

Midlothian Older People's Newsletter

Issue 4: 2024

Welcome to YOUR newsletter...

We hope you find this newsletter useful. Perhaps it may even inspire you to try something new!

This newsletter aims to support your wellbeing and social life as we journey into 2024, to keep you as active as you can be and connected within your community. It has positive ideas, links to local organisations, tips to reduce the risk of falling, and suggestions for support if you're worried about energy prices or the cost-of-living.

We hope this year will be positive and social. A cheerful time where you connect with people, enjoying the warmth of human interaction, friendship, support and lots of fun and laughter.

Fresh air and a walk, as we thankfully come into lighter days, can be important - perhaps with a neighbour or friends to brighten your spirit. If you're able and active, think about helping others, reach out and in doing so, feel better yourself!

This year let's all...

**... pull together, keep connected
and help ourselves and others
be well, active and positive.**



Midlothian
Health & Social Care



Midlothian
Voluntary
Action

Support with the cost of living

If money is tight at the moment there are many places that might be able to help.



FOOD

Community Food Pantries

Pantries stock a range of food that you can choose from. You can join as a member for a few pounds each week and in return shop for groceries worth more.

Mayfield & Easthouses

0131 663 5317

14 - 15 Bogwood Road,
Mayfield.

Woodburn - Grassy Riggs

07384 376156

10 Woodburn Road,
Dalkeith

STAYING WARM

Changeworks, Home Energy Scotland, Ofgem and Warmer Homes Scotland can help with grants or advice to keep your home affordably warm.

Changeworks and Midlothian Council can offer advice on saving energy bills. They can offer support around managing heating in the home and putting in renewable technologies.

For more information email:

Changeworks

changeworksindalkeith@changeworks.org.uk

0131 555 4010

www.changeworks.org.uk

Warmer Homes Scotland Fund

0808 808 2282

www.homeenergyscotland.org

Ofgem

www.ofgem.gov.uk

TRAVEL

Free bus travel

If you are over 60 you can travel for free on buses.

www.transport.gov.scot/concessionary-travel/60plus-or-disabled

RENT

If you need help with your rent or paying council tax, call Midlothian Council for advice

0131 271 3201

BENEFITS

The Welfare Rights team at Midlothian Council or Citizen's Advice Bureau can give you advice about benefits you might be entitled to such as Carer's allowance supplement, funeral support payments or adult disability payments. They can also give you information about grants such as the Scottish Welfare Fund for people in crisis.

Citizen's Advice Bureau

Penicuik

01968 675 259

bureau@penicuikcab.org.uk

Dalkeith

0131 660 1636

bureau@dalkeithcab.org.uk

Welfare Rights Team, Midlothian Council

0131 270 8922



Find out about Midlothian's active walking groups in the Red Cross events calendar.



A date for your diary

There are so many groups and activities for older people it can be hard to keep up!

The Red Cross produce a monthly calendar of events containing information on lunch clubs, and range of groups covering arts and crafts, walking, friendship, exercise, poetry, and more, there is something here for everyone.

They can also support you to attend groups.

If you would like a calendar or to speak to someone to support you into a group call **0131 654 0340**



Green health prescriptions

Keeping well in nature

Midlothian has many beautiful landscapes and green spaces and being in nature is a brilliant way to boost your mental health and wellbeing. This could be going for a walk, gardening or simply by sitting in a green space and enjoying your surroundings. Spending time outdoors has been shown to help people's physical health, mental health and help manage long term conditions.

Health professionals may offer you a Green Health Prescription to benefit from nature. This may be alongside or instead of traditional treatments. Talk to a wellbeing practitioner in your GP surgery, look for the Green Health noticeboard in your GP surgery or visit www.midspace.co.uk and search 'green prescription' for more information.



Carer Support

Planning for the future is important if you care for someone.

VOCAL, Voice of Carers Across Lothian supports unpaid carers to plan for the future.

Understanding the different options available to you now and in the future is really important, and they can help you put your plans into action. VOCAL offer practical information and advice on Power of Attorney, Wills, Trusts, Guardianship and Anticipatory Care. They can also ensure that you are aware of your rights as a carer and the rights of the person you care for.

Call: **0808 196 6666 (option 2)**
or visit: www.vocal.org.uk

Events & activities for unpaid carers

Many carers struggle to think about their own health and wellbeing, which is why VOCAL offers a varied events, training and activities programme. These help carers to get a break from caring, reduce isolation and improve their confidence in caring.

