



ABILITY  
BORDERS

## Ability News – October 2018

### Welcome!

As we move in to the winter months we are busy planning our next event which will be around welfare benefits and fuel poverty. We had hoped to have this organised before Christmas but we want to ensure that the event is accessible to as many people as possible and are looking at finding ways to ensure this. Please keep checking our Facebook page to find out more.

Our new group in Hawick is doing well and has some lovely members. We are moving to Peebles next, so please get in touch if you are interested in becoming a member or can help us to set up the group there.

We are also very engaged in the development of the Physical Disability Strategy following the recent consultations, ensuring it is grounded in lived experience.

This newsletter is packed with information as usual. There is a feature on diabetes and the growing number of amputations, revealing some shocking statistics. Diabetes is now a global crisis as figures have quadrupled since 1980. We will be doing what we can to support any and all initiatives which address this.

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

Take great care in the coming winter months!



Corrina Beighton  
Development Officer



## Contents

Dangers of Diabetes .....	3
Serious Complications.....	3
Diabetic foot ulcers.....	4
Putting Feet First campaign.....	5
Groundbreaking heart tests .....	6
Tool developed to spot deadly sepsis in people who have heart failure .....	7
Finding Your Feet.....	8
Jelly Drops Hydrating treats .....	9
Neatbox Apps .....	10
Welcome.....	10
Button.....	12
Smartphone Assistance App for Disabled Rail Passengers.....	14
Understanding the Unmet Need for Short-Term Mobility Aids .....	15
Top Tips for New Hips .....	17
Beth's top tips! .....	18
New Charity Name .....	20
Scottish War Blinded .....	21
New Protocol Published for Hearing Loss.....	22
Silver Sunday.....	23
Forget Me Not Café .....	24
Help to Heat Scheme.....	25
Heating or eating?.....	26
Singing for Breathing Group .....	27
Update from the Hugh Petrie Stoma Group.....	29
Top Tips!.....	29
Grace's Sign.....	30
About Us .....	31
Contact Us.....	31

## Dangers of Diabetes

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the number of people with diabetes continues to grow worldwide.

Since 1980, the number of adults with diabetes is estimated to have almost quadrupled to 422 million in 2014.



Most of this rise is in those diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes. Overweight and obesity, together with physical inactivity, are estimated to cause a large proportion of the global diabetes burden.

According to Diabetes UK, ***someone is diagnosed with diabetes every 2 minutes around the world.***

Unfortunately, the more common diabetes becomes, the less people seem to understand how serious the condition is.

### Serious Complications

When diabetes is uncontrolled it has dire consequences for health and wellbeing. Over time **diabetes can damage the heart, blood vessels, eyes, kidneys and nerves, and increase the risk of heart disease and stroke.**

Such damage can result in reduced blood flow, which – combined with nerve damage (neuropathy) in the feet – **increases the chance of foot ulcers, infection and the eventual need for limb amputation.**

Diabetic retinopathy is an important **cause of blindness** and occurs as a result of long-term accumulated damage to the small blood vessels in the retina. Diabetes is also **among the leading causes of kidney failure.**

For those who are diagnosed with diabetes, there are **interventions which can improve their outcomes**, regardless of the type of diabetes they have. These interventions include blood glucose control, through a combination of diet, physical activity and, if necessary, medication; control of blood pressure to reduce cardiovascular risk and other complications; and regular screening for damage to the eyes, kidneys and feet, to facilitate early treatment.

## Diabetic foot ulcers

A **diabetic foot ulcer** is an open sore or wound that occurs in approximately 15 percent of patients with diabetes and is commonly located on the bottom of the **foot**.

People with diabetes can get problems with their feet as a result of too much blood glucose (sugar) over a long period of time. This can then affect the nerves so that you may not feel any pain when you have cut your foot or burned yourself. Your body also finds it hard to heal itself and can mean that even small cuts, blisters, burns or infections can develop into ulcers and lead to amputations.



Under the weight of the body, skin deteriorates and eventually becomes an open sore. These ulcers frequently form underneath calluses and cannot be felt due to diabetic neuropathy. Signs of a foot ulcer include:



- Swelling, discoloration, and warmth around the wound
- Foul-smelling discharge seeping from the wound
- Pain and firmness when the wound is touched
- Callused or thickened skin surrounding the ulcer
- Fever and chills in advanced stages of foot ulcers



Of those who develop a **foot ulcer**, 6 percent will be hospitalized due to infection or other **ulcer**-related complications.

