



Ability News – March 2018

Welcome!

Welcome to the second issue of our newsletter!

We have been very busy since our first issue, planning for our 6 Ability Roadshows across the Borders which will begin in April – you can read more about them in the following pages. And of course, we have been gathering a variety of articles which we hope will be of interest to you.

We promised to look at ways of making our newsletter more accessible. This month we will be placing printed copies in various locations in Duns, namely the library, Romanes pharmacy, Pearsons of Duns (Garden centre), Southfield Community Centre, the Citizen's Advice Bureau, Newsforce and the Co-op. We hope to get a better idea of the demand for the newsletter through the number of subscription requests we receive and from the amount taken. We will also be issuing the newsletter at each of the roadshows.

We would like to thank those of you who took the time to comment on our first newsletter and have included some of those comments throughout this issue. We encourage you to keep providing us with feedback, so we can keep improving with each issue.



We very much hope to see you at the roadshows and wish you a very happy Easter!

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Ability Roadshows

We are delighted to present a series of six roadshows across the Borders on the theme of independent living.

These events are for adults with a physical disability or long-term condition, their carers and families.

[Peebles – 16th April, Gytes Leisure Centre](#)

[Duns – 23rd April, Duns Rugby Club](#)

[Hawick – 30th April, Hawick Town Hall](#)

[Kelso – 10th May, Abbey Row Community Centre](#)

[Eyemouth – 14th May, Eyemouth Community Centre](#)

[Galashiels – 21st May, Focus Centre.](#)

Ability Roadshow
Independent Living Event

For adults with physical disabilities and long term conditions and their families/carers.

FREE events!

Come along and find out about

- Housing adaptations
- Warm Homes initiative
- Benefits
- Aids and equipment
- Support groups
- Transport
- Scottish Borders Physical Disability Strategy

To book, visit
www.abilityborders.org.uk/roadshows/events
or call 01896 757290

Ability Borders is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) SC045843

Location	Date	Venue
Peebles	16th April	Gytes Leisure Centre
Duns	23rd April	Duns Rugby Club
Hawick	30th April	Hawick Town Hall
Kelso	10th May	Abbey Row Centre
Eyemouth	14th May	Community Centre
Galashiels	21st May	Focus Centre

All events 1pm-4pm, except Kelso (1.30pm-4.30pm)

What is independent living?

Essentially, it is living just like everyone else:

- having opportunities to make decisions that affect your life
- being able to pursue activities of your own choosing.

We will be bringing along groups and organisations to share information with you about benefits, transport, housing, adaptations, aids and equipment, support services and recreational activities which can enable independent living.

You will also have a chance to give your views on the new Borders physical disability strategy produced by the Health and Social Care Partnership.

During the first two hours of the roadshow, there will be a number of quick 10-minute presentations from the groups and organisations. There will be lots of breaks and opportunities for questions.

During the last hour, you will be able to look around the stalls in the style of a market place. You can speak to the groups and organisations joining us on the roadshow and find out more about what's in your area.

You can register to attend an event in your own area by going to our website page:

<http://abilityborders.org.uk/events/roadshows/>

and following the links to our Eventbrite booking system.

All events run from 1-4 p.m. apart from Kelso which is 1.30-4.30 p.m. Individuals can book for the presentations only, drop in to the market place for the last hour, or attend the whole thing. It's up to you!

We promise you a very friendly and welcoming environment – and refreshments will be available.

Support for People Affected By Cancer

In Scotland there are approximately 55,000 cancer registrations made annually. As of 2016/17 the number of newly diagnosed cancer cases in the Borders was approximately 700 per year. Over the next 5 years this number is set to increase from 700 per year to over 800.

Support for people in the Borders who have been affected by cancer is available through initiatives being delivered in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support.

Move More Borders is a physical activity programme for people affected by cancer. The programme is funded by Macmillan and is in partnership with Live Borders. A range of activities are offered including walking groups, gentle movement classes (similar to Tai Chi), small group training classes and gardening groups.



The activities are free and family and friends are also welcome. Taking part in physical activity during and after cancer treatment can help prevent and manage some of the effects of treatment, such as fatigue, depression and risks to heart health. Lots of people report that it helps them to feel more like their old self.

For more information:

Phone 01896 661166 ext 311 or email: movemore@liveborders.org.uk

Transforming Care After Treatment (TCAT) aims to support people who have completed cancer treatment, giving them the opportunity to complete a Holistic Needs Assessment (HNA) that will help identify their ongoing concerns or problems.

This is then followed up by inviting people to attend a variety of Health & Well Being Events where support and information regarding what to expect will be provided, along with the services that are available.



The British Red Cross is working in collaboration with (TCAT) to support people after their treatment and recovery from cancer.

Whether their needs are practical, emotional or physical, the Red Cross will develop a plan that will help them to regain a sense of control over their lives. Below are some testimonials from people who have used the service.

“After the trauma of a cancer diagnosis and treatment, it can be so difficult to return to a normal life. If you’re on your own like I am, it can be an especially lonely time. TCAT has helped me no end. As well as giving me a lot more confidence, my quality of life has greatly improved. I’m certainly more outgoing since making use of the project and would definitely recommend anyone who has been through cancer to get in touch.”