There are over 20 different opportunities, including social groups and practical sessions to help you manage the issues you may face in your caring role. Topics include money management; moving and handling; caring for someone with dementia; and future planning.

To find out more, please visit
www.carerstraining.co.uk

Get connected online

Connect Online groups can help you with technology such as smartphones, tablets and laptops.

Volunteer Midlothian offer drop-in sessions and home visits if you are housebound or a carer. If you don't have your own device you can borrow a tablet/iPad and they can also provide free internet access.



You can drop into a session at:

- **Penicuik, Food Fact Friends,**
Tuesdays 10.30am – 12 noon
- **Dalkeith, St Mary's Church,**
Tuesdays 2pm – 3.30pm
- **Loanhead Library,**
Wednesdays 11am – 12.30pm
- **Rosewell Development Trust,**
Wednesdays, 1.30pm – 3pm
- **The Salon, 4-6 White Hart Street, Dalkeith**
Wednesdays 2pm – 3.30pm
- **Penicuik Library,**
Thursdays, 2pm – 3.30pm

Call: **07856 573694** or email:
una@volunteermidlothian.org.uk

Reduce your risk of falling

- **Have you had any unusual dizziness, light headedness, headaches or pain?**
Tell your GP if you do or if you have had a fall.
- **Are you on the right medication?**
Ask your pharmacist or GP to check.
- **Is your sight and hearing OK?**
Many opticians can test both free of charge.
- **Do your shoes or slippers fit well?**
It is a good idea to have shoes or slippers with a back which covers your heel rather than ones you 'slide' into.
- **Is your home well lit and do you have enough space to walk around?**
It is a good idea to move any rugs from the floor.
- **Are you drinking enough and eating a balanced diet?**
Eating foods with calcium and vitamin D can help maintain healthy bones.
- **Are you getting enough exercise?**
Being as active as you can help your strength and balance. Everyday tasks around the house can help, as can joining a local group.

What to do if you fall in your home

If you are injured, call 999 and ask for an ambulance.

If you are not injured, call 111 and ask for help.

- **Try to get help** – this could be by your community alarm or phoning a relative, friend or neighbour. Did you know you can ask your smart speaker to do this?
- **Try shouting, or banging on a wall to attract your neighbour's attention.**
- **If you can, reach for a blanket or clothing to keep warm.**
- **After moving gently, if you think you can get up safely, follow the steps below** (from the NHS Inform website).



1. Roll onto your side



2. Push onto your hands



3. Push onto your hands and knees to crawl



4. Side on to solid furniture – strongest leg next to it – foot flat to ground



5. Push up and turn slowly



6. Rest – and check for injury again



HcL Dial-A-Ride and Dial-A-Bus... getting you from A to B!

If you find it hard to get out and about, HcL might be able to help. They provide supported door-through-door transport to help you get out and about, do your shopping, or attend appointments and social activities.

Dial-A-Ride

Choose where you want to go – a medical appointment, the shops, a visit to friends or family, to church, the cinema or theatre.

Dial-A-Bus

Hop on an HcL Bus to local shopping centres including: Cameron Toll, Tesco Eskbank, ASDA & Sainsbury's Straiton, Tesco Penicuik and Morrison's Dalkeith.

**From 1st February 2024 you can
use your Concessionary bus pass!**

Their drivers pick you up from your front door and can support you to leave your house and on the bus if you need a bit of extra help. They can help you put your coat on, lock your house and help carry your shopping home. Each bus can carry two wheelchair passengers. You can use the service on your own or bring a friend or carer.

For more details on the cost and how to register and book, call:

Dial-A-Ride: **0131 447 9949**

Dial-A-Bus: **0131 447 1718**

Email: **edinburgh@handicabs.org.uk**

Ageing Well

The Ageing Well project has been offering the over 50s activities for 23 years. Fun sessions are run by volunteers who encourage everyone to enjoy keeping active together.

Vivian Wallace, Project Coordinator for the past 13 years, joined a walking group for after-walk coffee and chat to find out why people enjoy these activities. Top reasons were: company, laughter and friendships. There was lots of laughter, but also serious discussion on the group's importance. 'We talk through our problems as we've grown to trust each other which helps and cheers us up.'



One lady admitted that when she joined the Mayfield group, she felt unsure and was shy at first, but her confidence has grown so much that she volunteers at the MAEDT pavilion where they meet and will happily blather with anyone now.

Reminiscing about local people, village characters and past times getting up to mischief as youngsters brought laughter to the room.

