



Ability News – July 2018

Welcome!



Since our last issue we have been incredibly busy holding 6 successful roadshows across the Borders, attended by over 340 people. As a result, we issued over 120 information bags, signed up new members, established a new user group in Hawick and were able to solicit feedback for the new Physical Disability Strategy as part of its consultation engagement. We subsequently held two further consultation sessions on the strategy, involving over 20 people and submitted a thorough and comprehensive response.

We would like to say a huge thank you to our wonderful members who provided invaluable support at the events, and without whom we would not have coped. Some of our members then went on to represent Ability Borders at the Greenlaw Festival and gave a brief update for this issue. And of course, we have been gathering a variety of articles which we hope will be of interest to you.

If you have received a copy of this newsletter indirectly and would like to subscribe, please email us and let us know. As usual, we encourage you to keep providing us with feedback, so we can keep improving with each issue.

We wish you a very happy summer!



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Ability Borders at the Greenlaw Festival

Ability Borders were on the road again attending the Greenlaw Festival for the first time on Saturday 30th June 2018.

Dun`s steering group members John and Diane Cobb manned the stall at the Festival to promote the service and make people aware what the service can provide.

Goodie bags were given to people who stopped and enquired about Ability Borders which contained information on numerous services available across the Scottish Borders.

Ability Borders at present run two monthly member groups in Dun`s and Galashiels with a third group in Hawick due to officially start in August.



If you would like to know more about Ability Borders and are interested in joining a member group, please use the contact information at the end of the newsletter.

'The second newsletter is better than the first, lots of really interesting, useful information. I was particularly interested in the app that could improve my computer skills. Well done.'

Welfare Benefits

Carers Allowance Changes



Carer's Allowance is a benefit for people who provide regular 'care' for someone who needs additional support and is currently paid by the Department of Work & Pensions. But this is about to change in Scotland.

A new Scottish Agency, Social Security Scotland, has been set up to deliver certain benefits that have been devolved to Scotland through the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018. This Act provides for eight different types of benefits – one of which is Carer's

Allowance.

Carer's Allowance payments are currently £64.60 per week. The Scottish Government has decided to increase Carer's Allowance to the same payment rate as Jobseeker's Allowance, which is currently £73.10 per week. However, until the Scottish Government has the new benefit system fully up and running, carers in Scotland will still be paid by the Department of Work & Pensions.

To cover the shortfall, carers will receive a top up supplement (backdated to April 2018) twice a year from the Scottish Government, which will be the difference between the amount of Carer's Allowance paid by the Department of Work & Pensions and the current rate of Jobseeker's Allowance.

Claiming Carer's Allowance

You don't have to be related to or live with the person that you care for. Any savings that you have will not be taken into account, and you will also get National Insurance credits towards your pension if you are under pension age.

You cannot be paid extra if you care for more than one person.

All of the following conditions must be satisfied to claim Carer's Allowance. You must:

- Be at least 16 years old,
- Spend at least 35 hours a week caring for someone,
- Live in the UK, and have lived in the UK for at least 2 out of the last 3 years (unless you are a refugee or have humanitarian protection status, or live abroad as a member of the armed forces)
- Not be in full-time education, or study for 21 hours a week or more

- Not be subject to immigration control
- Not earn over £120 a week (after deductions)

In addition, the person you care for must already get one of the following benefits:

- Personal Independence Payment – daily living component
- Disability Living Allowance – the middle or highest care rate
- Attendance Allowance
- Constant Attendance Allowance paid with an Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit, or basic rate with a War Disablement Pension
- Armed Forces Independence Payment

There are a significant number of carer's failing to claim this benefit in the Borders. One reason may be that individuals do not see themselves as carer's. The new Carer's Act which came into force on 1st April 2018 defines a carer to be:

Any individual who provides or intends to provide care for another individual. This will include anyone who provides unpaid support to family or friends who could not manage without this help e.g. caring for a relative, partner or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or substance misuse problems.



Claims can be made online by clicking the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/how-to-claim>

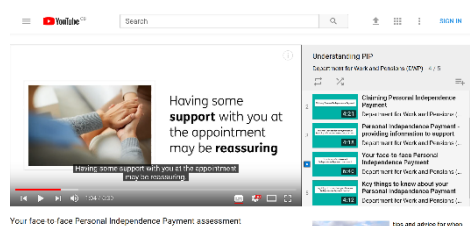
Or calling the Carer's Allowances team on: **0800 731 0297**



Department
for Work &
Pensions

PIP Videos published by the DWP

The DWP has published 5 short videos to help give people an overview of the process for claiming Personal Independence Payment (PIP).



The videos provide information to help explain the key stages in the PIP customer journey so that people understand what to expect at each step of the way and what they need to do when making a claim.

What the videos are about

1. Is PIP for you or someone you know?

Who might be eligible and what to do before the claim.

2. Claiming PIP

The claim process – making the initial telephone call, when you should get the form and how long you have to complete it.

3. Supporting information for PIP

What supporting information you should include with your claim and why it's important.

4. The face-to-face assessment

5.

What to expect if you are asked to attend a face-to-face assessment.

5. The PIP decision – key things to know

What to do when you receive the PIP decision letter. It also outlines the importance of reporting any changes in circumstances so that we can ensure the level of benefit they are getting is still right.