“The help was very comprehensive and if something wasn’t available they would help to find another provision. This all made me feel empowered, supported and secure”

TCAT is also a free service and is being delivered by the British Red Cross with Macmillan Cancer Support, NHS Borders and Scottish Borders Council.

To find out more, contact the Red Cross on 01896 751888.



Lavender Touch

Living with cancer and its treatment can be the most distressing time in someone's life leading to a variety of emotions and symptoms. To help ease some of these, Lavender Touch provide a complementary therapy service in the form of massage, reflexology and aromatherapy.

The therapies are designed to help ease the symptoms and side effects of treatments such as nausea, anxiety, muscle aches and pains, insomnia and lethargy.

With a team of therapists, the service is offered in people's homes, the Macmillan Centre, the Renal Unit and the Margaret Kerr unit. Anyone diagnosed with cancer in the Borders is eligible for 6 free treatments which can be arranged at different stages of illness and recovery. The service is also extended to their carers also who are entitled to 3 free treatments.

To access the service a doctor, nurse or healthcare professional must make a referral to Lavender Touch.

Lavender Touch also develop and sell their own range of products which have been specifically formulated to help these symptoms and are safe for people with cancer to use. Developed by experienced Clinical Aromatherapists, the products include creams, sprays, scrubs, body wash, lip balms, pulse points and aromasticks. The product range uses a variety of essential oils which help with sleep, pain, rashes and inflamed skin, hot flushes, breathing, nausea circulation, infections and anxiety.



For more information on Lavender touch and their products, or to donate to this wonderful service, contact:

Phone 01896 208255

Email: admin@lavendertouch.co.uk

www.lavendertouch.co.uk

Cancer Support Cars



The Cancer Support Cars service is a voluntary transport service set up by Borders Macmillan Centre and the British Red Cross society. Funded solely by donations, the service was set up to meet the needs of people who are not eligible for Scottish Ambulance Service transport and would otherwise have difficulty in arranging transport to their appointments.

The service covers transport to any cancer related appointments across the Lothian and Borders and provides a door to door service which can prove invaluable to those undergoing treatment such as chemotherapy or radiotherapy.

As this service is funded entirely from donations, users are respectfully asked to make a minimum donation of:

- £15 per journey where the total distance is under 35 miles
- £25 per journey where the total distance is over 35 miles

Note that a journey to Edinburgh will cost the service approximately £50.

Information about this service should be issued to patients along with information about the Scottish Ambulance Service transport service. If you are able to claim travel expenses, then you will be able to claim in the usual way and pass it on to the service. It may also be possible to apply for a Macmillan grant to help towards the donation.

To request transport or find out more information about this service, contact:

British Red Cross

Phone: 01896 751888.

'Thank you so much I really enjoyed reading the newsletter, so much relevant information. I will forward to all the families we support as they are all impacted by illness and disability.'

Borders Community Transport Services

If you are unable to use public transport or don't have access to a car then, this service can support your needs.

With access to fully equipped wheelchair accessible vehicles driven by volunteer drivers as well as volunteer drivers using their own cars, the service can help with:

- Hospital, dentist, health centre and clinic appointments
- Optician and podiatry appointments
- Attending social activities and groups
- Visiting friends and relatives

Four organisations have come together to provide this service, Berwickshire Association for Voluntary Services (BAVS), the Bridge, British Red Cross and the Royal Voluntary Service.



You can access the service through a single point of contact however, and all calls are free.

There is a cost per mile and a minimum charge which you will be informed about when you book the transport.

To book your transport or enquire about the service, contact:

Phone: 0300 456 1985

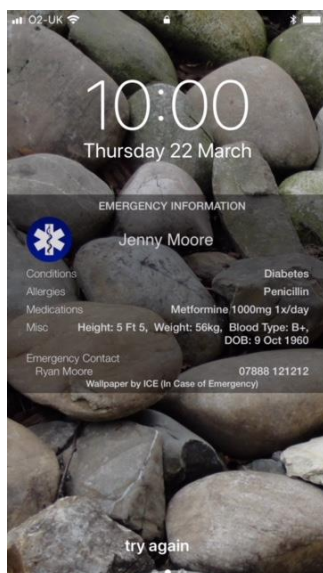
'Well done on the first newsletter, it looks great and a well worth read.'

'I've forwarded this on to colleagues as I'm sure they'll be interested in future releases.'

In Case of Emergency

If you own a smartphone, whether it is an iPhone, an Android or a BlackBerry then you can use an app called ICE – In Case of Emergency - to conveniently store information needed by doctors and paramedics if you are a victim of an emergency.

The concept of ICE was created by a former paramedic who understood the importance of having the relevant medical and contact information available at the scene of an accident or emergency.



As well as your name and the details of your emergency contact, the app allows you to provide information about your medications, known conditions, allergies and any other relevant information.

By adding ICE to your mobile phone, it allows paramedics on the scene to identify and treat you and to immediately notify your next of kin. They can do this without actually accessing the contents of the phone as it is made available to them on the home screen.