- ❖ Every day in the UK another 300 people are told they have a diabetic foot ulcer. For every one of them it is said that there is no permanent cure, only remission.
- ❖ People with diabetes are more likely to be admitted to hospital with a foot ulcer than any other complication of diabetes and more than **140 leg, foot or toe amputations are carried out each week in England alone.**
- ❖ Tragically, up to **80% of amputations are preventable** if people receive the correct management - that's 4 out of every 5 amputations!
- ❖ Shockingly up to 80% cent of those who have had an amputation or foot ulcer die within five years.

All people with diabetes should have annual foot checks and understand how to look after their own feet. Everyone should have swift access to multidisciplinary foot care teams, which have been shown to significantly reduce levels of risk.

Diabetes UK have a 'Simple Steps to Healthy Feet' leaflet giving tips and advice for caring for your feet.

**Take these simple steps to healthy feet**

- Go to your foot check**  If you're over 12 years old a trained professional should inspect your bare feet once a year. This will spot if you are at risk of any foot problems.
- Know how your feet are doing** At the end of the foot check you should be told if you are at high risk of developing foot problems or if you need to see a specialist for expert foot advice.
- Look at your feet every day**  Whether it's when you're putting your socks on or just before bed check your feet every day. If you see any colour changes, swelling, pain, cuts or bruises, build-up of hard skin, or anything unusual tell your diabetes team.
- If you lose feeling in your feet be extra careful** Being at high risk of foot problems or losing feeling in your feet means you might not realise when you've hurt yourself. Try not to go barefoot, especially on hot sand or gravel, and don't sit too close to radiators or heaters.
- Watch out cutting your nails**  If your body can't heal itself properly any kind of wound can increase the chances of a serious foot problem so cut your nails carefully. Don't cut down the side of your nails to avoid ingrowing toenails.
- Don't use corn-removing plasters or blades** These can damage your skin and cause more problems for your feet. If you have corns a healthcare professional should deal with them.
- Make sure your socks and shoes fit**  Blisters can be dangerous for people with diabetes. If your shoes are too tight, too loose or rub you then don't wear them. Even if they look great.
- Take control of your diabetes** Easier said than done. But lowering high amounts of sugar in your blood will help prevent nerve damage and can stop things getting worse. Ask your diabetes team about the different ways they can help.
- Ask for help to stop smoking**  Smoking makes it harder for blood to travel around your body (like to your feet) so puts you at even greater risk of amputation. Your healthcare team can make it easier to quit.



## Putting Feet First campaign

Alongside a wide range of information, guides and support, Diabetes UK's 'Putting Feet First' campaign is helping to inform healthcare professionals and the public about the importance of diabetes footcare what they can do to reduce it.



To raise public awareness with respect to these alarming amputation statistics, the campaign set up a pop up shoe shop with a difference. You can access this video [here](#), on the diabetes uk website or via our Facebook page.

# DIABETES SCOTLAND

**KNOW DIABETES. FIGHT DIABETES.**

Diabetes UK Scotland provides specialist information and advice on all aspects of living with diabetes. For more information, support or just to talk to someone who knows about diabetes.

Tel: 0141 245 6380

Email: [scotland@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:scotland@diabetes.org.uk)

Web: [https://www.diabetes.org.uk/In\\_Your\\_Area/Scotland](https://www.diabetes.org.uk/In_Your_Area/Scotland)

We also have diabetes support groups in the Borders. For more information on these contact Diana Findley

Email: [diana.findley@btinternet.com](mailto:diana.findley@btinternet.com)



## Groundbreaking heart tests

The British Heart Foundation has funded research which has developed a groundbreaking test which can detect 'hidden' heart diseases caused by problems with the small blood vessels supplying the heart.

The new test was presented at the Transcatheter Cardiovascular Therapeutics conference on 25th September 2018.

Due to a lack of supporting medical evidence previously, the new tests are not yet standard in the NHS. However, researchers now say that they should be routinely available to pinpoint the cause of chest pain.

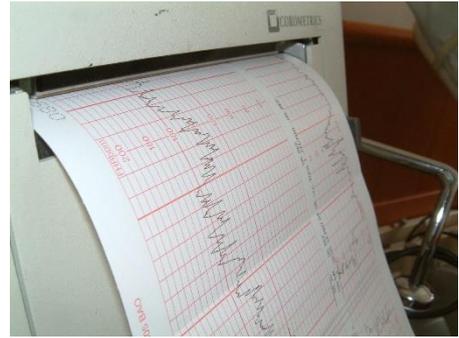
The test involves passing a thin, flexible wire into the heart and measuring how well a blood vessel relaxes.

During trials, the new test was performed on 151 patients with chest pain who could not be diagnosed using currently available tests. The small vessel test results for half of the patients were made available to doctors to further guide the diagnosis and treatment. The results for the other half of the patients were not disclosed and those patients followed standard care.