It's a long weekend if nothing is on so they look forward to the walk on a Wednesday and Friday at 11am. Walk leader, Bert had to admit 'they're a great bunch', although he'd have been in trouble if he'd said anything less! He added, 'There are great local walks, and we get a lovely bowl of soup at the MAEDT café afterwards – the staff are wonderful.'

'We stopped for a game of bingo which was a giggle, as were some of the conversations. One lady said, 'you learn something new every time we get together.'

They're a very friendly bunch and Vivian was delighted when one lady said 'Oh aye, we also come for the exercise: after all we're all ageing well!'

As well as walking groups, there's a wide range of activities available including dancing, singing, badminton, table tennis, new age kurling, indoor bowling, walking football, walking rugby, walking netball, pickleball and exercise classes. For more information email: ageingwell@midlothian.gov.uk or phone Vivian on **07825 356478**

There are walking groups at different levels: *walk & talk, strollers, striders* and *monthly trekker walk*.

DAY & TIME	LOCATION	MEETING POINT	LEVELS
Tuesday 1pm	Gorebridge	Arniston Rangers Car Park	Stroller/Strider
Tuesday 1.30pm	Dalkeith	St Nicholas Church Hall	Stroller/Strider
Wednesday 11am	Mayfield	MAEDT Pavilion	Walk and talk
Thursday 10am	Loanhead	Loanhead Leisure Centre	Stroller/Strider
Thursday 11am	Newtongrange	Newtongrange Library	Walk and Talk
Thursday 11.30am	Woodburn	Grassy Riggs	Walk and Talk
Friday 9.45am	Penicuik	St Mungo's Church Hall	Stroller/Strider
Friday 10am	Roslin	The Original Rosslyn Inn	Stroller/Strider
Friday 11am	Mayfield	MAEDT Pavilion	Walk and talk
Friday 1.30pm	Rosewell	Rosewell Church Hall	Stroller/Strider
Sunday 1.30pm	Bonnyrigg	Lasswade High Centre	Stroller/Strider

Dementia Carers Group

The Dementia Team would like to welcome you to a group for those caring for someone with Dementia. At Bonnyrigg Health Centre, meeting room, on Thursdays, 4 - 5pm.

22 February: Tools to help with communication

29 February: Packages of Care, funding, SDS

7 March: Welfare Rights

14 March: Communicating together- Speech and language

21 March: Vocal, Alzheimer Scotland

28 March: Care Homes, legal advice

There will be a presentation and an opportunity to ask questions and chat to others. You can come to all the sessions or just the ones you think may be useful.

Ideally come to the group without the person you care for, but if this is not possible please come together.

No need to book just come along! For further information call: **0131 537 9979**

TELECARE - Changes to your alarms & sensors

By the end of 2025, all telecommunications providers in the UK will have upgraded their systems to new digital technologies.



Existing telecare alarms may not work as reliably on these new systems. Midlothian Council is upgrading to new digital telecare devices to ensure that if you use an alarm or sensor you continue to receive a high-quality service with minimal disruption.

WHAT DO TELECARE CLIENTS NEED TO DO?

Continue using telecare as normal. The Midcare Team will arrange an appointment to upgrade the equipment later this year.

Please get in touch with the Midcare Team if you have:

- recently changed your telephone line provider
- updated or changed your telephone / internet service package
- been asked by your existing provider to switch your old telephone line to a new digital one.

Call the Midlothian Contact Centre – mentioning Midcare call lines:

0131 271 3900 or email:

swccenquiries@midlothian.gov.uk

Think 3 before GP

GPs' surgeries are often busy so consider three alternatives before you make a doctors appointment to get appropriate care as soon as possible:

1. Self care
2. Check www.nhsinform.scot
3. See a pharmacist for minor conditions

NHS Pharmacy First Scotland



Pharmacists are medicine experts and can help with minor health concerns. They offer advice, provide medicine, and can refer you to other healthcare services.

Further details: www.nhsinform.scot/pharmacy-first

Nearly 20% of doctor's appointments can be dealt with by other healthcare professionals. Get the right care in the right place and keep A&E free for critical emergencies. Here's where to access appropriate medical care when you need it:



Self Care

Hangovers, coughs, colds, grazes, small cuts, sore throats plus many other minor illnesses and injuries can be treated at home with over-the-counter medicine and rest.