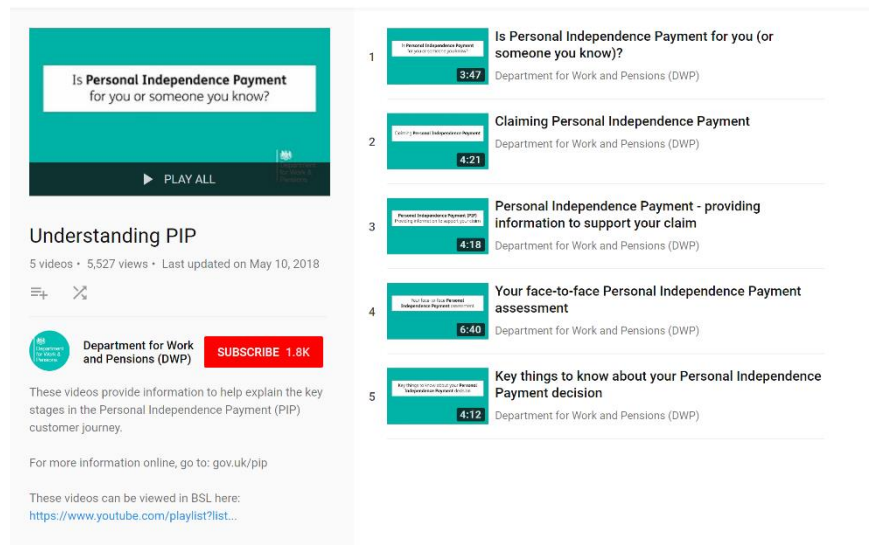
You can access the videos at:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLeysxjNpEPy8Y73-Ywm7OeAGjFc1Xc-It>

Or just go to YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/>) and search for 'Understanding PIP'

The videos have audio and subtitles and are best viewed unmuted. BSL versions of this video are also available via <https://www.youtube.com/dwpsign>

Ability Borders members who have reviewed the videos have given mixed reviews. Some, yet to go through the process, found the videos informative. Others who are currently appealing decisions have found the videos to be far removed from reality. We would be interested in hearing your thoughts too. You can send an email enquiries@abilityborders.org.uk or phone 0300 999 2273.



Video recording to be a standard part of the PIP assessment process

A written statement - HCWS733 - made by Sarah Newton (Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work) in June announced:

"We are constantly looking at ways to continually to improve the PIP service. In response to Paul Gray's Second Independent Review and the recent Work and Pensions Select Committee Report we outlined numerous further improvements to the PIP service. This included numerous measures to improve the clarity of our communications products and increasing the level of clinical coaching, feedback and support available to each assessor.



"A key part of our efforts to improve the assessment process will be making video recording of the PIP assessment a standard part of the process. We will be piloting videoing the assessment with a view to then rolling this out across Great Britain.

The statement also announced the extension of Capita and Atos contracts for a further two years to "better allow for a stable transition to any new provision."

[View statement HCWS733](#)

Roadshow feedback:

'Really impressed with presentations and with individual stands. Good information and advice given'



Ability Borders Welfare Benefits Event

Too many people with disabilities and their carers/family are still not claiming for the benefits they may be entitled to. Of equal concern is the fact that many are not being awarded the benefits and support that they should be entitled to.

Not knowing what to apply for, how to apply, gathering evidence and navigating through forms with over 40 pages can create immense levels of stress and anxiety. When this process is complicated by problems, claim denials, appeals and tribunals the mental and physical health of individuals can become significantly affected. Often people give up and resign themselves to living in unacceptable conditions.



We hope to begin to address these issues by holding a major welfare benefit event. The purpose of the event will be to give as much support, information and guidance as possible with respect to benefits related to disabilities and carers. We will hold workshops, provide one on one support, talk about rights, take a walk through the key benefits, provide guidance and support documentation, set up appointments for follow up, and discuss interim help and other sources of support.

In order to achieve this, we will need to coordinate the support of a number of agencies and organisations who deal with benefits advice across the Borders.

If this is something that you would be interested in attending or would like to support the event, then please email: enquiries@abilityborders.org.uk and let us know. We are aiming to hold the event in September/October 2018.

'I love your second addition newsletter!'

'What a fabulous newsletter I have enjoyed every part of it'



Sepsis is an acute bodily reaction to infection in which the person's own tissues and organs are damaged. It can lead to shock, multiple organ failure, and death, especially if it is not recognised early and treated promptly.

HOW TO SPOT SEPSIS IN ADULTS

Seek medical help urgently if you (or another adult) develop any of these signs:

- **S**lurred speech or confusion
- **E**xtrême shivering or muscle pain
- **P**assing no urine (in a day)
- **S**evere breathlessness
- It feels like you're going to die
- **S**kin mottled or discoloured

Sepsis kills 44,000 people in the UK every year and in Scotland someone dies of sepsis every 4 hours. In fact, it kills more people in Scotland than breast and prostate cancer combined.

One quarter of all people who survive sepsis are left with significant complications ranging from chronic pain, memory loss, limb amputations, seizures, kidney impairment and bowel problems.

If caught early however, outcomes can be excellent.

Early symptoms of sepsis may include:

- Very high or low temperature
- Uncontrolled shivering
- A fast heartbeat
- Fast breathing

In some cases, symptoms of more severe sepsis develop soon after, including:

- Feeling dizzy or faint
- Confusion
- Diarrhoea
- Nausea and vomiting
- Slurred speech
- Severe muscle pain
- Severe breathlessness
- Not passing as much urine as normal
- Cold or blotchy hands and feet
- Loss of consciousness

HOW TO SPOT SEPSIS IN CHILDREN

If your child is unwell with either a fever or very low temperature (or has had a fever in the last 24 hours), call 999 and just ask: could it be sepsis?

A child may have sepsis if he or she:

- Is breathing very fast
- Has a 'fit' or convulsion
- Looks mottled, bluish, or pale
- Has a rash that does not fade when you press it
- Is very lethargic or difficult to wake
- Feels abnormally cold to touch

A child under 5 may have sepsis if he or she:

- Is not feeding
- Is vomiting repeatedly
- Has not passed urine for 12 hours

**EVERY 4
HOURS
SOMEONE IN
SCOTLAND
DIES OF
SEPSIS**

Individually, these symptoms can be due to other health problems but a combination of these symptoms becoming progressively worse means it is important to speak with a medical professional. If the patient has sepsis and is left unchecked, the patient's condition is likely to rapidly progress to multiple organ failure and death.

Time is critical when it comes to treating sepsis and every hour counts. It is vital that you seek medical advice if you have recently had an infection or injury and have possible early signs of sepsis.

To find out more about sepsis and current research go to: <https://sepsistrust.org/> or www.nhsinform.scot/sepsis



FEAT

The Fiona Elizabeth Agnew trust (FEAT) was set up following the death of Fiona, a GP and her unborn daughter Isla in August 2012 who both died after contracting Sepsis.