From a parent or carer's perspective, knowing that paramedics have access to all the information they need to give the right treatment and to contact the relevant person can be a big comfort.

ICE is free to download and can help to save lives.



'I have just been reading through your recent Ability Borders December Newsletter which I found was full of really good information.'

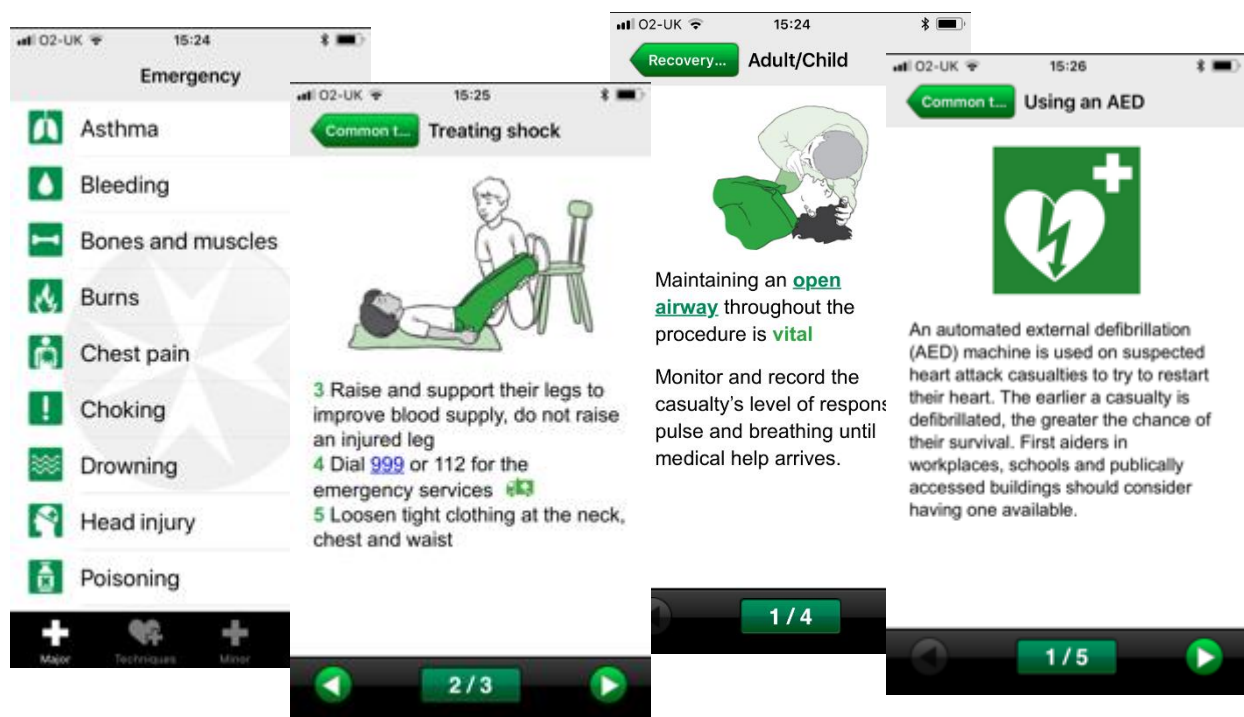


St Johns First Aid App

Another great app for a mobile phone is the St Johns Ambulance first aid app.

Completely free to download, the app provides guidelines on how to treat a range of conditions, from asthma to stroke.

The app is very simple to use and includes links within the instructions which when pressed will take you directly to the specific technique or instruction it is detailing. For instance, in the 'recovery position' instructions for adult/child it states to maintain an open airway. The words 'open airway' are in green text and underlined. When you tap this, you are taken directly to the 'Opening airways' instructions.



To download the app simply search for St Johns First Aid app – it's available for iPhone, Android and BlackBerry smartphones.



Arthritis Virtual Assistance

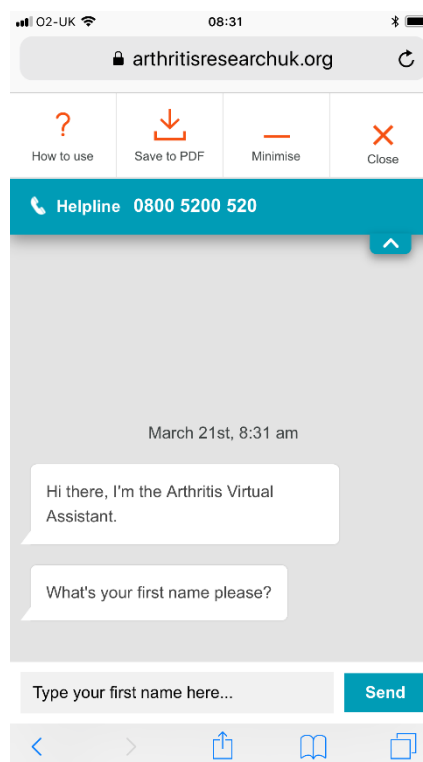
Living with arthritis can mean dealing with significant pain and fatigue which can often lead to isolation. Finding information at any time of the day or night can be vital.

