

Midlothian Older Peoples Assembly



Supporting Older People across Midlothian

DECEMBER 2016



GET READY FOR WINTER IN MIDLOTHIAN

Are you ready for winter?

This year older people across Scotland are being encouraged to get ready for winter.

Getting ready for winter is something we all need to do - it takes only 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 your community and neighbourhood, or behind the wheel, we all need to consider what might help.

By thinking about how we can all get ready, we can help Midlothian be better prepared.

In past years the severe weather caught many people out. This special newsletter contains some good advice and tips to prepare us for this winter. Some useful phone numbers are included. Keep this by the telephone! We have included some sources of support so please take time to read through these and make sure you have thought about the things that will make this winter manageable, safe and enjoyable!

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Ready for winter?



If you have any news, views, or questions relating to this newsletter, or would like to know more about Midlothian Older People's Assembly, please contact Eric Johnstone at Midlothian Community Care Forum, 4/6 White Hart Street, Dalkeith EH22 1AE, or telephone 0131 663 9471

Midlothian Social Work

Emergency Helpline

Midlothian Council's social work team will run an emergency helpline which is activated and publicised if severe weather arrives. This is for elderly and vulnerable people without other means of support - for example where carers or family members are unavailable.

The helpline can assist if they are running out of their prescription medication and/or need basic groceries like bread and milk. The council works in partnership with the British Red Cross so if you call they can arrange for a volunteer to pick up and deliver an emergency prescription and supplies to your home.

It's 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. If the weather is bad you (or someone you know) might be concerned about transport or whether a council facility has had to close. For up to date information during severe weather, visit the Council's website: www.midlothian.gov.uk or call their contact centre on 0131 663 7211.

In a social work emergency you can call 0800 731 6969 (out of normal office hours).

Prepare for Winter

Getting ready for winter at home is easy. Just make a household plan and collect together the items for an emergency kit that will be essential to you and your family. (see insert in this newsletter)

Winter proof your home by following Scottish Water's advice on protecting your pipes:

- * Know where your stop valve is and how to turn off your water.
- * If cold weather is forecast, and during a cold snap, keep your heating on at a low temperature to help prevent pipes from freezing.
- * Know how to turn off your electricity supply at the mains.
- * Making your home energy-efficient will make it cheaper and quicker to heat during cold weather. Call the Scottish Government's Home Energy Scotland Hotline on 0808 808 2282.
- * Check the terms of your household insurance policies, and 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 have any.
- * Make sure you will be able to clear your paths and driveway if severe weather strikes. It's a good idea to keep a shovel (specially designed snow shovels are particularly good) and some salt or grit at home. Find out where your nearest local authority public grit bin is.
- * Keep healthy in the winter, and avoid the 'flu.
- * If you are over 65 or have a health condition such as heart or lung problems or if you are pregnant, get your free seasonal 'flu vaccination to protect yourself this winter.

KEY CONTACTS IN MIDLOTHIAN

Midlothian Community Hospital.....	0131 454 1001
Refuse/ Wheelie Bins.....	0131 561 5284
Ageing Well Leisure service.....	0131 561 6506
Advocacy for Older People EARS.....	0131 478 8866
Bonnyrigg Seniors Bill Prentice.....	0131 663 6895
Gorebridge Over 50's Mary Webb.....	01875 820 094
Midlothian Travel Team contact Karl Vanter.....	0131 561 5443
Dial-A-Bus Midlothian.....	0131 447 1718
Dial-A-Ride Midlothian.....	0131 447 9949
Midlothian Social Work Services.....	0131 271 3900
McSence Handyperson Services.....	0131 454 1500
Carers VOCAL Midlothian.....	0131 663 6869
Breathe Easy (George).....	07969 467 594
Midcare (Telecare) Midlothian.....	0131 271 3770
NHS 24.....	111
Self Directed Support.....	0131 271 3900
Midlothian Libraries.....	0131 271 3980
Alzheimers Scotland.....	0131 654 1114
Midlothian Council Revenues & Benefits.....	0131 271 3201
Blue Badges Scheme.....	0131 561 5455
Midlothian Taxicard Scheme.....	0131 561 5455
Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living.....	0131 475 2350
Citizens Advice Bureau Dalkeith.....	0131 660 1636
Citizens Advice Bureau Penicuik.....	01968 675 259
British Red Cross.....	0131 654 0340
Community Links Befriending Project.....	0131 660 1216

READY SCOTLAND

The Scottish Governments 'Ready Scotland' website provides a wide range of information on emergencies and how to prepare for them.