Established by Craig Stobo, Fiona's husband, with the support of six of the couple's friends, FEAT's main objective is to stop sepsis through funding research into the early detection of the condition and its treatment and also to raise awareness about sepsis more generally.

To find out more go to:

www.featurk.org.uk

Roadshow feedback:

97% of attendees found the events to be good, very good or excellent.

96% would like to see more events in the future.



Finding Your Feet

Finding Your Feet support families affected by amputation or limb difference, through a range of sporting initiatives and social inclusion projects.

The loss of a limb, whether through amputation or congenital limb difference, can have a devastating impact and will change people's lives.

Isolation is a huge problem for many amputees. It has been proven that quality of life and even life expectancy is greatly reduced without social inclusion, with as many as 30% not surviving a year post amputation.

Finding Your Feet supports amputees and their families or carers in achieving rehabilitation and independence in hospital, home, education, employment and sport.



They provide opportunities for individuals and their families to come together to share experiences or simply socialise and are currently in Glasgow, Dundee, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Leeds. From day trips, drop-in centres, coffee mornings and parties to football, climbing, skiing and swimming, our sessions are designed to meet the needs of all ages while providing a unique opportunity for amputees to have fun and benefit from some support.

For more information, contact:

Email: info@findingyourfeet.net

Phone: 0141 258 4868

Web: <https://www.findingyourfeet.net/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/findingyourfeetcharity>

Pharmacy care

Pharmacies in the Borders are now providing more services than you might know about. Along with specialist advice, some offer blood pressure testing, a minor ailments service and medication trays among other services.

A growing number of pharmacists in the Borders now also offer free collection and delivery prescription service.



Borders pharmacy have a pharmacy in Hawick and Galashiels and are always looking for ways to help improve their services. They currently offer:



Delivery-Collection

The service can collect your prescription from your doctor and have it ready for you to collect or deliver straight to your door.

Ordering On-Line

An easy on-line repeat prescription form to order your repeat medicines.

Medication Trays

For people who are on multiple types of medication, and find it difficult to remember how to take them, the service can make up and deliver weekly medication trays to help.



Blood Pressure

You can test your blood pressure in the pharmacy. Just pop in and make an appointment. If they are not busy they may be able to do it immediately.

Lyndsay & Gilmore pharmacies in Selkirk and Galashiels also offer the collection/delivery and blood pressure services as do **GLM Romanes Ltd** Pharmacy in Duns.

It is worth checking with your pharmacy to see which services they provide as they continue to play a greater role in primary healthcare services.

Finding the right home in the right place can be a confusing and stressful experience. If you have a disability, mobility problems or other specific needs, it can be even more complicated.

Housing Options Scotland were set up in 1997 to provide a unique public access service to all disabled people throughout Scotland advising on social renting, private renting, and home ownership.

They advise and support disabled people, veterans and older people through the complex design, financial and legal processes involved in buying or renting a property

This summer, Housing Options Scotland will be holding free drop in events all over the country to give housing information, advice and support to disabled people, older people, disabled veterans and those who support them and will be coming to Langlee in August.

At this free drop in event there will be:

- Presentations throughout the day on housing.
- Information stalls from local and national organisations working with disabled people, older people, disabled veterans and those who support them.
- The chance to speak to housing professionals about your housing needs.
- Not forgetting teas, coffees and biscuits!
- And as this is a drop in event, you can come along whenever suits you!



And **Ability Borders** will be there too with lots of our lovely members.

This HOW 2 event will take place at the **Langlee Community Centre** on **Thursday 16th August** between **10pm and 3pm**.

To find out more and book yourself a free place, click here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/how-2-find-the-right-home-in-the-right-place-galashiels-tickets-45771720448>

If you would like to find out more about Housing Options Scotland, visit their website at www.housingoptionsscotland.org.uk or call on 0131 247 1400.



Hospital Saturday Fund

The Hospital Saturday Fund is a registered charity whose aims are to provide assistance through its charitable funds for:

- Individuals with a medical condition or disability who would benefit from assistance with the purchase of specialised equipment or from practical forms of treatment
- Registered health charities such as hospitals, hospices, medical organisations who are in need of grants for medical projects, care, research or support of medical training within the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland

The Hospital Saturday Fund will also consider giving partial or full grants (Maximum of £2000) to individuals for the following:

| | |
|--|--|
| Specialised Mobility Equipment | Wheelchairs, Mobility Scooters, Car adaptations |
| Medical Appliances and Aids | Hearing Aids, Nebulisers, Specialised Vision Aids. |
| Specialised Computer Equipment | |
| Therapeutic Equipment / Treatment | Orthopaedic beds, Mattresses or Pillows Riser /recliners chairs Lift hoist / aids Physiotherapy, Hydrotherapy, Acupuncture, Speech therapy Osteopathy, Chiropractic treatment Reflexology, Massage therapy Aromatherapy. |
| Home adaptations | Walk in showers, accessibility adaptations to bathrooms, access ramps, non-slip flooring, stair lifts. |
| Respite breaks at a therapeutic centre | |

The fund does not accept applications directly from members of the public.

All applications must be submitted on behalf of the individual by a professional supporter/referrer. Supporters can include: a registered medical, health or welfare charity, social worker, hospital consultant or specialist, specialist nurse, Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, Citizen Advice Bureau, local authority or any other health professional.

Applications are received throughout the year and grant meetings held quarterly so there may be a delay in being advised of the outcome.

For more information please see their website:

<https://www.hospitalsaturdayfund.org/>



The Blackstock Trust

Another charity which looks to provide funds for individuals is the Blackstock Trust who aim to support people who are aged or infirm, have a long-term condition, sensory loss or physical disability in the counties of Roxburgh, Berwick or Selkirk.

There is no limit on the amount to apply for and all requests are considered at grant meetings held quarterly.