Pharmacy/Chemist

Diarrhoea, ear-ache, painful cough, sticky eye, teething, rashes, plus advise and treatment for various minor health concerns and symptoms. No appointment is needed and most pharmacies have a private consulting area.



GP/Doctors' Surgery

Arthritis, asthma, back pain, vomiting, stomach ache. GPs & Nurses deal with a range of health problems.



Minor Injuries Units

Non-urgent services for conditions such as: cuts, sprains, strain, bruises, itchy rash and minor burns. They are usually led by nurses. No appointment is needed.



A&E/999

Severe bleeding, breathing difficulties, severe chest pain, unconsciousness. A&E or 999 is for emergencies, serious or life-threatening situations.

If you're unsure which service best suits your condition and you wish to get advice from a medical professional, call 111 or visit 111.nhs.uk

Shining a light on...

Midlothian 

LIBRARIES



There's much more through
our doors than books...

www.midlothian.gov.uk/libraries

Libraries are warm and welcoming, free for everyone, spaces.

You can borrow books and audiobooks, use computers, WiFi, 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 Groups, and Author Visits.

Some libraries hold help & advice sessions from a range of organisations, including the Citizen's Advice Bureau.

Newtongrange Library has a pop-up Post Office every Monday, 11am - 3pm (except Bank Holidays).

Further information at:
www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/427/libraries
or call: **0131 271 3980**

Braw Blether

Braw Blether groups come together in Midlothian Libraries to help support mental health and wellbeing.

They use short stories, poems, articles from magazines and other forms of words, sometimes writing, to spark connection and conversation. The groups are open to all.

Call: **07771 345294**

Email: Bibliotherapy@midlothian.gov.uk

Or speak to your local library.



Warm and Well Hubs



As part of the **#MidlothianCares** initiative from Midlothian Council, in response to the cost-of-living crisis, four libraries are **Warm and Well Hubs** (Danderhall, Loanhead, Lasswade, and Newbattle). Local residents can just turn up to keep warm and enjoy free hot drinks plus soup and bread. Library staff can offer support

Would you enjoy
FREE soup, bread
& a hot drink...
but don't like to ask?



Available in **Warm & Well Hub** cafés at:
Lasswade, Danderhall, Loanhead
and Newbattle leisure centres.
(Our staff will know what you mean.)

For more cost of living supports visit
www.midlothian.gov.uk/midlothiancares



Gorebridge Lend + Mend Hub

Gorebridge Library offers 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

Dog-friendly Mobile Library



Hop on board with your furry friend.
Further information at:
www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/427/libraries/446/mobile_library

**POWER CUT?
CALL 105**



GOT A POWER CUT? CALL 105

Many people don't know they should contact their local electricity network operator if they have a power cut. They often mistakenly call the electricity supplier they pay their bills to.

That's why the electricity network operators have introduced 105 – to give you an easy-to-remember number to call that will put you through to the local people who can help.

Useful contacts

Health emergency

In an emergency call 999

For non-urgent health concerns call 111

Supported transport

HcL Dial-a-ride

0131 447 9953

Staying connected

The Silverline

0800 470 8090 (FREE)

Friendship calls and advice 24/7

Ageing Well

0131 561 6506

A range of low level activities

Mental health

Breathing Space

0800 83 85 87 (FREE)

Confidential support if you feel low, anxious or depressed

Samaritans

116 123 (FREE)

Confidential listening line if you need someone to talk to

Sensory impairment

Order hearing aid batteries:

batteries@midlothian.gov.uk

or 0131 270 7500

RNIB

0303 123 9999

helpline@rnib.org.uk

Deafblind Scotland

0141 777 6111

wr@dbscotland.org.uk

Dementia

Alzheimer Scotland

0808 808 3000

24/7 help and guidance.

0131 654 1114

(Mon – Fri, 9am – 5pm)

Midlothian Dementia Advisors:

- Michael Huddleston

07831 859490

mhuddleston@alzscot.org

- Carol Hamilton

07584 408392

chamilton@alzscot.org

**National Dementia
Advisor Service**

0300 373 5774

Mon – Fri, 9am – 5pm

help and guidance

ndas@alzscot.org

www.alzscot.org

Carer support

VOCAL Midlothian

0131 663 6869

LGBT

LGBT Helpline Scotland

0300 123 2523

helpline@lgbthealth.org.uk

Domestic violence

Women's Aid

0131 561 5800

info@womensaideml.org

If someone is at risk of harm

Adult Social Care

0131 271 3900

Emergency Out of Hours

0800 731 6969