Arthritis UK have recently developed an online virtual assistant which uses the latest technology to give people with arthritis access to personalised information. Still in its early stages, the virtual assistant has been designed to learn and improve upon itself with every use, by building upon its own intelligence.

At the moment, the assistant can give general information about your condition and medication and provide you with useful exercises to help manage your arthritis. It will give the best response if the question asked relates to a single type of arthritis and is expressed clearly. For example, you can ask “what are the best exercises for osteoarthritis?” or “What are the side effects of methotrexate?”.

You can try the virtual assistant out yourself by visiting the website:

www.arthritisresearchuk.org/arthritis-information



'I thought the newsletter was very clear and attractive to read. It presented information in a really easy format for people to access.'

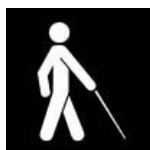
Digital Accessibility

For those of us who are fortunate to be digitally aware and have access to technology such as Apple iPads, there are many ways in which information and media can be made more accessible.



Apple believe that ‘the most powerful technology in the world is technology that everyone, including people with disabilities, can use. To work, create, communicate, stay in shape, and be entertained.’

So, when designing products, they do so with everyone and have created a number of assistive features which complement your vision, hearing, motor skills, learning and literacy such as these:



VoiceOver Feature – for blind and low vision

VoiceOver is a gesture-based screen reader that lets you enjoy iPad even if you can’t see the screen. When this feature is enabled you can hear a description of everything happening on your screen, from battery level to who’s calling to which app your finger is on and image recognition and much more. You can also adjust the speaking rate and pitch to suit you.

VoiceOver also includes systemwide support for braille chords in 6 and 8 dot braille, enabling direct braille entry without the need for a physical braille keyboard and the iPad is fully compatible with more than 70 refreshable braille displays.

For those who are deaf-blind, iPad lets VoiceOver users access closed-caption and subtitle tracks through their braille displays.



Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Apple products are compatible with a large number of hearing aids which allow for better sound quality and offer many helpful features such seeing the battery status and changing the left or right volume, together or separately. You can also quickly apply your audiologist’s environmental pre-sets as you go outdoors or enter

noisy locations, like restaurants, without having to rely on additional remotes. There are a number of other features also.

Facetime provides high quality video which is ideal for people who communicate using sign language.

Siri is a voice activated assistant which also provides the option of texting questions and instructions.

iMessage lets you start up a conversation without needing to say or hear a word.

Closed Captions is available for films, TV programmes and podcasts.

Mono Audio When you're using headphones, you may miss some audio if you're hard of hearing or deaf in one ear. That's because stereo recordings usually have distinct left- and right-channel audio tracks. Mono audio can help by playing both audio channels in both ears, and letting you adjust the balance for greater volume in either ear.

Reading Support & Learning support

If you learn better when you can hear what you're reading or writing then there are some excellent features that can help you.

The feature called 'Speak Screen' will read all the content on the pages back to you. While 'Speak Selection' will allow you to highlight the specific range of text you want to hear so that you can follow along as highlighted words, sentences or words within each sentence are read aloud. And with 'Typing Feedback' activated, each letter you type on the keyboard is spoken aloud as well. You can also use 'Predictive Text', which suggests word options that you can listen to and choose from to get help with spelling.

Physical and Motor Skills

There are a number of features which have been developed specifically with motor skills in mind.

Switch Control is a powerful accessibility technology for anyone with extensive physical motor limitations. Switch Control lets you fully interact with your iPad without ever touching it.

By using Bluetooth-enabled switch hardware, like the one shown here, you can navigate through onscreen items and do things like edit photos, play videos and send email. You can even use your iPad to control your Mac or Apple TV.²



Siri is a voice activated assistant that can help you perform actions such as web searches, sending messages, tracking down documents, setting reminders or even turning on your go-to accessibility settings. All you have to do is ask by saying something like “Tell Luke I’m running late” or “Remind me to make reservations for Saturday”. And if you prefer to communicate by typing, there’s a new accessibility option to set Siri to “Type to Siri” mode. QuickType also helps predict your next word based on what you’ve said before, so you can minimise typing over time.

Dictation lets you talk wherever you would type. Tap the microphone button on the keyboard, say what you want to write, and your iPad converts your words (and numbers and characters) into text.

AssistiveTouch is very intuitive and easy to use allowing you to adapt the Multi-Touch screen to your physical needs. So, if you need to change some gestures, like pinch, you can make them accessible with just the tap of a finger. You can also create your own gestures and even customise the layout of the AssistiveTouch menu. And if you want an alternative to pressing the Home button, you can activate it with an onscreen tap. Gestures like rotate and shake are available even when your iPad is mounted on a wheelchair. And iOS devices support a number of third-party assistive devices that help you interact with your iPhone, iPad and iPod touch.

Touch Accommodations allows you to adjust how the screen responds to your touch. You can control how long you touch before it’s recognised or whether repeat touches are ignored. This means you can put your finger down anywhere on the screen and move to the item you want without mistakenly performing an action.