Applications from individuals must be made in writing. The application form is available from:

The Blackstock Trust, Pike & Chapman
36 Bank Street
Galashiels
Scotland
TD1 1ER

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland



Are you among the 1 in 5 people in Scotland living with a chest, heart or stroke condition or know someone who is? If so then you can help Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland (CHSS) with their first ever Lived Experience Survey which runs until 31st July 2018.

The short survey lasts no more than 8-10 minutes and asks you questions about:

How has your life changed?

What matters most to you?

What help and support has made the most difference?

Your personal experience will help to highlight the most important issues being faced and allow CHSS to understand the support and services they should be providing you.

To have your voice heard and to take part in the survey please visit: www.chss.org.uk/surveys

Eyemouth & District Rehab Support Group

When Jock Shiells was diagnosed with a chronic lung condition he was shocked to discover there was no support available for him apart from some basic rehabilitation. In fact, the Scottish Borders is the only region without a Pulmonary Rehabilitation provision despite there being 2,742 people diagnosed with COPD in the Borders.

Determined to improve his health, he decided to set up a rehabilitation group which would offer exercise as well as social interaction and with the help of Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland (CHSS), he set up the Eyemouth & District Rehab Support Group in 2013.

Several years on it has become a great success with 70 members aged from 40 upwards. Due to its success the group regularly receives referrals from GPs, Borders General Hospital, Eyemouth Health Centre and CHSS.

The group has also expanded to include members with Parkinson's, Cerebral Palsy, spinal injuries and other disabling conditions.

Each week the group offers three gym sessions and three pool sessions. An additional class has also been set up at a residential home where the residents take part in chair exercises.



"I think the key thing is the informality," said Jock. "There are no targets – you are just in for an hour of exercise then come out for coffee and biscuits. It is a social thing as much as anything. They come for the banter, but we still do the exercises."

Neil McMurdo is convinced that his regular exercise with the Eyemouth group is helping to keep him out of a wheelchair.

The 59-year-old has cerebral palsy and arachnoiditis, a progressive spinal disease.

However, despite his consultant predicting that he would soon be in a wheelchair it is still sitting unused in his sunroom, thanks to the pool and gym exercise plus horse riding sessions organised by the Riding for the Disabled Association.

And Neil, who initially wore armbands for his swim sessions, can now swim ten lengths unaided and is aiming to work up to at least 20 in the near future.

"If I lose the power in my legs I can't drive so I just keep going to the gym, pool and riding and between the lot of them it is keeping me active," he said.

"The Eyemouth and District Rehab Support Group is excellent and has made a big difference to a lot of people. It boosts your confidence and it is social because afterwards we

have coffee and a blether. I am okay because I'm married but some people don't see many others, so the social side is quite important."

"It's only £5 a year and £3 for each session and that includes the coffee and biscuits. The pool staff are really good - three of us use the hoist for going in and out and it is never a problem to the staff."

"Quite a few of us have learned to swim through the lessons and Ian (retired lifeguard and instructor) has been excellent. He doesn't take any money he just does it to help out."

If you would like to find out more about the group contact:

Jock Shiells

Tel 07711 019682

email:jockshiells65@gmail.com

Roadshow feedback:

'Format of whole event worked well, the right balance of presentations and time to talk around different tables'



Independent Living Fund Scotland

The new ILF Scotland Transition Fund has now been running for 6 months. The fund provides money (up to £7,500) for up to one year, to support young people aged 16-21 living with disabilities to improve their lives and help them to take part in their communities. The purpose of the Fund is to help these young people with the transition after leaving school or children's services to be more independent while continuing to spend time with other people.

ILF Scotland aim to target as many young people as possible and therefore there are only a few criteria which an applicant has to meet to be eligible to apply for the Fund. These include:

- Being between the ages of 16 and 21;
- Having lived in Scotland for the last 6 months;
- Having an impairment or disability;
- Having less than £26,250 of personal savings

For more details of the eligibility criteria, please visit their website [here](#).

They have had many young disabled people apply to the fund with some inspiring and creative ideas, including art and music lessons, technology, joining a club, driving lessons, sports equipment and much more. You can read more about the sorts of things young people have been applying for by reading this [guest blog](#) from one of the ILF recipients.

There is no deadline or closing date for the Fund, so young people can take their time filling out application forms for the things they feel they need the most.

To find out more

Visit the ILF Scotland website at <http://ilf.scot/transition-fund/how-can-i-apply/>

Other useful pages:

<https://ilf.scot/transition-fund/what-can-the-money-be-used-for/>

<https://ilf.scot/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/ILF-Scotland-Transition-Fund-Leaflet-201217.pdf>

Rate it!

Rate it! - New disability consumer review site

Rate it! is a new website that offers disabled and older people a space to share their views and reviews of products (both specialist and mainstream) that can help to make life easier.

The reviews are written by real people from our Rate it! community of reviewers, and because it's a pilot project, they really need you to get involved!

Please do share your product reviews on Rate it!, read other people's reviews and tell others about it too.

They would like to build a thriving community of product reviewers who can help each other to research, choose and buy the products that will work best for them.

For more information go to:

<https://rateit.ridc.org.uk/>

The screenshot displays a product page on the Rate it! website. The product is an 'Ingrid walking stick and crutch holder', rated 5 out of 5 stars. The description states it is a modern walking stick holder by Ingrid, allowing for convenient hanging, storing, or carrying. The price is listed as 'Under £15'. A user review from 'Parker' (dated May 19, 2018) is featured, praising the gadget for making life with a walking stick easier. The review mentions that the holder can be moved between different outfits and is easy to use. The page also includes a 'Read full review' link and a 'Share this product' section with social media icons. A 'Browse similar products' section shows a 'Wheelchair under seat pouch / bag' and a 'Tramper / beamer'.



Recycle Mobility Centre is the first social enterprise in Scotland to offer reconditioned mobility equipment to people affected by welfare reform and are committed to projects that help disabled people find employment.

Based in Glasgow, the centre provides services across Scotland and in addition to an affordable pricing range they offer a payment scheme with no interest charges:

Mobility scooters start at £280, Rise and Recliners from £250, manual wheelchairs from £80 and electric wheelchairs from £300. They also have smaller mobility items and accessories such as walking sticks from £5, Zimmer's from £10, Tri Walkers from £35 and Strollers from £45



By supplying affordable equipment people can gain access to the community, family and friends thus reducing isolation.

