount.html	
EDF Energy	Online Only
 : www.edfenergy.com/for-home/help-support/warm-home-discount	
E.ON	☎ : 0345 052 0000
 : www.eonenergy.com/energy-efficiency-grants/warm-home-discount.html	
Octopus Energy Ltd	☎ : 0808 164 1088
 : octopus.energy/blog/warm-home-discount/#scotland	
OVO	☎ : 0330 303 5063
 : www.ovoenergy.com/help/warm-home-discount	
Sainsbury's Energy	☎ : 0808 501 5277
 : www.sainsburysenergy.com/help-support/warm-home-discount.html	
Scottish Power	☎ : 0800 270 0700
 : www.scottishpower.co.uk/warm-home-discount	
Utilita	Online Only
 : utilita.co.uk/help/scottish-whd	
Utility Warehouse	☎ : 0333 777 0 777
 : uw.co.uk/legal/energy-information/warm-home-discount-scheme	

How to claim

Some people in Scotland get a single payment during winter called Winter Heating Payment from December 2025.

You will get Winter Heating Payment automatically if you get one of the benefits that make you eligible. Or make a claim fill out the downloadable form or call ☎ : 0800 182 2222

 : www.mygov.scot/winter-heating-payment/eligibility

Pension Age Winter Heating Payment

Pension Age Winter Heating Payment helps people of State Pension age pay their heating bills. It's paid once a year and replaced Winter Fuel Payment for people in Scotland. If you're eligible, You could get a payment of between £101.70 and £305.10.

Most eligible people get the payment automatically and do not need to apply. You'll get a letter to confirm your payment. Letters will be sent from November 2025.

Social Security Scotland will send the payment to the same account as your State Pension, or any Social Security Scotland benefits you get.

A small number of people will need to apply. Check whether you need to apply at  : www.mygov.scot/pension-age-winter-heating-payment/check-if-youre-eligible

If your income is over £35,000, HMRC will take your Pension Age Winter Heating Payment back.

Midlothian Affordable Warmth

SGN, Changeworks and Penicuik CAB continue their partnership into 25/26 to continue to provide energy advice and income maximisation services to residents of Midlothian. Referrals can be made from now until March 2026 and the service is open to Midlothian residents of any tenure.



Changeworks can provide:

- Energy advice and advocacy from expert Affordable Warmth Advisors to help Midlothian residents with energy usage and bills.
- Community events and engagement, working with community groups to deliver talks, stalls and events to assist your staff and service users.
- £50 of fuel credit to clients struggling to pay for fuel through the winter.

Penicuik CAB will provide:

- Income maximisation advice, including support to apply for benefits and grants, reduce outgoings and improve financial management.

Energy Best Deal is a consumer education programme developed by Ofgem and Citizens Advice. The programme provides valuable information and guidance to vulnerable consumers and the frontline advice workers who work with them. It raises awareness of the savings energy consumers can make and the help available for those struggling to pay their bills. Energy Best Deal sessions provide information and guidance to consumers and frontline advice workers on how consumers:

- Can reduce their energy costs by switching tariff, payment method or supplier,
- Know where to go for help if paying energy bills is a struggle,
- Save money by using less energy in their homes.

Funding for the Energy Best Deal programme is provided by a number of energy companies via Ofgem.

Energy Best Deal group sessions are aimed at vulnerable consumers who are most at risk of fuel poverty and the frontline workers who support them. Organisations delivering Energy Best Deal sessions have well established links with other local support organisations and the frontline workers and volunteers that work with people in or at risk of fuel poverty. Sessions are often held at venues working with groups such as elderly people, tenants, parents or people with health problems.



Organisations can make referrals to the service via Changeworks online referral form or you can refer yourself at  : www.changeworks.org.uk/referral/

For more information please visit  : www.dalkeithcab.org.uk/services/energy-best-deal or for Penicuik  : www.penicuikcab.org.uk/home

V.E.R.A. – Virtual. Expert. Remote. Advice

VERA – The Idea

Due to the number of clients requiring DCAB help we needed to find more efficient and helpful ways to assist people.

The number of clients trying to access Dalkeith & District CAB services over recent times has increased dramatically. As a Third Sector charity with limited funding & resources we decided the only way of supporting more people was to improve the access to our service. DCAB had already changed over to a triage service during the pandemic which had been successful.

We needed to develop a way of managing the number of client trying to access our services more efficiently.

Often clients contacted us but did not have the information regarding their issue when they phoned or emailed us.

We decided that if we could allow the clients to have access to information it would allow us to resolve their issues much more quickly.