The team found that the new tests were able to correctly diagnose six times as many patients as standard tests. Even more importantly, six months later, symptoms of angina were less and quality of life was better in the patients whose care was guided by the new tests.

Philippa Hobson, senior cardiac nurse at the British Heart Foundation, said:

“People living with microvascular angina suffer from crippling and frightening episodes of chest pain that dramatically affects their day to day life. They are unable to treat their symptoms effectively as their angiogram is essentially normal. Medication currently prescribed to people with diagnosed coronary heart disease does little to resolve their pain or reduce risk of heart attack, so they are left in limbo.



“This study is very reassuring news for sufferers who live in the fear of having a heart attack as for many, there is currently no conclusive proof they have heart disease.”

For more information contact the British Heart Foundation:

Web: <https://www.bhf.org.uk/>

Heart Helpline:

Tel: 0300 330 3311

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## Tool developed to spot deadly sepsis in people who have heart failure

**Nearly one in four deaths in people with heart failure are caused by sepsis, according to new research recently published in the Journal of the American Heart Association.**

Researchers funded by the British Heart Foundation have developed a way to identify patients who are most at risk, often years before they become ill.



The team hope the tool will help doctors determine which patients may benefit from closer monitoring and help to ensure they receive rapid treatment when they fall ill. Sepsis is a very serious complication of an infection. Without treatment it can lead to multiple organ failure and death. Catching cases early could save thousands of lives every year.

Professor Richard Cubbon, from the University of Leeds who led the study said, “We have created a simple way to identify people with heart failure who are at greatest risk of dying from sepsis. It could be part of a routine check which is already performed when they visit their doctors.”

With our risk profile, we hope people at high risk of sepsis will receive better monitoring, and infections which could lead to sepsis are treated early.”

**550,000 people in the UK have been diagnosed with heart failure, but estimates suggest there may be many more cases.**

People who have heart failure are more vulnerable to potentially deadly infections. Following research which tracked 1,802 patients scientists found that sepsis was an important cause of death accounting for almost 1 in 4 deaths.

Professor Sir Nilesh Samani, Medical Director at the British Heart Foundation commented on the study.

"This observational study re-emphasises that, despite modern treatments, people with heart failure have a prognosis that is worse than many cancers with 2 out of 5 people dying within 4 years.

"The new finding here is that sepsis is an important cause of death in these patients accounting for almost 1 in 4 deaths. We also now know that particular characteristics of the patients, some of which may be correctable, makes them more prone to developing sepsis.

To read more about this development visit the British Heart Foundation web page:

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/what-we-do/news-from-the-bhf/news-archive/2018/october/bhf-scientists-develop-tool-for-spotting-deadly-sepsis-in-people-who-have-heart-failure>



Finding Your Feet

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

For more information, contact:

Email: [info@findingyourfeet.net](mailto:info@findingyourfeet.net)

Phone: 0141 258 4868

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

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



## Jelly Drops Hydrating treats

We are always on the lookout for great new innovative ideas and products and these Jelly Drops are just such a product.

Developed by engineering graduate Lewis Hornby, the Jelly Drops were designed in response to his grandmother's struggle with hydration. It is easy for people with dementia to become dehydrated as many will no longer feel thirst, know how to quench it or have the dexterity to drink.

For people with dementia the confusion and sleepiness caused by dehydration is often mistakenly attributed to their underlying condition, meaning it can often go unnoticed until it becomes life-threatening. Lewis's own grandma ended up in hospital due to severe dehydration.

Lewis spent many weeks in his grandmother's care home to understand the issues people with dementia face. From his observations, he realised that people with dementia find eating much easier than drinking but it can still be difficult to engage and encourage them to eat.

He also observed that care home residents struggled to eat when presented with a plate of food and needed assistance. But when it came to eating with their hands, they were more intuitive. When he gave a box of chocolates to the residents, they instinctively knew what to do.

Jelly Drops builds on this insight - the bright, tasty treats attract the attention of people with dementia, and the firm, easy to grip 'drops' makes them simple to pick up.



When first offered to his grandma, she ate 7 Jelly Drops in 10 minutes - the equivalent to a cup full of water, something that would usually take hours and require much more assistance. Eating the whole box would account for around half the necessary daily fluid intake.

Lewis is now looking to put the Jelly drops into production.

To find out more and track progress go to:

Web site: <https://www.jellydrops.co.uk/>

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



## Neatbox Apps

Since the establishment of the organisation in 2011, Neatebox have developed two incredible apps to support their mission 'to lead society in becoming more inclusive to everyone'.

Their two apps, Button and Welcome, are used across the UK and Ireland to foster the independent life styles of disabled people and aim to reduce anxiety, increase social mobility and ultimately promote a very real change in society's attitude towards those who have so often been ignored.