To date they have provided over 2000 people with reconditioned mobility equipment with the environmental "Win" being that using calculations of equipment weight, they've managed to reduce around 1,300kg of waste to landfill per year.



They also offer one-year employment, training and volunteering opportunities for those furthest from the job market, including disabled people, as well as two month long graduate internships each year. They are also involved with the SUR programme working with undergraduates studying electrical and mechanical engineering in manufacturing.

Further development plans include expanding their workspace, adding a further workshop for storage and training area to accommodate more trainees and volunteers, all working towards a brighter future for everybody.

To find out more

Phone – 0141 261 3441

E-mail – mail@recyclemobilitycentre.com

Web – <http://recyclemobilitycentre.com>



Red Cord Cards

Many public accessible toilets are used not only by disabled people, but by non-disabled people, parents with young children, staff members and cleaners.

One problem with this is that many toilets have been found with emergency cords tied up out of reach or cut short.

In response to this problem, the charity Euan's Guide created Red Cord Cards in 2015 to educate the public and highlight the importance of why emergency cords should not be tampered with. Euan's Guide is a disabled access review website used by disabled people to review, share and discover accessible places to visit.



The text on each card says: 'This red emergency cord must hang freely all the way to the floor. If it does not, it may prevent a disabled person from asking for help.'

The cards are splash-proof to protect them from sinks, designed to easily slide onto emergency cords without setting off the alarm, and printed in an easy-to-read font.

There are now 30,000 Red Cord Cards in accessible toilets around the UK and the charity is now calling on its supporters and members of the public

to help release 50,000 Red Cord Cards to accessible toilets around the country to help set the cords free.

Members of the public can request Red Cord Cards at no charge from the Charity by visiting the Euan's Guide website:

<https://www.euansguide.com/redcord>

Public places and businesses can also request Red Cord Cards for their premises in return for a small donation to the charity.

Digital Disabled Persons Railcard

If you're a regular train passenger, then you may be pleased to hear about the new technologies being introduced to make train travel easier for people with disabilities and long-term conditions.



The Digital Disabled Persons Railcard gives users the option to receive their card in a digital format which can be downloaded instantly onto their Android or iPhone device. This means you no longer have to wait for cards to be sent in the post and is one less thing to remember to carry.

Digital Railcards can be bought through the Disabled Persons Railcard website only:

<https://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/>



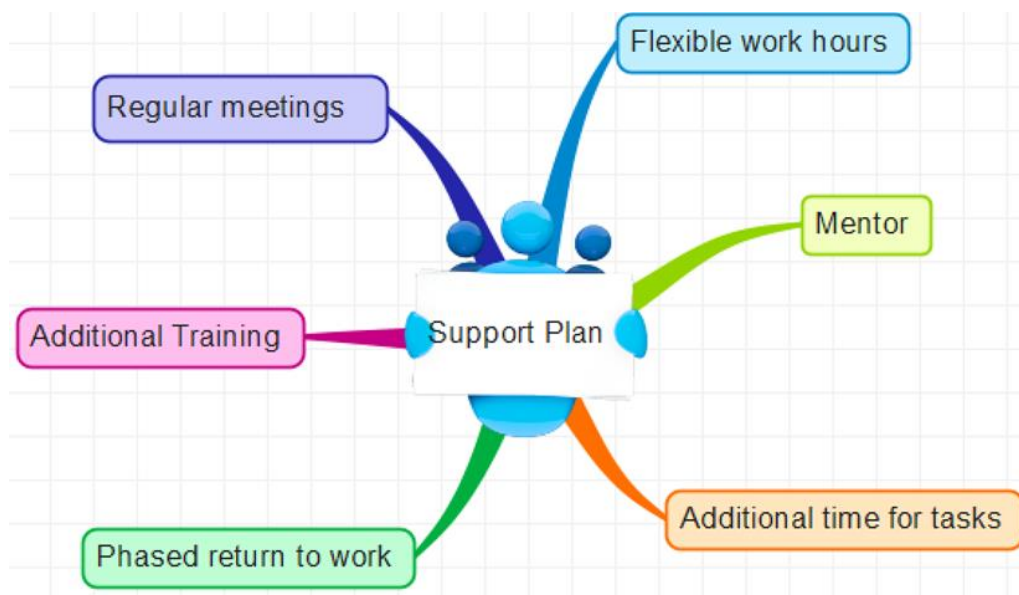
Access to Work

Access to Work is a publicly funded employment support programme that aims to help more disabled people start or stay in work, including self-employed. It can provide practical and financial support for people who have a disability or long-term condition.

It can help with:

- Aids and equipment in the workplace
- Adapting equipment for ease of use
- Travel to work
- Travel in work
- Communication support at interviews
- A wide variety of support workers
- Mental health support service
- Other practical help such as a job coach or sign language interpreter.

If a person has a mental health condition they will be offered assistance to develop a support plan. The plan can support them to remain in work or return to work and include suggestions for reasonable adjustments in the workplace. For example, the support plan can include:



Reasonable Adjustments

By law, you don't have to tell anyone at work about your disability or condition. However, your employer is required to make 'reasonable adjustments' to help you.

Anyone with a disability or long-term condition is protected against discrimination by the Equality Act 2010 which states that **employers are required to make reasonable adjustments to remove any 'substantial disadvantages' to employees.**

What is a 'reasonable adjustment'? This can sometimes pose a problem as it is an objective question open to interpretation. It could mean agreeing to more flexible ways of working or providing more breaks or it could be to provide specific equipment or furniture.

You can find out more about reasonable adjustments from the Disability Employment Adviser at your local Jobcentre Plus office. If you apply for support to Access to Work also the specialist advisors can help to determine what the reasonable adjustments are and what the programme can provide beyond that.

There is an incredible range of aids and equipment that is available to help support people at work. To give you an idea, here is just a selection of ergonomic keyboards designed to meet various needs.