These are just some of the features that have been developed by Apple to make their technology accessible to all and help is available for all of these features through a variety of ways such as phone, online chat, email or in store.

Digital Awareness Training

We now do more online than ever before from grocery shopping to banking. However, as more and more services and information are made available electronically, people without digital awareness or access to computers and the internet are increasingly left behind.



So many different forms, guides, services etc are now either available to download or complete electronically. Not only is this cheaper but it's quicker. Even doctors are beginning to use video technology such as Facetime to speak with patients.

We would like to address these inequalities by looking at digital awareness training for those with physical disabilities and long-term conditions. We particularly want to ensure that this group have access to the information they need regarding their condition, benefits information, new developments and services. Being able to access friends and family through applications such as Facetime is also of importance.

If you would be interested in participating in digital awareness training, please contact us.



Borders Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service

According to the Scottish Council on Deafness, there are an estimated 1,012,000 people in Scotland with some degree of hearing loss. Of those 57,000 have severe to profound deafness.

Though most people will associate hearing loss with old age, around 466,000 are under the age of 60. In the Borders, about 1 in 6 people have some loss of hearing.

Hearing loss can have a significant detrimental effect on an individual due to difficulties with communications. As a result, people may avoid going to their GP's, have difficulty finding a job and/or communicating with colleagues, may not enter further education due to a lack of communication services, have trouble communicating while staying in hospital, are unable to join regular groups and activities and feel isolated from their family and community. Older people with hearing loss can also be prone to falls.

However, there is an extensive range of assistive technology and aids to help with hearing loss.



The Borders Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service provides a drop-in service through which you can borrow from a range of equipment including telephones with amplifiers, TV listening aids, relaxers for tinnitus, visual/chiming doorbells, and vibrating/flashing alarm clocks. These aids can be borrowed for a 2 week home trial so that you can ensure the product is right for you before you buy.

The drop-in centre is open every Thursday morning from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at 1 Wheatlands Mill, Wheatlands Road, Galashiels, TD1 2HQ.

Appointments outside these times are by prior arrangement.

For more information, contact:

Phone: 01896 751888

Email: bordersdeafandhardofhearing@redcross.org.uk

You can also access this service at the Red Cross office in Coldstream by calling 01890 883 673 for an appointment



Thank you very much for forwarding me this very useful and information newsletter, which I will forward to the appropriate staff.

It would be helpful if you would be willing to forward me future newsletters



The Scottish Borders
Carers Advisory Board

Scottish Borders Carers Advisory Board

According to the last census in 2011, there were more than 10,000 people providing unpaid care in the Borders. Of those, around 2,400 were providing over 50 hours of unpaid care a week. The true numbers, however, are thought to be much higher and will continue to grow as our population ages and the number of incidents of cancer, diabetes, dementia, etc., increases.

The Carers Advisory Board is a joint initiative by the Borders Carers Centre and Borders Care voice and was established to ensure the best possible outcomes for carers in the Borders.

Meeting every 6 weeks at the Carers Centre in Galashiels, the group aims to give carers a greater voice in the Scottish Borders - to improve the support they receive, their experiences, and their quality of life.

As a member of the group you will have opportunities to get involved, voice concerns and to raise issues as well as ensuring that carers are recognised as equal partners. You don't have to be politically motivated or a great speaker, just share your own experiences as a carer.

'42% of carers have one or more conditions'

Ensuring that the needs of carers are as much at the heart of future service development as those being cared for, is of key importance. Why? Because 42% of the carers identified in the census reported having one or more conditions themselves.

Without the right support and information, many of our carers can face unnecessary stress and considerable demands on their time and abilities, which in turn can cause them to neglect themselves and their own health needs.

Practical advice and support is available with respect to all aspects of caring including respite, benefits, rights and entitlements, local support, groups and activities etc.

Creating a balanced supportive environment for both the carers and those being cared for is vital as we move forward. The Carers Advisory Board is integral to ensuring this happens.

If you would like to join the group or find out more, call 01896 752431 or e-mail admin@borderscarers.co.uk



Carers Week is an annual awareness campaign to celebrate and recognise the vital contribution made by the UK's 6.5 million carers. It is also a time of intensive local activity, with thousands of events planned for carers across the UK.

Every day 6000 people in the UK become carers, that's over 2 million each year. By the year 2037 it is anticipated that there will be 9 million carers in the UK as our population ages and conditions such as cancer, diabetes and dementia increase.

The detrimental effect of being a carer can be considerable and far reaching, from deteriorating physical and mental health and reduced finances, to limited opportunities in employment, education and training. Supporting carers at every stage of their journey is vital to helping alleviate these effects.

Each year in the Scottish Borders, Borders Care Voice and Borders Carers Centre hold an event to celebrate the vital contribution of local carers. This year's event will take place on Tuesday, 12th June in Melrose.