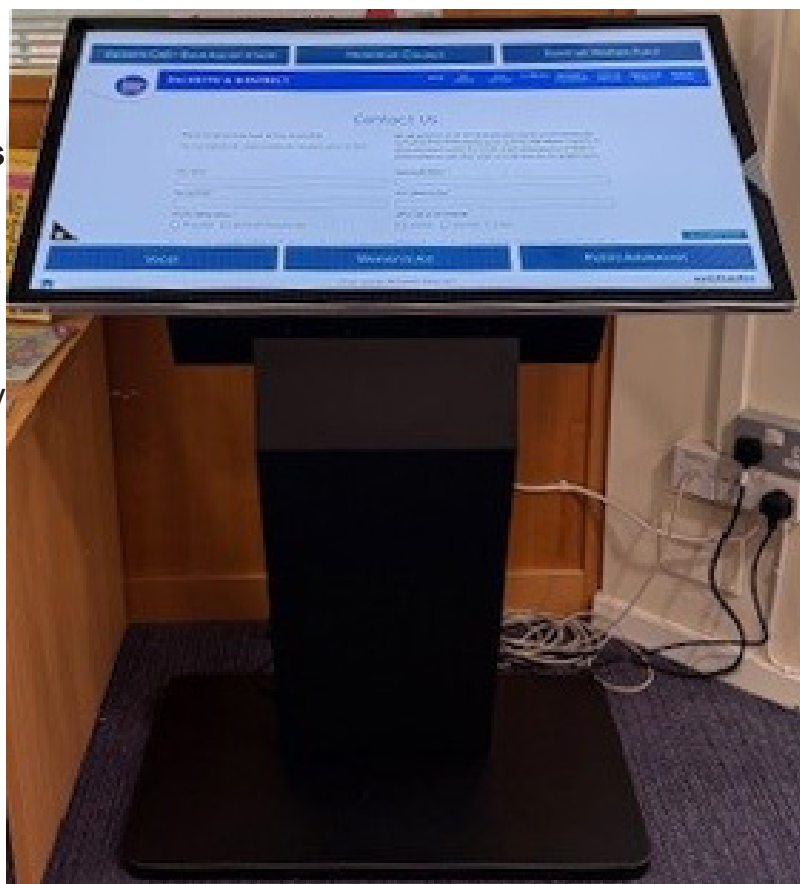
In order to meet rising demand with limited resources, Dalkeith & District CAB began to think of new ways to provide assistance, mindful of the reduction in many other helping services in Midlothian, and that many of those in need had limited digital skills or access to online support.

In April 2024, thanks to funds from Place Based Investment Funding 2023/24 allocation to the Council the first VERA was born. It's large, easy to use touch screen offers immediate access to information and support from a range of services including Midlothian Council, Scottish Welfare Fund, Women's Aid, VOCAL, and of course Citizens Advice.

VERA debuted at Mayfield and Easthouses Development Trust (MAEDT) in the Pantry, enabling more people to access free, confidential advice and information. They can also use VERA to access further details of the services offered by Dalkeith CAB.

VERA's are now placed at Womens Aid, Lasswade Library, Gorebridge Library, Woodburn Hub, Danderhall Library, Loanhead Library & the main Bureau.

We have more recently added Entitledto, benefit checker, to VERA so clients can check their own benefit entitlement. Once the benefit check would be completed the client



would receive a 6 digit code. If the client then required further help they could give the bureau team the code and we would be able to log on to the system and check their benefit check for accuracy.

VERA has been a testament to the benefits of partnership in Midlothian, with the CAB and other services collaborating to empower communities through advice and information. We believe this is a step in the right direction. We are already working on a different model of VERA that could be easily moved into schools for parent/teacher events and also alternative info tabs dependant on the key audience. Watch this space!

Staying Safe in Stormy Weather

Over the past few years, we've all noticed that storms seem to be happening more often and with greater force. Scientists tell us that changes in the climate are contributing to this increase, so it's more important than ever to be prepared.

Before a Storm

- Secure your home and garden – bring in or tie down outdoor furniture, bins, or plant pots that could blow over.
- Check your roof, windows, and gutters to make sure they're in good condition. Prepare an emergency kit with a torch, spare batteries, warm blankets, bottled water, and any essential medication. See list below!
- Charge your mobile phone in case of power cuts. If a power cut is going to be lengthy and your mobile phone is used to monitor health conditions a power bank could be an option.
- Stay informed – keep an eye on weather forecasts and warnings.
- Registering as a vulnerable person with SPN ☎ : 0330 10 10 167.

During a Storm

- Stay indoors and away from windows.
- Don't try to go outside to fix anything while the storm is happening.
- If you need to travel, only do so when it's absolutely necessary.



After a Storm

- Be cautious of fallen trees, loose roof tiles, or downed power lines. List useful numbers below.
- Check in on neighbours, especially if they live alone.