One-Handed Keyboards are specifically designed for individuals who use a single right or left hand.

This ergonomic shaped keyboard has been associated with significant reduction of carpal tunnel syndrome symptoms. Wrists rest against the palm rest in a relaxed, natural angle.



The split keyboard was designed to adjust to a position to properly straighten your wrists, this can help alleviate pressure on tendons and align arms and shoulders.

The Single finger or Head/Mouth stick keyboards have a unique shape and keyboard layout. The shape matches natural head movement and the key arrangement minimises finger or stick activity, raising speed and relieving frustration.



To find out more and to apply for Access to Work go to www.gov.uk/access-to-work

You can also apply by phoning Jobcentre Plus

Telephone: 0800 121 7479

Textphone: 0800 121 7579



Disability Confident



**disability
confident**

The Disability Confident scheme supports employers to make the most of the talents disabled people can bring to the workplace.

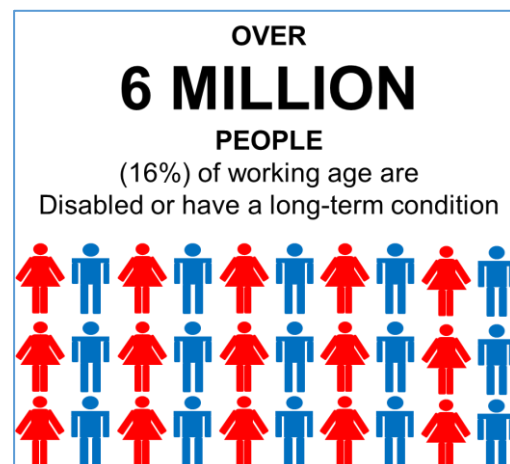
It is voluntary and has been developed by employers and disabled people's representatives.

The Disability Confident scheme has 3 levels that have been designed to support employers on the Disability Confident journey. Employers must complete each level before moving on to the next.

The scheme helps them think differently about disability, and improve how they attract, recruit and retain disabled workers.

Level 1: Disability Confident Committed

To be recognised as Disability Confident Committed just agree to the Disability Confident commitments and identify at least one action that you'll carry out to make a difference for disabled people.



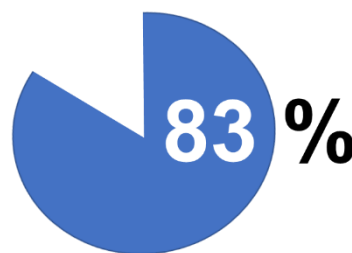
Level 2: Disability Confident Employer

Self-assess your business against the themes of getting the right people for your business and keeping and developing your people.

Level 3: Disability Confident Leader

Be seen as a champion within your local and business communities.

You can view which employers have currently signed up in the UK here:



Of disabled people under state Pension age **acquired their Disability or health condition** Between the ages of 16 and 64

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-confident-employers-that-have-signed-up>

In the Borders the following employers are either at level 1 or 2 in the Disability Confident process

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Berwick upon Tweed Community Development Trust | Berwick upon Tweed |
| K. Dixon Building Services | Berwick upon Tweed |
| Berwickshire Housing Association | Duns |
| Aquarius Hair Design | Earlston |
| 5 Star Taxis | Galashiels |
| Borders College | Galashiels |
| Central Borders Citizens Advice Bureau | Galashiels |
| Diamond Cabs | Galashiels |
| Fare Deal | Galashiels |
| Target Cabs | Galashiels |
| Works+ | Galashiels |
| Streets Ahead (Borders) | Hawick |
| All Awards Limited | Jedburgh |
| NHS Borders | Melrose |
| Sarah Dalrymple Consultancy Limited | Melrose |
| Scottish Borders Council | Melrose |
| Scottish Borders Social Enterprise Chamber C.I.C. | Melrose |
| Eildon Housing Association | Selkirk |
| EV8LIFE | Selkirk |
| Scottish Borders Housing Association | Selkirk |

RBS have introduced a new role in response to the changing ways our customers bank. Community Bankers will work in local communities recently affected by branch closures. As part of their role, they will provide customers with personal assistance in accessing the right banking options for their needs across a range of channels.

Amanda Baitup and Emma Baxter have been appointed as RBS Community Bankers for the Scottish Borders. Both ladies will be holding regular drop in sessions across the Borders.

Commenting on her new role, Amanda said: "I'm excited to have the opportunity to develop a strong relationship with our customers in the Borders, helping to ensure that RBS remains an important part of its many thriving communities. The impact of technological changes on the way people bank with us has been dramatic but we're also aware that not everyone is comfortable with these changes

"In my role as Community Banker, I'm looking forward to hosting regular events at local venues to help educate customers on being financially fit, training them on the different ways to bank in a digital world and how they can protect themselves from fraudsters."

Alongside helping people to bank safely and wisely, Amanda and Emma can provide house visits to those who are unable to physically get to a bank. They can also advise on assistance with accessibility.

Amanda will be at the following locations on a weekly basis (apart from the week commencing 13th August)

Tuesdays - Selkirk Post Office 9.30am – 11.30am

Tuesdays - Hawick CHSS 1:00pm – 3:00pm (in the community hub)

Fridays - Jedburgh Royal Legion 9.30am – 11.30am

Emma will be holding weekly drop in sessions as follows:

Thursday - Duns Volunteer Hall – 2:00pm – 4:00pm

Friday - Eyemouth Cafe Questo – 10:00am -12:00pm (excluding 27th July, 10th August & 14th September which will be held in Eyemouth Library 10:30am -12:30pm)

You can contact Amanda and Emma directly:

Amanda Baitup

Community Banker

Scottish Borders

Mobile 07711764522

Email: amanda.baitup@rbs.co.uk

Emma Baxter

Community Banker

East Lothian and Berwickshire

Mobile: 07711764598

24hr Tel: 03457 24 24 24

Email: emma.baxter@rbs.co.uk

Roadshow feedback:

'Event was well run. Talks to the point and informative. A good selection of services in attendance'

'Very enjoyable and useful'

'Very well organised and a friendly team!'