### Welcome

"Welcome" is designed to improve the interactions between customer service teams and disabled people, by making staff aware of the specific needs of their visitors in advance of their arrival. It raises the confidence of both the visitor and customer service team and helps to build lasting relationships.

Once you have set up your profile, planned your trip and sent details to your chosen venue, they will be provided with information including best practice, top tips and an overview of any conditions you have shared along with any specific comments or requests that you may require assistance with.

In which areas do you need customer service awareness?  
You can select more than one. Need help? Contact us at [hello@neatebox.com](mailto:hello@neatebox.com)

- Assistance Dog
- Ataxia
- Autism
- Deaf and Blind
- Dementia
- Epilepsy
- Hearing Impairment
- Learning difficulties and learning disability
- Mobility Impairment
- Physical Impairment
- Profound Hearing Loss
- Visual Impairment
- Visual Impairment with Guide Dog

Done

Setting the app up could not be easier and you will be provided with plenty of options to select from which define your needs - from requiring an assistance dog or having ataxia through to visual impairment with guide dog.

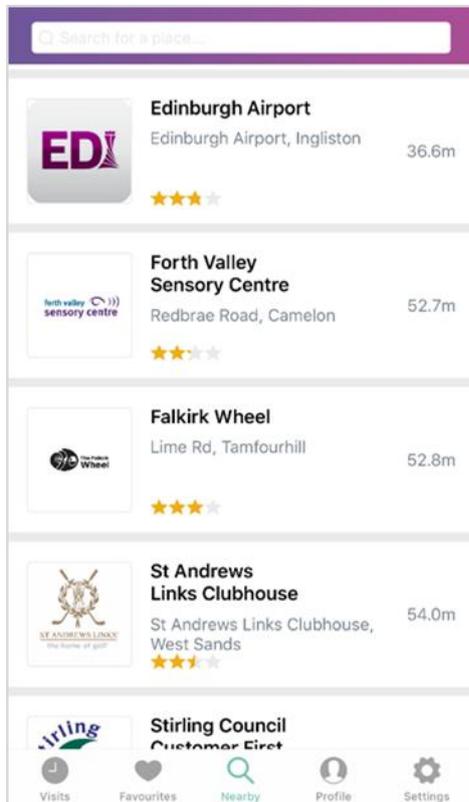
You can then go on to specify the service requirements you have from a wheelchair ramp through to amenities for your assistance dog and an accessible toilet.

Your Requirements  
You can select more than one, or you add something more specific to your needs.

- No assistance required
- Wheelchair Ramp
- Sighted Guide
- Assistance at entrance
- BSL - British Sign Language
- Hearing Loop
- Lip Reading
- Guide Dog amenities - Water, Spending Area etc
- Toilet - Changing Places
- Toilet - Accessible with hoist and changing table
- Toilet - Accessible

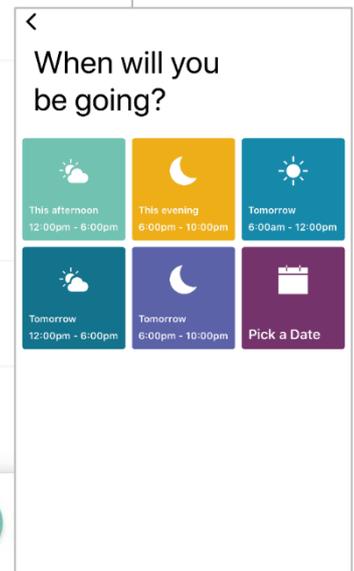
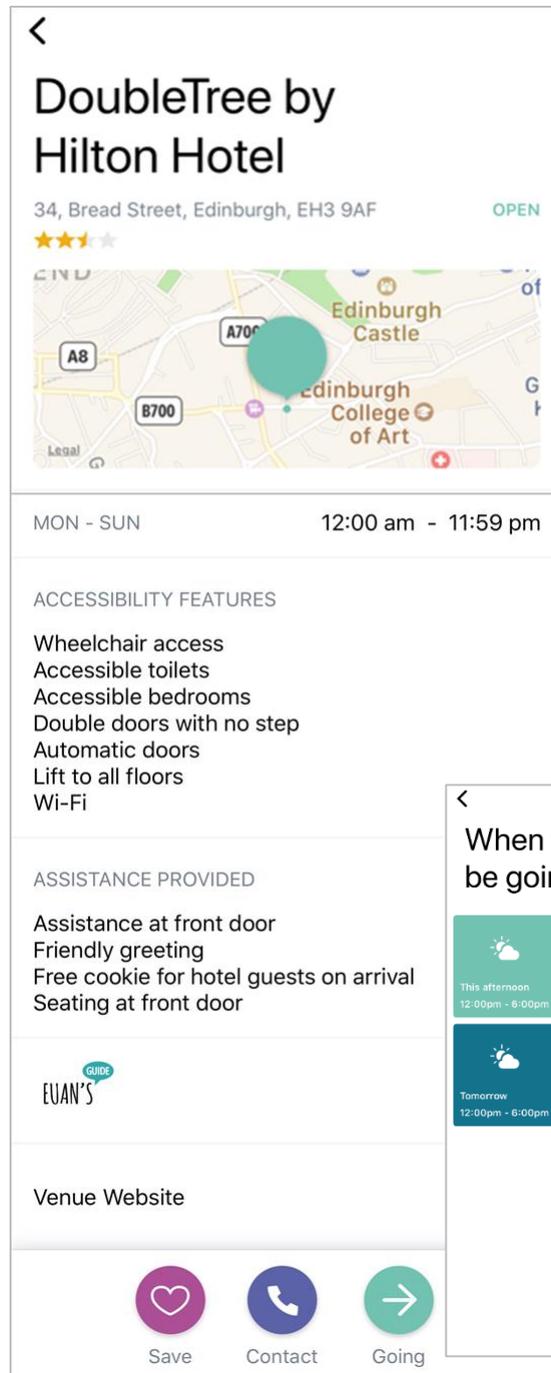
Done