More information will be made available nearer the time. However, if you would like to find out more, contact:

Borders Carers Centre

Phone: 01896 752431

Email: admin@borderscarers.co.uk

Or

Borders Care Voice

Phone: 01896 757290

Email: admin@borderscarevoice.org.uk

Health Authorisation Card for Young Carers



The Health Authorisation Card has been designed to help young children and young people under the age of 18 who care for someone who is disabled or ill.

The scheme arose in recognition of the young carer's role in providing unpaid care for parents and/or siblings and the impact upon their lives.

The initiative was started locally in 2014 by Action for Children and now has over 120 cards in circulation. Although the age range is targeted towards those who are 11 years and older, individual circumstance will be taken into consideration.

The card assures NHS staff that the cared for person consents to information being shared with their young carer. The card will specify the type of information which can be shared, i.e. medication, diagnosis, prognosis and also whether a young carer is able to pick up prescriptions on behalf of the person they care for.

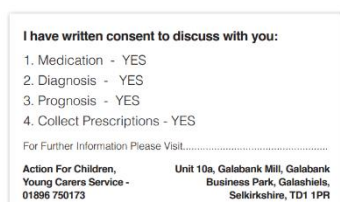
Front



It is still a duty of the NHS professional to use professional discretion when providing information so that it is appropriate for the young person's level of understanding and maturity.

The name, date of birth and photo of the young carer appear on the front of the card, alongside the name of the person cared for and a renewal date.

Back



On the back the card specifies the type of information the young carer has consent to discuss with the professional and whether they can pick up prescriptions. Action for Children's local contact details are also specified.

Note that you do not have to be part of the Young Carers Service to benefit from the health card.

For more information contact:

Phone: 01896 750173

Email: Jo.glover@actionforchildren.org.uk or

scottishbordersyoungcarers@actionforchildren.org.uk

Website: www.actionforchildren.org.uk

Revised Hospital Guide

The Borders General Hospital Participation Group have recently completed work on an updated guide to everything you need to know about coming in to and leaving hospital.

The guide is in its final stages of completion and will be made available within the next 2 months. Any patient who is admitted to the hospital will be provided with the guide which covers a range of information including what to bring with you to hospital, meal times, shopping, telephones, travel and mail. Access to this information ahead of scheduled procedures helps to reduce unnecessary stress and anxiety in patients.

All patients with planned admittance to hospital will receive the guide in plenty of time to prepare for their visit.



Parkinson's Set to Double

PARKINSON'S^{UK}
CHANGE ATTITUDES. FIND A CURE. JOIN US.

New figures from Parkinson's UK have shown that more than 12,000 Scots are living with the Parkinson's condition – and this amount is set to double within 50 years. In the Borders there are over 300 people with Parkinson's.

Parkinson's is a progressive neurological condition that causes a range of motor symptoms (such as tremor, rigidity, and slowness of movement) and non-motor symptoms (such as cognitive and mood disorders, pain, and sleep disturbances).

Although the cause is unknown, it is believed to involve both genetic and environmental factors and more commonly occurs in people over the age of 60, with men often more affected than women.

Parkinson can affect everyone differently, and for many people it can take years to progress to a point where it has a significant impact on daily life.

Borders Care Learning Network have recently been hosting Parkinson's awareness training. These sessions provide a valuable insight into the challenges of living with Parkinson's and some unique ways of dealing with them. One of the most important points stressed is the need to take medication on time.

To help with this there are products like this pill box with alarm. Although the retail price is around £15 upwards, they are available free through the Borders Parkinson's group.



The training sessions are provided by Gary Hattie, who himself was diagnosed with Parkinson's before he was 40 years old. Gary is also the coordinator of the Borders Parkinson's Branch and holds monthly 'Cuppa ana Chat' meetings in Hawick, Kelso, Langholm, Peebles and the Chaplaincy Centre at the Borders General Hospital. There is also a 'Young Parky Buddies' meeting in Galashiels.

The peer support provided in these groups is incredible. Not only is there an opportunity to meet some lovely people, you will have a giggle and learn about new developments or gain tips and advice from others. Tips like cutting off your pyjama bottoms around knee length to help with any difficulty turning in the bed at night.

Gary also produces a monthly newsletter which is well worth a read and can be found on the website below. In a recent newsletter he talks about new activity sessions in Peebles which have been established following the success in America of Boxing as an activity which benefits Parkinson's and coordination. Think more in terms of the training as opposed to knocking out your opponents!

To find out more about these groups or about raising money to support them, contact:

Email: garyhattie1@gmail.com

Phone: 01750 22588

www.bordersparkys.org.uk

For more information about Parkinson's visit the website which is full of great information:

www.parkinsons.org.uk

World Parkinson's Day

Most people have heard of Parkinson's but are not aware of what it is. This year world Parkinson's day is on the 11th April and is aimed at raising awareness.



Gary and some of his clan will be at the Borders General Hospital under the stairs on Tuesday 10th April where they will be selling home baking. They plan to be there all day so if you are around please stop by, buy some baking and have a chat – I guarantee you will find some lovely people!

Shingles Immunisation



In Scotland, around 7000 people aged 70 years and over get Shingles every year. But did you know there is a vaccine that can reduce your risk of getting Shingles, or if you do get shingles, it can reduce how serious the symptoms will be.