Border Holiday Group



The Border Holiday Group is a charity which organises coach holidays to Europe for those with disabilities and long-term conditions in the Borders and southern Scotland. Their aims are to provide the holiday of a lifetime to those who would otherwise be unable to travel, while at the same time providing respite for their carers at home.

To provide these holidays the Group needs to raise approximately £35,000 for each 10 day trip. The group leader, his medical team and the helpers are all volunteers, for whom this is a working trip, using their own holiday time to care for those less fortunate than themselves. Each individual is given their own helper and looked after from the moment they arrive.

How are people selected?



People either get in touch directly or are nominated to become VIP's.

A VIP is someone who cannot go on holiday by themselves because they need care either full time or part time because of an illness or physical or mental disability.

Those who get to become a VIP are assessed by a representative of the group to see if they are eligible. It is then a case of balancing the needs of all the VIPs against the care that can be given.

Is there a waiting list?

Yes however, they are happy to take names for anyone interested. It is essential that the balance of care is taken into consideration, so it is not necessarily on a first come first served basis.

If individuals are to pay, is there any funding available they can apply for?

Everyone on a Border Holiday Group trip must pay a fare including VIP's and carers.

The cost of the trip is calculated before VIP's are signed up and includes all meals and trips. As a charity VIP's can fundraise their fare. If they pay for care at home, then there should be a way for some of that money to go towards their holiday as they will receive 24/7 care.



VIP's in the past have received funding from support groups and other organisations. It is the responsibility of the VIP to get their own funding, although they are happy to help with any advice and letters of support they may require.

The fare can be paid up over time but must be paid in full before the trip.

Is there an age restriction?

The Border Holiday Group only take adults 21 years old and over. Though there is no upper age limit, the overall health of the VIP will be taken into consideration.

What if when the time comes, they are too sick to travel - is their place offered to another?

Yes, where possible they try to fill any vacant spaces that become available and try to have a couple of VIP's on standby in the event someone has to pull out.

Is there a refund if a person is too sick to travel?

Travel insurance is arranged through the Jumbulance Trust for VIP's which has covered cancellations in the past. However, they have never had to use it, as any VIP cancelling has had their spot filled by another VIP who has paid their fare, meaning we could refund the VIP who cancelled.



Is there a cost for any transfers incurred?

The group try to keep costs down where possible. In the event of a cancellation after insurance has been bought, you would lose your insurance fee, but would benefit from its cancellation policy in the event the spot was not filled.

As a guide, the ball park figure for the next planned trip is £1200 for 10 days which includes all meals, day trips, accommodation, transport and round the clock care.

For more information:

<http://www.borderholidaygroup.com/index.html>

[Email: lesley@ilfimagining.co.uk](mailto:lesley@ilfimagining.co.uk)

Secretary:

Lesley Fraser
10c Green Terrace
Hawick
TD9 0JG



The Cinema Exhibitors' Association Card

The CEA Card is a national card scheme developed for UK cinemas by the UK Cinema Association.

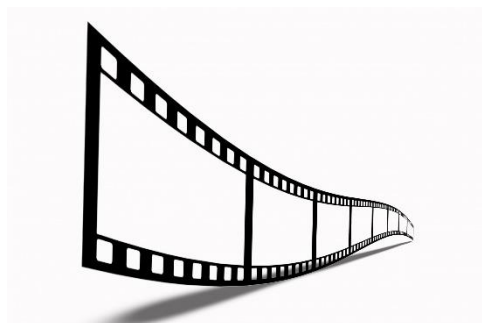
The card allows the cardholder to receive a complimentary ticket for a person accompanying them to the cinema to provide them with assistance.

The Maltings Theatre and Cinema in Berwick-upon-tweed and the **Pavillion Cinema** in Galashiels currently accept these cards. Over 10 cinemas in the Edinburgh area also participate. You can check for participating cinemas online at:

Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for the card you will need to provide evidence that the card holder receives one of the following:

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- Attendance Allowance (AA)
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP)
- Blind Persons Registration



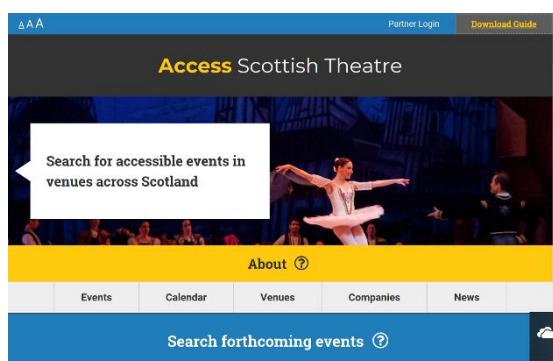
The card costs £6.00, is valid for 1 year from the date of issue and is not limited in terms of the number of times you can use it during that year.

You can check for participating cinemas online at:

<https://www.ceacard.co.uk/participating-cinemas>

To apply go to:

<https://www.ceacard.co.uk/apply>



Access Scottish Theatre

If you like the theatre, then the Access Scottish Theatre is an ideal place to find out about accessible performances happening across Scotland.

The guide covers the various access services:

- **Audio Description** – live or recorded verbal description for blind and visually impaired audience members
- **BSL Interpretation** – British Sign Language interpretation of the spoken and artistic content

- **Captioning** – Live text of the spoken word and sound effects on stage
- **Relaxed Performances** – performances that have been adapted for people on the autistic spectrum or people who could benefit from a more relaxed environment

There are various ways that you can search for performances, such as by access service or location. Performance listings will provide you with key information about the event and the access provision. Venue pages provide you with information about access at the venue.

A printed 6 month detailed guide is also available for download on their site. The guide lists theatre performances by access service (i.e.. BSL interpreter) and provides all the information you need to know about the venues, parking etc.

If you or someone you know requires a printed copy of the guide you can email

contact@accessscottishtheatre.com or call/text 07901 885 103 to be added to the mailing list.