Once you have set up your personal profile you can then plan a visit to any of the current venues on the app. It is very much early days with respect to venues participating in the app, but you can help with this by requesting a venue yourself, or supporting the ones requested by others. This will help encourage those venues to participate.



Once you click on the venue you are planning to visit, you will be shown the accessibility features of the venue along with the typical assistance provided.

You can then go on to specify the time of your visit, contact the venue directly, go straight to their web page or check out reviews on Euan's guide.



## Button

Pressing a pedestrian crossing button is easy unless you can't find or reach it. 'Button' enabled pedestrian crossings allow an automatic button push with a smartphone or wearable. This means that users can focus on positioning and alignment prior to safely crossing the street.

To make this work, Neatebox need to install specialist hardware in to the box on the pole at the crossing. They currently have installations at crossing in Locharbriggs, Edinburgh and Largs.

However, they need your help to establish more crossings across the country where the app would be of benefit. If you know of a crossing which is hard to navigate or would like to find out more information you can contact them at:

Email: [hello@neatebox.com](mailto:hello@neatebox.com)

Tel: 07429 155 934

Web: [www.neatebox.com](http://www.neatebox.com)

One Lochrin Square  
92 Fountain bridge  
EH3 7QA, Edinburgh



Pronounced 'oh-me', the OHMI Trust is a UK-based charity pioneering the development and adaptation of musical instruments for those who are physically disabled.

The organisation was established in 2011 by Dr. Stephen Hetherington, who began his career as an orchestral musician. It was Stephen's own hemiplegic daughter (a condition which affects one side of the body), who alerted him to the lack of instruments available to disabled musicians.



Any kind of deficiency or disability in one hand or arm will make traditional instruments difficult or impossible to play well, excluding millions across the world

are from music-making. This includes people with congenital disabilities such as cerebral palsy and hemiplegia, amputees, those who have suffered a stroke or developed arthritis etc.

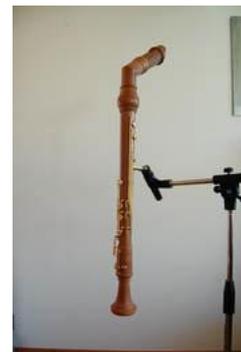


OHMI Trust's mission is to remove these barriers to participation in music whether at school, in the home or professionally. If the cost of purchasing an instrument is prohibitive for you, they also have a range of instruments available to rent on a yearly basis.

OHMI runs an annual competition to encourage inventors, designers and instrument makers to develop a musical instrument that can be played without the use of one hand and arm, and that has all the characteristics and facility of a traditional instrument.



Recent winners include a 3-D printed one-handed recorder using computer-aided design and a one-handed bass recorder.



As new instruments for those who are physically disabled become available, the OHMI Trust is working with appropriate organisations to teach and promote their use to anyone previously excluded from making music by their disability.