During stormy weather Emergency Services will see a spike in demand for their services. The most life threatening emergencies will be a priority. Please consider your situation before contact them.

Severe Weather

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.

For maps of routes affected visit;

 : [ready.scot/respond/severe-weather](https://www.ready.scot/respond/severe-weather)

Lothian Buses:  : [lothianbuses.com](https://www.lothianbuses.com)  : [x.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. “**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  : www.midlothian.gov.uk, it’s important to check for the latest information and advice during severe weather. Stay tuned to local radio stations 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 ready 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).**



Social Media



Midlothian Council:

 : www.midlothian.gov.uk

 : x.com/midhelp

 : x.com/midgov

 : www.facebook.com/MidlothianCouncil

Midlothian Community Action

 : mca.scot/

 : www.facebook.com/midlothiancommunityaction


 : www.instagram.com/midlothiancommunityaction/

Other Essential Contacts

For all other essential contact details see the Ready Scotland

 : ready.scot/

Be careful

Social Media web sites restrict access until you have an account with them. Social Media web sites are prone to scams to learn more visit  : [Aura](#)

Never accept friends request from people you do not know and always check their profile and click on links to those you do know. The identity may have been stolen.

VOCAL

VOCAL - Carer Support in the community

Do you look after someone close to you?

If you spend time caring for someone – a partner, child, family member, friend or neighbour – of any age to manage a long-term condition, disability, physical or mental health condition or addiction, then you are an unpaid carer!



VOCAL is here to support unpaid carers to access one-to-one support, emotional, financial, and practical support, and to access a break from caring.

Our Carer Support Practitioners, Alison Turbitt, Karen King and Jagoda Kinninmont, have a locality and hospital in-reach focus, are regularly based within various community venues and hubs across Midlothian.

Our locality and hospital in-reach practitioners will meet and chat with people to help them recognise if they are an unpaid carer and can then provide more information on our services and discuss what support may be beneficial to them in their caring role.

There is no need to book an appointment at our community venues, just pop along. To visit our community drop-ins in Midlothian, please check our website for dates and times:

Where to find us - 📍: www.vocal.org.uk/our-services/where-to-start/where-to-find-us/ VOCAL or call us ☎: 0808 196 6666 (option 2). As well as these community locations, carers can still access support at our carer centre in Midlothian,

And our centre at
VOCAL Midlothian,
30/1 Hardengreen Estate,
Dalhousie Road,
Dalkeith, EH22 3NX

Opening hours:

Monday, Thursday, Friday: 09:00hrs to 17:00hrs

Tuesday and Wednesday: 09:00hrs to 20:00hrs

Carers can call us on ☎: 0808 196 6666 (option 2)

✉: midlothian@vocal.org.uk.

📍: www.vocal.org.uk/contact/vocal-midlothian/

VOCAL Christmas opening times; Midlothian Carer Centre will close on Tuesday 24th December 2025 and re-open at 9am on Monday 29th December 2025 and will close on 31st December 2025 and return to normal opening on Monday 5th January 2026.

Green Health

Being in nature is a brilliant way to boost your mental health and wellbeing. This can involve going for a walk, gardening at home or through a community project, outdoor activities or simply by sitting in a green space and enjoying your surroundings. For ideas and activities for getting outdoors in Midlothian visit Midspace [📍: midspace.co.uk/] or Sport & Leisure Wellbeing [📍: www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200302/wellbeing].



Midlothian Mental Health and Resilience Service (MHARS) helpline

MHARS is a free confidential helpline for Midlothian residents aged 18 and over who experience mental health and wellbeing distress or crisis.

The service offers same-day direct access to compassionate support from a trained mental health practitioner. You don't have to be referred by your GP or a healthcare

professional.

You can expect a brief initial conversation to gather information, and then a call back within an hour to address issues in more detail.

MHARS practitioners can connect you to relevant community resources, services and activities. They can also tailor the support to include carers, family, friends and other partner agencies.

The MHARS helpline is open daily 8am to 8pm.

☎ : 0800 118 2962

The Midspace support directory can help you find support available for adults living and/or working in Midlothian.

📧 : midspace.co.uk/

Peer Connecting in Midlothian offers individual and group support for people over 18 who live in Midlothian and who are looking to improve or manage their mental health and wellbeing.



📧 : health-in-mind.org.uk/news/peer-connecting-in-midlothian/

HcL Dial-A-Ride

If you find it hard to get out and about during the dark winter season, HcL might be able to help. With the Dial-a-Ride service they provide supported door through door transport to help people do their shopping or attend appointments and social activities.

Dial-A-Bus provides a supported door-through-door transport service to access a local major shopping centre or supermarket.