<http://www.readyscotland.org>



Silver Line Scotland is a free*, national helpline providing information, friendship and advice to older people, 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

The service is delivered in partnership by Age Scotland and The Silver Line Helpline. Their aim is to assist older people to be happy and healthy, supporting them to live independently at home for as long as possible, and helping to overcome the barriers of isolation and loneliness. This partnership means that, via just one phone number – 0800 4 70 80 90 – older people across Scotland can access both Age Scotland's independent, confidential advice services along with the 24/7 befriending services of The Silver Line.

From 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday, anyone calling 0800 4 70 80 90 from a Scottish landline will come through to Age Scotland's Information and Advice team. Their paid staff and volunteers specialise in answering enquiries from older people, their carers and families. Whether your question is about community care, tax, pensions, benefits or any other issue, they will find an answer. They are also there for callers looking for a chat – this could be about what you've been doing, what's important to you or even just what you've been watching on the television. 0800 4 70 80 90.

Age Scotland publishes a series of information guides and fact sheets, online information and advice on topics including health, money and housing.



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.

We have included an insert with this newsletter called "My Winter Plan". Write down your important contact numbers now and keep them by your 'phone.

Clear ice or snow from your pathway. Remember, for some people bad ice can make things just as difficult as deep snow.

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 Scotland. 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 the times of 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.

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

Doctors

Bonnyrigg
107-111 High Street
Bonnyrigg
EH19 2ET

Quarryfoot 0131 537 9828
Dalhousie 0131 537 9844
Strathesk 0131 537 9977

Dalkeith Medical Centre
0131 561 5500
24- 26 St. Andrew Street
Dalkeith
EH22 1AP

Danderhall 0131 654 1079
85 Newtonchurch Road
Danderhall
EH22 1LX

Newbattle 0131 663 1051
Blackcot Road
Mayfield
EH22 4AA

Newbyres 01875 820 405
Hunterfield Road
Gorebridge
EH23 4TP

Pathhead 01875 320 302
210 Main Street
Pathhead
EH37 5PP

Loanhead Sutherland House
0131 440 0149
209 Mayburn Avenue, Loanhead
EH20 9ER

Penicuik
Health Centre 01968 672 612
Imrie Place
Penicuik
EH26 8HY

Eastfield Clinic 01968 675 576
Eastfield Farm Road
Penicuik
EH26 8EZ

Roslin 0131 440 2043
122 Penicuik Road
Roslin
EH25 9NT



WINTER TIPS

In case of a power cut:

Keep a torch (and batteries) next to the phone. Maybe some candles/ matches also.

Central heating - remember to reset timers after a fault or power cut!

Do you have enough food in stock (eg tins of soup), just in case you can't get out for a few days?

If you can't get out and about, do you have someone you can call.. give it some thought!

Do you know anyone in your local community council who may be helpful?

Are you connected to your local church community...perhaps let them know if you feel vulnerable?

Do you know a local plumber - always handy to have his phone number!

Keep some salt or grit right at the door for sprinkling- never walk out on an icy step!

Medication - make a note of your prescription medication and restock your medicine cabinet.

Find out when your local GP surgery will close over the festive holiday period and make sure you are prepared for this.

Frozen pipes - If cold weather is forecast, it's best to keep the heating on overnight at a low temperature so that the pipes won't freeze - simply turn your thermostat down to 15 C.

Keep Safe and Warm at Home this Winter



If it's cold outside you need to be warm inside. Here are some tips for keeping warm:

If you can't heat all your rooms, make sure you keep your living room warm throughout the day and heat your bedroom before going to bed.

A balanced diet will help keep you warm and healthy in the winter. Make sure you and your family eat at least one hot meal a day. Soup is nutritious and warming, and inexpensive to make or buy.

Wearing the right kind of clothes can help keep you much warmer. Layers are best, t-shirts and under clothes to keep the base of your back warm will heat you from the core.