For more information please contact:

Email: [admin@ohmi.org.uk](mailto:admin@ohmi.org.uk)

Web: <https://www.ohmi.org.uk/>

The OHMI Trust  
29 Woodbourne Road  
Harborne  
BIRMINGHAM  
B17 8BY

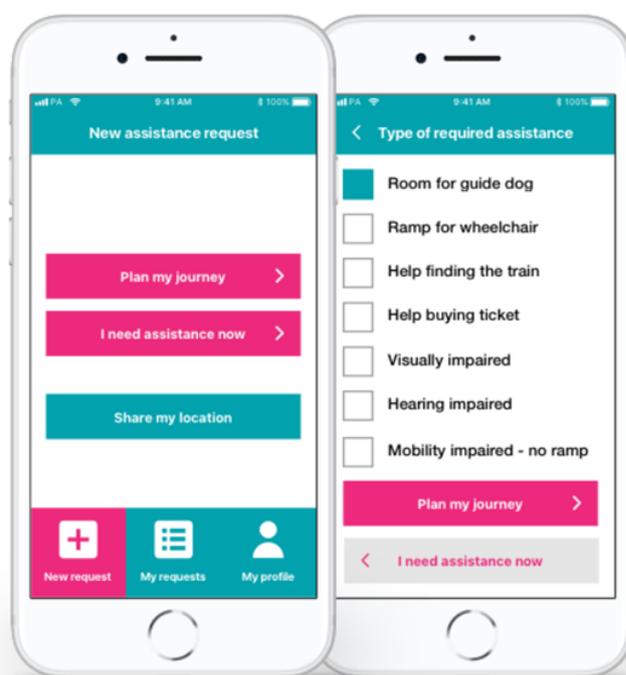
A smartphone app, currently being trialled by four train companies, will be rolled out across Britain next year. The app should revolutionise the passenger assistance process, making it easier, less stressful and less likely to go wrong.

Currently customers can book assistance in a number of ways including by phone or online, a time-consuming process where they provide contact details and specify the assistance they need every time.

Staff at stations then receive a printed list of booked assistance each morning. Should plans then change, for example if trains are delayed or the customer misses their booked train, there is currently no way to update the list or inform staff, so they inevitably end up in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The new **Passenger Assist** app, developed by Transreport for the rail industry, will tackle these problems by:

- enabling customers to book, change and cancel assistance quickly, which can currently take up to 40 minutes over the phone
- allowing customers to create a user profile, specifying their personal details and the type of assistance they need, so recurring bookings become quicker
- providing staff with live information, including key details about the customer and their journey, so they can provide a better service and accommodate short-notice requests
- ensuring better staff communication so staff can anticipate and deliver changes in planned assistance.



The app, which will be rolled out in the autumn of 2019, has been developed in collaboration with disability charities including Disability Rights UK, Blind Veterans UK and Anxiety UK and includes accessible features, such as the ability to change colour themes, fonts and text sizes.

Customers will still be able to book using the national freephone number on 0800 022 3720, which will forward them to the train company they need. By textphone, customers can use the free textphone forwarding service on 60083, which will send them the number they need.

Customers can also book online at [disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/travel-assistance/](https://disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/travel-assistance/). If customers want to book by email or fax, they can contact their train company directly.



While this development is much needed, figures released by the Scottish Government have suggested that as many as 104 train stations are not fully accessible, and 30 of those have platforms which are completely inaccessible to disabled people!

In response to this Transport Scotland have stated that at those stations where facilities have not yet been upgraded, ScotRail provides alternative travel provision for disabled passengers who request it.

Read more at: <https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/wheelchair-access-row-over-100-rail-stations-1-4772404>



## Understanding the Unmet Need for Short-Term Mobility Aids

Ability Borders were on the road yet again attending the launch of a new study by the British Red Cross looking at the need for short-term mobility aids and its impact upon the quality of life.



The report **Maintaining mobility – Understanding the unmet need for short-term mobility aids** and the accompanying **Scotland advocacy summary** explores the levels of need and impact of short-term mobility aids, including wheelchairs, and makes recommendations for improvement.

*Ability Borders Duns group members John and Diane Cobb attended the Red Cross event in the Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh.*

## Key findings from the report show:

Most statutory wheelchair providers (82%) do not supply wheelchairs for short-term use. Of those that do, it appears to be a postcode lottery with only certain areas or certain conditions being eligible. Out of the five NHS Wheelchair providers in Scotland only one responded that they provide short-term wheelchairs, others only do so in limited circumstances

[‘An estimated 4.3 million people could benefit from access to a mobility aid, such as a wheelchair.’](#)

**The study found that those who had accessed a short-term wheelchair loan were very positive about their experience.** Most (90%) said the wheelchair was very helpful and had enabled them to carry out day to-day activities. 87% said it had made it easier for family and friends to help them and nearly half (49%) said it had hastened their recovery time.

**Those with an unmet mobility need had been affected in a range of ways, with the majority (65%) experiencing significant negative impacts on their quality of life.** These effects ranged from having to stop working to becoming increasingly dependent on family and friends or becoming socially isolated and housebound.