Dial -A-Ride

Choose where you want to go – a medical appointment ,hairdressers , a visit to friends or family ,to church or the theatre. You need to pay for this service for more information on the cost and how to register call ☎ : 0131 447 9949.

📧 : www.HcLtransport.org.uk

✉ : Edinburgh@handicabs.org.uk



Useful Telephone Numbers for Midlothian	
Emergency Services	☎ 999
Non Emergency Police	☎ 101
NHS24	☎ 111
East Lothian Community Hospital	☎ 01620 642 700
Midlothian Community Hospital	☎ 0131 454 1001
Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh	☎ 0131 536 1000
St Johns Hospital	☎ 01506 523 000
Western General Hospital	☎ 0131 537 1000
Midlothian Council Revenues and Benefits	☎ 0131 271 3201
Midlothian Council Emergency Housing repairs 24/7	☎ 0131 663 7211
Midlothian Council Self-Directed Support	☎ 0131 271 3900
Midlothian Council Social Work Services	☎ 0131 271 3900
Midlothian Council Social Work (out of hours)	☎ 0800 731 6969
Midlothian Council Waste & Recycling	☎ 0131 561 5284
Breathing Space	☎ 0800 83 85 87
British Red Cross	☎ 0131 654 0340
Citizens Advice Bureau Dalkeith	☎ 0131 660 1636
Citizens Advice Bureau Penicuik	☎ 01968 675 259
Deaf Blind Scotland	☎ 07715 421 377
Dementia Helpline	☎ 0808 808 3000
Dial-a-Bus Midlothian	☎ 0131 447 1718
Dial-a-Ride Midlothian	☎ 0131 447 9949
LGBT	☎ 0800 464 7000
Lothian Buses	☎ 0131 555 6363
Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living	☎ 0131 475 2350
Midcare Alarm Services	☎ 0131 271 3770
National Gas Emergency Service (if you smell gas)	☎ 0800 111 999
RNIB	☎ 0303 123 9999
Samaritans	☎ 116 123
SP Energy Networks	☎ 105
Scottish Water	☎ 0800 077 8778
Traveline Scotland	☎ 0871 200 2233
VOCAL Midlothian Carers	☎ 0131 663 6869
My Doctor	☎
My Plumber	☎
My Emergency Contact	☎

Merry Christmas, Readers. Wishing you this Christmas will bring so much fun and happiness for you all. Trivia: Christmas Day became a public holiday in 1958 in Scotland, both Boxing Day and New Year's Day achieved public holiday status over a decade later in 1974.

Early Pictish religion says this is the time when children were sent on the great hunt. The child who caught the most mice and rodents became the Clan Chieftain for the day.



Drop In

Free of Charge
CAFÉ CONNECT



Dalkeith Arts Centre

- Thursday 06/11/25 - 2.00 to 3.30pm
- Thursday 04/12/25 - 2.00 to 3.30pm
- Thursday 05/02/26 - 2.00 to 3.30pm

Linking Loanhead

Loanhead Library

- Wednesday 14th & 28th January 2026 2.00 to 4.00pm
- Wednesday 11th & 25th February 2026 2.00 to 4.00pm
- Wednesday 11th & 25th March 2026 2.00 to 4.00pm

Both provide support for deaf people.

All welcome
inclusive for
everyone.

We focus on
what people
can do, not
what they
can't

Meet or make
friends and share a
blether

Link in with us
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.



Rosslyn Chapel

A Christmas Carol

Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol", blending the classic Christmas tale with a cappella traditional carols such as O' Holy Night, God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, Silent Night

6.30pm and 8pm, 4th, 5th and 6th December.

Winter Tales - Storytelling for the Season - Family Event

Dougie Mackay for an afternoon of winter-themed stories in the magical setting of the Lady Chapel.

Friday 5th December, 3pm age 4+

Laudemus Virginem - Medieval Christmas with Gaita

Gaita will evoke the medieval Christmas spirit with a selection of songs and dance tunes in praise of Virgin Mary, performed on period instruments. A unique festive treat in the wonderful candlelit atmosphere of Rosslyn Chapel.

Saturday 13th December, 7.30pm

Christmas Candlelit Concert - The Robin Choir

Experience a breathtaking evening of Christmas carols by candlelight in the beautiful Rosslyn Chapel performed by the Robin Chapel Choir, one of the foremost ecclesiastical choirs in Scotland Saturday 20th December, 7.30pm and 9.15pm

Roslin Village Choir Winter Concert



Roslin Community Choir are delighted to present their winter concert at Rosslyn Chapel again. Join us for a program including some festive favourites, music from the movies, and more!

Saturday 27th December, 7.30pm

For more information please visit www.rosslynchapel.com/whats-on/

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@mvacvs.org.uk 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