Staying active is good for your health. Walking, for example, can be beneficial. If the weather prevents you getting outside, stay active indoors - catch up on all the household tasks you've been putting off.

Talk - especially if you've been stuck in the house for a few days. Lift the 'phone and call friends and family for a chat.

If you have elderly relatives or neighbours who might need help, please check up on them. You can get a warm feeling inside by ensuring they are warm on the outside!

Loss of Utilities

Power cuts and the loss of other utilities including gas, water and telephones can happen during the winter - just when we need these services the most.

While utility companies in Scotland have well-tested plans in place to deal with all kinds of events, there are steps you can take now that will help you cope with any loss of utilities in the future.

Keep mobile 'phones and lap top computers fully charged so you will have use of battery power for a short time at least if there is a power cut. Certain types of mobile phone allow you to access the internet and other services, which will help you to stay informed.

Make a list of all the telephone numbers you might need, and keep them handy. Here are a few to get you started.

National Gas Emergency Service (if you smell gas) 0800 111 999
Scottish Gas 0800 048 0202
Scottish Power 0800 092 9290
Scottish Hydro Electric 0800 980 0415



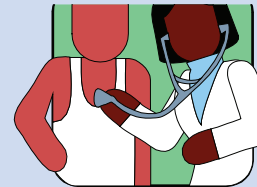
Licensed Plumbers

It always makes sense to use a licensed plumber. Scottish Water supports and promotes the Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbers Employers Federation (SNIPEF).

To find a licensed plumber in your area visit www.needaplumber.org or call SNIPEF on 0845 224 0391 who will be able to recommend a plumber. Office opening hours are Monday - Thursday 8.30am to 5pm and Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm. For out of office hours, please visit their website or refer to your telephone directory.

Health Advice Over the Festive Period

- **GP practice closures:** During the festive season most GP practices will be closed on public holidays.
- **Pharmacy closures:** Most pharmacies will be closed on the festive public holidays too. For opening times, see the NHS 24 website at www.nhs24.com
- **Repeat prescriptions:** With GP practices and many pharmacies closed on these days, please order and collect from your GP practice any repeat prescriptions you need in plenty of time. Out-of-hours services cannot provide repeat prescriptions.
- **Your local pharmacist - health care right up your street:** For expert health information and advice - ask at your local pharmacy. Community pharmacies are changing, with highly-trained staff providing even more services to protect your health and treat minor ailments. For pharmacy opening times over the festive season, visit the NHS 24 website at www.nhs24.com
- **A&E services:** Hospital Accident & Emergency (A&E) services are for urgent and emergency situations only. A&E is not an alternative to your GP, so please don't go to A&E if your doctor can't see you immediately or when your GP surgery is closed.
- **Minor Injuries Clinic:** For minor ailments and injuries (such as minor cuts and burns, infections, stings, suspected sprains and small bone breaks) go to the Minor Injuries Clinic at Edinburgh's Western General Hospital (for adults and children over one year). Open every day of the year from 8am to 9pm. No appointment necessary. Phone 0131 537 1330/1331.
- **NHS 24 and out-of-hours care:** If you need urgent medical advice that cannot wait until your GP surgery opens, phone NHS 24 on 111. If you need to be seen out of hours (between 6pm and 8am, at weekends, or on public holidays) an appointment will be made for you at the most convenient out-of-hours centre. Patients are seen by appointment only in out-of-hours centres.
- **Remember:** If you think you need an emergency ambulance for a life-threatening condition, call 999.



For your good health:

- 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. If you have a cough, cold or 'flu, drink plenty of water or other non-alcoholic liquids to replace fluids lost in sweating and keep warm and rest as much as you can.
- Check medicines in your home are up-to-date and keep them in their original labelled container. Always follow instructions on the box or label. If you are unsure or taking other medicines prescribed by your doctor, check with your local pharmacist first.
- 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 say they contain paracetamol, ibuprofen or aspirin, so always check before using them.
- To combat the cold, layers of thinner clothing are more effective than one thick layer. Choose clothes made of wool, cotton or fleecy synthetic fibres. Also wear a hat (a lot of your body heat is lost through your head) and make sure that your shoes will grip in slippery conditions.