Shingles are caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox. Though most of the virus is destroyed during recovery, some will survive and can become active again in later life when your immune system has been weakened either through age, illness, stress or certain treatments.

Shingles usually infects a specific nerve and the area of skin around it causing a rash with very painful blisters that are filled with fluid. These blisters usually appear on a specific part of one side of the body, usually on the chest, but sometimes they also affect the head, face, and eyes.

The shingles rash usually appears a few days after the pain begins and lasts for about a week, but the pain can last much longer. The older you are, the more likely you are to have long-lasting pain. In some cases, the pain can persist for several months or even years – this is called post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN). Current treatments for PHN are not very effective, but the shingles vaccine reduces the risk of getting shingles and PHN.

‘Between 700–1400 of these people develop PHN and around 600 are admitted to hospital for treatment ‘

The shingles vaccine helps to protect you by boosting your immunity and you only need to have the vaccine once. It will reduce your chances of developing shingles by more than a third and reduce the symptoms and duration of the shingles if you do develop it.

If you are 70 or over, contact your GP to make an appointment to get your vaccine.

For more information talk to your practice nurse or GP, or call the NHS Inform Helpline on 0800 22 44 88 (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88). The helpline is open every day and also provides an interpreting service.

Further information and support is also available through the Shingles Support Society



<https://shinglessupport.org.uk/>

Edinburgh Marathon



One of Ability Borders newest and youngest members is training for the Edinburgh Marathon to raise money for the Mental Health Foundation.

Michelle Ritchie, 27, from Hawick has been training at Tweedbank sports complex to prepare for the 26 mile marathon on the 27th May. If you would like to sponsor Michelle or support her in any way then please contact us and we will provide you with her details.

We would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Michelle on her new job at HGS in Selkirk. This will be the first paid job that Michelle has been able to secure and until now has only been able to get voluntary work with charities.

Berwick's Games for People with Disabilities

Unlike the Paralympics, Berwick Rotary Club's annual sports and games day is all about fun.

Free to all participants, the event is open to people of any age and any disability. With around 10 different activities to participate in there is plenty of opportunity to try new things as well as have a go at the favourites. Darts, Boccia, table tennis, archery, skittles and swimming are just some of the activities on offer.

Though specialised assistance cannot be provided, carers are of course welcome, and staff will be willing to help where possible.

The event will be held on Sunday 13th May, at the Swan Leisure Centre, Tweedmouth, Berwick upon Tweed, TD15 2AS.



If you would like to be enter the games, please contact:

Moir Thompson,

Phone: 01289 382228 or 07889 979054 (mobile)

Email: moiaitchison@aol.com

All entries need to be in by 24th April.



Blue Badges

The blue badge scheme recently trialled a new eligibility service which allowed people with cognitive impairments to apply for a Blue Badge.

The pilot, which was introduced in April 2016 allows carers and relatives looking after people with conditions such as autism, Down's syndrome and dementia to apply for a badge.

The successful outcome of the pilot has meant that these changes are being permanently adopted. This is of particularly good news for the rising number of people with dementia.

There are approximately 5,200 Blue badge holders currently in the Scottish Borders, though it is not clear how many of those were issued for cognitive impairments.



To apply for a blue badge, contact the Customer Advice and Support Service

Telephone: 0300 100 1800

Address: Council Headquarters
Newtown St. Boswells
Melrose
TD6 0SA

Fuel Poverty Consultation



Members of Ability Borders recently attended a consultation on the Fuel Poverty Strategy, hosted by Home Energy Scotland.

The current definition of fuel poverty which was set out in 2001 is based on a household spending 10% or more of its income on energy costs to keep their home warm. Backed by legislation, a target was set

to ensure, so far as is reasonably practical, that people are not living in fuel poverty by November 2016.

Since that time, energy prices have risen far higher than inflation with an increase of 170% between 2003 and 2015 which has made achieving the target increasingly challenging.

Proposed new definitions are as follows:

Households in Scotland are in fuel poverty if:

- they need to spend more than 10% of their after housing cost (AHC) income on heating and electricity in order to attain a healthy indoor environment that is commensurate with their vulnerability status; and
- if these housing and fuel costs were deducted, they would have less than 90% of Scotland's Minimum Income Standard (MIS) as their residual income from which to pay for all the other core necessities commensurate with a decent standard of living.

The members contributions were formally submitted online, in which they addressed aspects of disability and heating, the rurality and lack of energy choices in some areas and the potential difficulties associated with paying for fuel in advance of delivery, such as heating oil. The lack of digital awareness and access to the internet is also a problem for some of the population, particularly the elderly, which often excludes them from finding the best energy supply deals.

A copy of the 'Consultation on a Fuel Poverty Strategy for Scotland' is available on the Scottish Government web site:

<https://beta.gov.scot/publications/consultation-fuel-poverty-strategy-scotland/>

Writing for Wellbeing

A developing body of research has shown that expressive writing helps calm the mind and emotions, increasing feelings of happiness and wellbeing. As well as sparking the imagination, people have found it meditative and report that it helps them to be kinder to themselves.