**Respondents with a short-term mobility need were more likely than the general population to be retired, out of work, in the lowest socioeconomic group,** and to report that their health was poor or very poor, or that they have a long-term health condition.

**One-fifth (21%) of respondents who saw the potential benefits of a wheelchair believed that using one would have reduced the likelihood of further injury.** A similar proportion (18%) thought it would have helped to maintain their general health and wellbeing and 10% said it would have hastened their recovery time.



## Impact

For people who had a short-term mobility issue but did not have a wheelchair, common themes reflected their experience included

- Isolation
- Loss of independence
- Declining emotional wellbeing
- Weakened physical health
- Difficulty managing day to day activities
- Negative impact on employment

## Recommendations

The Scottish Government should introduce a statutory duty to provide short-term wheelchairs in line with long term wheelchair provision

Health and Social Care services should introduce holistic mobility assessments for people with short term mobility needs

Information and training should be provided to health and social care professionals to ensure that they are equipped to identify and advise people with short term mobility needs on appropriate mobility aids, including wheelchairs

Statutory health and social care services should improve the provision of short-term wheelchairs in their area, by exploring ways to deliver short term wheelchair loans in a more consistent and joined up manner to people who need them.

To read a full copy of the report [click](#) here or go to.

<https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/research-publications>

For further information about this research please contact

Fiona Macleod, Senior Policy and Public Affairs Officer Scotland

Email: [fmacleod@redcross.org.uk](mailto:fmacleod@redcross.org.uk)

0141 891 4037



## Top Tips for New Hips

This month we welcome some new tips and practical advice from a lovely lady called Beth Duff who had both her hips replaced due to osteoarthritis. As Beth lived on her own, she found she needed to be both organised and a little inventive in order to

care for herself. She has shared much of what she practised below and we hope you will find these tips as helpful as we did.

These days Beth enjoys pottering about in her garden and walking her dog, Jess. Together they raised over £550.00 for the local Arthritis UK group by walking 5km every day for 45 days!

## Beth's top tips!

1. Do all the exercises you are given BEFORE surgery. This will start to strengthen the muscles you will need afterwards to support your new hip. Continue to do as much exercise as you comfortably can, even if it's just a short walk every day. It will help your recovery.
2. Leave your house ready for coming home. This is especially important if you live alone. Have some quick and easy to prepare meals in your freezer. One bowl meals are ideal as they are easy to carry! Re-arrange furniture where necessary, making sure you set up any equipment you are given. It's also a good idea to become familiar with on-line shopping or arrange for some-one to shop for you. Remember that you won't be able to drive for about six weeks.

3. Make sure you have some loose comfy clothes. I lived in fleecy trousers and tops as it made dressing very easy and they were cosy too. Get used to the aids to help you put on socks and shoes beforehand too. Putting on socks takes a bit of practice!



***I found this sock aid easiest to use***

4. Take a large bottle of water into hospital with you and get visitors to bring more when they come to see you. You will be encouraged to drink a lot post-surgery and hospital water is not particularly pleasant to drink!
5. After your operation, take every opportunity to work with the physiotherapists when they visit the ward. Be as independent as possible so that you are confident about looking after yourself once you are home. Do as much walking as you are able. The surgeon's contribution to a successful outcome is just 50%. The rest is up to you!
6. Ask to take a walking frame home. I was much more confident using that if I had to get up in the night. With a basket attached, it was ideal for carrying things around the house when I still needed two sticks. Not recommended by the OT's but I found it very practical!



***My favourite gadget***



7. Once you are home, do all the exercises you have been given, repeating them as often as prescribed. You will be surprised how busy you are just doing this! The best tip I got was to take pain relief about an hour before exercising (especially in the morning).

***My exercise Kit. The mat is a thin plastic chopping board.***

8. The hardest thing, in my opinion, was sleeping on my back. I moved into a single bed as I was afraid I would roll over in a double bed. I also found it helped to get up and have a walk about when I was struggling to sleep in the night and I often had an afternoon nap in my chair. Although hip surgery is considered very normal, it is still a major operation as far as your body is concerned so rest is important for recovery. Remember to keep a phone by your bed in case you need help in the night. Remember too to take keys out of your door so that it can be unlocked from the outside, if necessary.



***A handy place for keys***

9. If you are able, continue to get physiotherapy. It's easy to get into bad habits which can potentially cause problems to your new hip, knees or back.
10. Above all, know that if you work hard on your rehabilitation, a whole new life beckons and you can probably return to activities you had had to stop before surgery. It takes time, though, so be patient. I reckon it took me a good six months before I felt the full benefit – but it was well worth it.