To find out more visit their website:

<https://www.accessscottishtheatre.com/>

or Facebook:

www.facebook.com/accessscottishtheatre

Access Scottish Theatre

Listings and access guide
133 performances across 17 venues
- BSL, Captioning & Audio Description
JAN - JUL 2018

Edinburgh
Glasgow
Stirling
Dundee
Perth
Pitlochry
Aberdeen
Inverness
Musselburgh



Vision Loss Support

Macular Society



Support throughout central vision loss

More than 600,000 people in the UK have age-related macular degeneration (AMD). This is the most common cause of sight loss in the developed world. For anyone who has a macular condition, they will know that the part of their sight which is affected is their central vision (the bit in the middle).

This is the part of your vision which is responsible for detail and colour perception, the loss of which often makes daily tasks such as reading, watching TV or recognising people's faces very difficult and frustrating.

The Macular Society is the UK charity dedicated to supporting anyone with central vision loss and their family and friends. They have more than 16,600 members and around 7,800 professional members. They provide a range of services including information, telephone befriending and a professional counselling service and have nearly 400 local support groups.



In September 2017, the Macular Society launched 2 new support groups in Kelso and Galashiels which now meet monthly. Both groups are well attended and provide a welcoming and friendly atmosphere for members to get support, information and help with tips and tricks about living with macular degeneration.

- The **Kelso group** meets on the second Wednesday of each month (apart from January, July and August), from 10:30 am until 12:15 pm, at the Abbey Row Community Centre, The Knowes, Kelso, TD5 7BJ
- The **Galashiels group** meets on the second Wednesday of each month (apart from January, July and August), from 1-3 pm, at the Focus Community Centre, Livingstone Place, Galashiels, TD1 1DQ

If you, or someone you know has a macular condition, you are very welcome to come along to the next meeting which takes place on Wednesday 12 September in either location. The groups are also very happy to welcome those with other sight loss conditions as many of the issues faced are very similar.



The Macular Society is looking to support more people who have difficulty with "the bit in the middle" and want to engage a range of volunteers to help deliver services across Scotland.

They are looking for enthusiastic and energetic volunteers to help us with the following roles:

Group volunteers - use your experience and organisational skills to help run the 2 Borders support groups in Kelso and Galashiels.

Telephone Befriending - help by offering regular telephone contact to others with macular degeneration.

Gadget Guides - learn about a variety of useful gadgets that can help people in their daily lives and spread the word about them.

Speakers - use your public speaking skills to raise awareness of macular degeneration and the Society's work.

Skills for Seeing - learn how to teach people how to make the most of their remaining vision using a variety of techniques.

If you think you can help or you would like more information about the Macular Society and it's work in Scotland, please get in touch with the Regional Manager for Scotland South:

Jamie Cuthbertson

Tel: 0141 942 1083

Mob: 07903 520 350

Email: jamie.c@macularsociety.org

Google to Launch New Android App.



Google has announced it is developing an app it hopes will help blind and visually impaired people become more independent.

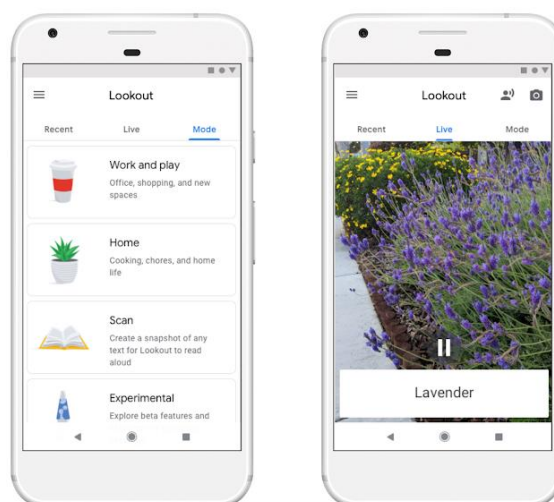
'Lookout' will give users auditory cue's as they encounter objects, texts and people around them.

It is designed to be used as a lanyard around your neck, or in your pocket, with the camera pointing away from the body. After operating the app, and selecting a mode, Lookout processes items of importance in your environment and shares information it believes to be relevant, such as a text from a library book, or the location of a toilet, an exit sign, a chair or a person nearby.

Lookout delivers spoken notifications and is designed to be used with minimal interaction allowing people to stay engaged with their activity.

Lookout is the latest in a string of smartphone apps that in recent years have replaced expensive technologies. It follows in the footsteps of Microsoft's successful Seeing A1 app, which is currently only available on Apple devices.

Lookout operates in four modes based on the user's current activity: Home, work & play, scan and experiment. After selecting a mode, the user will be told about an object the app detects around them, such as the location of a sofa at home.



The app doesn't require an internet connection to operate and uses artificial intelligence (AI) to learn what people are interested about.

It is expected to be available in the Google Play Store later this year.

For more information and to see a video:

<https://www.google.com/accessibility/blog/post/announce-lookout.html>



VisionZone returns to Melrose in September. This is a great opportunity to meet representatives from organisations offering support services, daily living aids, talking books and magnifiers.

You will also be able to try reading and viewing your favourite photographs using the latest video magnifiers.

Event details:

Date: Thursday 13th September

Time: 10.00 am to 1.30 pm

Venue: Melrose Corn Exchange

Market Square, Melrose, TD6 9PN

About Us

Ability Borders is an information, signposting and support service for adults with a physical disability or long-term condition and their family and carers.

We understand the importance of being able to access relevant and up to date information easily. With so many things to consider when living with physical disabilities and long-term conditions, we believe that access to information should not be yet another challenge.

Knowing where to go for help or for information about your rights and the services available is vital for independent living and tackling isolation.

We aim to be the first line of support for anyone with a physical disability or long-term condition. We enable a network of people with disabilities, their carers and support organisations to share information and experience of services and provide a collective voice for our service users, seeking changes and improvements to services.

Contact Us

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

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.

Please also contact us if you would like to become a member of Ability Borders.

Email: enquiries@abilityborders.org.uk

Tel: 0300 999 2273

Facebook: Ability Borders

Web: www.abilityborders.org.uk

1 Orchard Park

St.Boswells

TD6 0DA

Ability Borders is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Scottish Charity: SC045843