A Writing for Wellbeing course has recently been delivered in Duns as a collaborative effort between A Heart for Duns, SBC Community Capacity Building Team and Anne Ryland, a local poet and writing facilitator.

Twelve individuals of mixed ages embarked on the course which was delivered over eight weeks with each session lasting two and a half hours. The course covered a group poem, and letter writing and themes such as autumn, the Borders, home, the body, writing about objects.

Participants were given the choice of using either poetry or prose writing styles for the themes and were asked to keep a journal at home.

The course culminated in a published booklet which was for group use only. Such was the success of the group that they have continued to meet up once a month as a closed group.

One of Ability Borders own members who attended the group shared some of his writing with us. We were so impressed and touched by his work that we asked if we could share it with our readers and we're very glad he agreed.

Isolation

I feel alone most of the time and very alone some of the time. Loneliness affects me day and night, long hours of solitude, hours pass without hearing a human voice outside of television or the radio.

I feel cast adrift from my fellow man drowning in a sea of nothingness. Melancholy touches me deep within my soul bursting to explode with joy that just is not there.

This lack of contact with fellow man or woman leaves me sad and dejected from life's merry go round disconnected from a happier me. Solitary hours pass me by feeling hopeless and afraid in my prison cell that should be home.

Memories of childhood days creep across the room bringing out of the shadows happier times to lament away this lonely life.

Ability Borders Member



Diabetes Project Update

In our last newsletter we talked about the success of a new type 2 diabetes project trialled in Galashiels which combines tailored exercise, nutrition, and social and psychological support.

Run in partnership with NHS Borders, the project is now well underway in Eyemouth with a full 12 participants who have begun their 6 month intervention to better their diabetes control.

Participants are all enjoying their twice weekly exercise class and are already asking how to best exercise outside the class setting. As part of the programme they attend healthy eating and nutrition workshops provided by the Health Living Network and Desmond programme and behavioural change and motivational sessions with the LASS service. These form the start of a long and important intervention programme.

Anyone who missed out on the Eyemouth project can still access the generic exercise referral programme, for more information please see details below.

As part of the diabetes project a peer mentor programme is being developed which will offer further support to anyone referred into the programme. A peer mentor training day is provisionally booked for the 4th of April in Galashiels with a few places still available. If you are interested in becoming a diabetes per mentor, please get in touch with Paul Davis using the contact information below.

Along with condition specific projects Live Borders also have various supported exercise options available in falls prevention, cancer rehab, active ageing, mental health and multi condition low level classes.

For more information on Live Borders Health pathways please get in touch with Paul Davis:

Phone: 07458040481

Email: pdavis@liveborders.org.uk

'Your newsletter is really impressive ... I feel that Ability Borders is going in the right direction, providing direct information and support for disabled people. Well done!'

Diabetics - Changes to Ribena

Ribena Blackcurrant is sometimes used by people with diabetes to help manage their blood sugar levels. From February 2018, new Ribena Blackcurrant formulations (both ready to drink and squash) are being introduced with a reduced sugar content of approximately 55%.

The new Ribena Blackcurrant will now contain sugars naturally occurring from the juice, with a reduced level of added sugar (sucrose), and the sweeteners Acesulfame K and Sucralose.



This initiative follows on from the reduction of sugars in Lucozade Energy as part of Lucozade Ribena Suntory's (LSR) health and wellbeing plan to reduce the sugar levels in their drinks.

For more information on the nutritional contents of specific LRS products please visit <https://www.lrsuntory.com/our-brands/> or contact our consumer care team on hcp.enquiry@lrsuntory.com.



Eat, Sleep, Ride C.I.C.

A new social enterprise, Eat, Sleep, Ride C.I.C is a riding school with a difference.

Based in Reston, Duns and run by its founder Danielle McKinnon, the school goes above and beyond when it comes to engaging with individuals with additional needs. Whether you are disabled, have a long-term condition, mental health issues or you are young or old, Danielle will create activities tailored to your individual needs.

If you would just like to come along and groom horses, that's fine. If you would like to just walk with them, that's fine too. There are no expectations or pressures and you will find a passionate, caring and understanding team there to support you.



Alongside this Danielle offers lessons, educational walks, groundwork training and training programmes for employment and employability aimed at reaching young people.

If you are interested and would like to have a taster session Danielle will be happy to organise that too.

For more information, contact:

Danielle McKinnon

Email: dmc85@hotmail.co.uk

Phone: 07516 360235

www.eatsleeprides.org

Contact Us

We hope you have enjoyed this newsletter. **Please get in touch if you would like to subscribe to the newsletter.**

We would also love to hear your thoughts about the newsletter. Perhaps you have some tips you would like to share, information about your own group, an appeal for help in your area or to highlight an example of great service and support you have experienced. Whatever it is, we welcome your constructive input.

Email: enquiries@abilityborders.org.uk

Tel: 0300 999 2273

Facebook: Ability Borders

Web: www.abilityborders.org.uk

1 Orchard Park

St.Boswells

TD6 0DA

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