If something's troubling you, get in touch:
Telephone: 0131 221 9999 (Branch)
National telephone: 116 123
08457 909090 (UK)

Your County Needs You This Winter!

Midlothian Council is hoping that community spirit will flourish in severe weather. Once again, the emphasis this year is on Midlothian Council working with communities in severe weather. Midlothian Council advises;

"Six years ago when the snow was particularly bad our staff continued to provide an often exceptional service during very difficult conditions."

"For example, many were walking far distances so elderly clients could get the help they needed at home."

"Meanwhile, the roads team was committed to doing its bit by keeping the county's main roads open."

We are confident all the necessary measures are in place to cope whatever the weather throws at us.

As a priority the Council clear main roads, bus routes and pavements such as routes to schools and hospitals, before tackling, for example, roads to industrial estates. It is only then that gritting teams can get down residential streets. The Council has stockpiled more than 5,000 tons of grit to keep Midlothian moving this year.

It would be good if residents help too.

They simply can't get down all residential streets quickly in severe weather and rely on householders to, if possible, keep roads and pavements outside their home free of snow and ice.

"Most residents do a sterling job and we can't thank them enough but this year, if there's a neighbour who might need help then why not offer some? Of course everyone should take the necessary precautions to not let anyone in your house you don't know - but there's still plenty we can all do to help out this winter. Even just having a chat and checking that an elderly neighbour is okay can make a real difference if they've been stuck indoors feeling lonely."

Midlothian Council also has robust procedures in place to look after vulnerable people. By working closely with agencies including NHS Lothian, the voluntary sector and the emergency services, they make sure those in greatest need are cared for.

For example, working with the voluntary sector, the Council can organise practical help and support for many elderly people living alone - including shopping and collecting prescriptions, It also makes sure places like care homes get the necessary access they need to goods and services and it liaises with the NHS to support patients being discharged from hospitals who need extra support.

Useful council telephone numbers:

Housing Repairs: 0131 663 7211

Waste: 0131 561 5284

Recycling: 0845 130 2322

Feedback: 0131 561 5444

In very extreme weather, anyone who is vulnerable and needs help call 0131 271 3233.



For more information on what the Council does in severe weather, visit www.midlothian.gov.uk/severe-weather

For more information on taking delivery of a bag of grit/salt mix for your community group email; severeweatherdutyofficer@midlothian.gov.uk

Have a Braw Blether at Midlothian Libraries

"There is a direct link between what you feel about stories and what you feel about everything else, especially about yourself."

Braw blether is a reading group with a difference. This service encourages individuals to come together to share thoughts, ideas, emotions and feelings using books, stories and poems as inspiration.

At any one time up to one in five adults in the UK can feel alone, stressed or struggle to cope with life - but using the ideas from stories, books and poems in this way can improve confidence, self-esteem and interpersonal skills.

Why not join us and see how much better you feel with a cup of tea and a Braw Blether?

How do I know if this is right for me?

You don't have to be a great reader to come along and you don't need to bring anything with you.

Even just sitting and listening to others is great. The service is free and refreshments will be served. Groups run in Dalkeith and Penicuik.

Please also feel free to bring a friend or support person with you.

For more information about Braw Blether you can get in touch by phone with Fiona on 0131 271 6668 or by email on Fiona.bailey@midlothian.gov.uk. She is usually available Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

You can also always pop into your next session at the library or look at the library website: <http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/libraries>



READY SCOTLAND

The Scottish Government's 'Ready Scotland' website provides a wide range of information on emergencies and how to prepare for them. The site is available at: <http://www.readyscotland.org>

Follow Midlothian Council's Twitter and Facebook to keep up to date!

Twitter - @MidGov

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/MidlothianCouncil>

A REQUEST - PLEASE KEEP THE MAIN ROADS CLEAR OF HAPHAZARDLY PARKED CARS!

For many people the buses provide a lifeline during the winter. Buses keep going at a time when many motorists lose confidence in driving their own cars. Those motorists turn to the buses instead. There are ways that you can help keep the buses running for everyone in the community.

- Some motorists dig out their cars from their drives or cul-de-sacs, and not wanting to repeat the task if fresh snow falls again, park them on the nearest main road. If many motorists do the same along one stretch of standard width road, the effect can be to narrow the road so buses can no longer get through. This then means that buses are diverted away and that area of the town is no longer served. This has happened in past severe winters in areas as diverse as the Penicuik estates, Loanhead main road, Bonnyrigg main road, Woodburn, Mayfield and Birkenstone in Gorebridge.
- The Council learnt the lesson and introduced Traffic Orders that temporarily prohibit parking along some stretches of road when snow is forecast to lie for three days or more. These are marked by cones before the snow falls and will remain in force until the snow has gone and the cones are removed. The orders have been placed in areas that have proved to be a problem in past winters. Even if there are no cones, please consider if parking a car might cause an obstruction for other vehicles.
- Remember, if a bus cannot get through, then it will also be difficult or impossible for a fire engine or a waste disposal truck to pass.
- At the outer end of a bus route, there is often a turning circle so that the bus can turn to return to the city. These are essential for the bus to continue serving the outer sections of a route. If there is nowhere to turn at the usual terminus, then the bus will be turned short [where there is a way of turning safely] and more people will be inconvenienced. The Council clears bus termini of snow. A clear patch of road can be a temptation for a motorist looking for somewhere to park on or just off the main road, but a car parked here will obstruct the smooth operation of the buses. Please do not park in the path of buses using a bus terminus such as Rosewell, Cameron Crescent in Poltonhall or Deanburn in Penicuik.
- In a couple of places in Midlothian, the narrowness of the roads or the hilly terrain make it safer for all traffic to proceed in the same direction. In past winters, this has happened around the upper Mayfield estates [clockwise], and at Birkenstone [anticlockwise].



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 them these four key questions:

- Is your home cold?
- Is your home damp?
- Is your home draughty?
- Are you concerned about affording to heat your home?

If the answer is 'yes' to any of these, what next?
Support is available through:

1) The Scottish Government's Energy Assistance Scheme. Call Home Energy Scotland on 0808 808 2282 for more information.

2) Changeworks' Affordable Warmth Team provide outreach support to people who struggle with heating costs, gas or electricity debt, or with staying warm, dry and comfortable in their home. We help people get the most out of their heating and hot water, resolve fuel billing problems, negotiate a better tariff with suppliers, access energy efficiency grants and give advice on choosing a suitable gas/electricity tariff. We support people living in Midlothian, Edinburgh and East Lothian, and can visit people at home. If you would like to contact one of our energy advisors:

email warmth@changeworks.org.uk

Fill in our online referral form on our website:
<http://www.changeworks.org.uk/householders/free-energy-advice-referral-form/569/>

Or call 0808 808 2282 and ask for the Affordable Warmth Team.



From Midlothian Council.....

For top tips about what to do in severe weather as well as information on how to cope if snow does come, and for more information visit www.midlothian.gov.uk/severe-weather. Our Council teams are ready for whatever the season throws at us. Our gritting teams will be out round the clock as required, our land and countryside services staff members are all on hand to tackle fallen branches if needed and there's more than 5,000 tons of grit in stock.

Councillor Derek Rosie, the Cabinet member with responsibility for roads, said: "The weather can change extremely quickly and it's good to know we are prepared to cope whatever happens.

"As usual, if we do get heavy snow, we are relying on residents who are able to do their bit by clearing pavements outside their homes.

"If local people could also check on vulnerable neighbours then that is a huge help."



The focus for the Council is to keep priority roads - such as bus routes and those near hospitals and schools- open throughout winter.

There are more than 430 grit bins placed throughout the area for general use. Please use the grit for footpaths and roads rather than private driveways.

We're also reminding people that if the weather does force us to close a school, nursery or public building then we will tell residents as soon as possible to allow them to plan ahead.

For more information visit www.midlothian.gov.uk/severe-weather or follow us on Facebook and Twitter .

To find out more about our gritting routes visit www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200287/roads/winter_on_midlothian_roads

Keeping Midlothian Moving

If there's heavy snow, the 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 and around the Birkenside loop at Gorebridge.

In addition, Lothian Buses can contact us immediately to have a car moved or a bus route gritted.

For maps of routes affected visit www.midlothian.gov.uk/downloads/download/201/winter_parking_restrictions