Thanks so much to Beth for writing in. If you have some great tips and advice like Beth, please share them with us and we'll put them in our next Newsletter!

## New Charity Name

ARTHRITIS RESEARCH UK + ARTHRITIS CARE =

# VERSUS ARTHRITIS

Arthritis Research UK and Arthritis Care became one charity in November 2017 and have just recently announced it's new name – Versus Arthritis.

Liam O'Toole, Chief Executive, said “the organisation would be a ‘braver’, more vocal charity, offering more care and support to arthritis sufferers.”

The Melrose Branch of Arthritis Research UK – now 45 years old – will become **Scottish Borders Versus Arthritis**.

Joanna Smith, the branch Chairman, said “We will continue to embrace our traditional role of fundraising for much needed research work – for which the Melrose Branch is so renowned – alongside the outreach work with people who are faced with the condition.”

The charity's three priorities are:

- Providing high-quality services
- Information, advice and support to people with the condition
- Campaigning to ensure arthritis is recognised as a priority and deliver cutting-edge research.

Research into new drugs and possible cures are long-term projects for which a lot of money is required and a great deal is raised here in the Borders.

Those with the condition need help now to live full and active lives. The help may just be to speak to others with similar conditions, to alleviate isolation, to come together for a great number of activities, to access facilities, to seek help regarding education, employment or every-day living. It's up to you to tell them how to help.

To find out more contact the Branch Secretary on

Email: [info@arthritisresearchmelrose.org.uk](mailto:info@arthritisresearchmelrose.org.uk) or leave a message on 01896 754041 (Tuesday to Friday) and your call will be returned.



They will also have a stand at the Borders General Hospital (BGH) on Thursday **18<sup>th</sup> October 9.30 – 5.30**.

Finally, there will be a meeting in the Board Room at BGH on **31<sup>st</sup> October at 6.30pm** to launch the new initiatives. Please contact the Branch Secretary if you would like to attend. Everyone is welcome.

Versus Arthritis web page can be found here: <https://www.versusarthritis.org/>



**SCOTTISH WAR BLINDED**  
FOR ALL VETERANS WITH SIGHT LOSS

## Scottish War Blinded



### Scottish War Blinded

Scottish War Blinded supports blind and partially-sighted ex-service men and women and their families, helping them to regain independence and confidence after sight loss.

**To become a member, it doesn't matter why someone's vision is impaired, or when they began to lose their sight.**

The majority of members have lost their sight many years after their service due to age, or a range of medical conditions such as Macular Degeneration or Glaucoma.

Membership of Scottish War Blinded is free and available to anyone in Scotland who has done any of the following:

- served in the Armed Forces
- completed National Service
- been in the Reserves
- been in the Merchant Navy under Navy command
- served in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps

Support for members includes, but is not limited to:

- Rehabilitation and training to adapt to sight loss
- Grants for equipment purchase to assist with independent living
- A wide range of social opportunities across Scotland
- Access to two custom-built activity centres based in the central belt of Scotland

- Access to 1:1 outreach support based in many council regions throughout Scotland
- Funded respite care
- Home modifications
- Sports and recreational pursuits

Their person-centred approach sees each veteran as an individual, with his or her point of view as at the heart of the work they do.

For more information contact:

Tel: 0800 035 6409

Web: <https://www.royalblind.org/scottish-war-blinded/what-we-do>

## New Protocol Published for Hearing Loss



**deafscotland**  
equality & integration through communication for all

A community-led initiative has resulted in the development of the **Hearing Access Protocol for Meetings & Events**, produced by Ideas for Ears and supported by deafscotland.



Meeting and events can be stressful and frustrating for people with hearing loss. Common issues such as poor acoustics, a presenter who is hard to understand and background noise can affect the way people access, participate in and contribute to meetings and events. This in turn impacts on the effectiveness and productivity of those meetings and potentially breaches equality and human rights legislation.

The Hearing Access Protocol provides guidance on how to design and run meetings and events so people with any hearing ability can hear and follow them, including those who are deaf.

To find out more about this work and to read the Hearing Access Protocol visit the Ideas for Ears website:

<https://www.ideasforears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/HearingAccess-Protocol-1.pdf>

## Silver Sunday

Silver Sunday is an annual day of fun and free activities for older people across the UK.

Initially, it started with a tea dance and within a few short years it has turned into a national

campaign to tackle the blight of loneliness that

affects so many older people. Silver Sunday is now a day in the national calendar,

the first Sunday in October, when we ask the nation to pause and think about older people and celebrate their contribution to society.



**SILVER SUNDAY**  
CELEBRATING OLDER PEOPLE



Led by The Sir Simon Milton Foundation, Silver Sunday

celebrates the value and knowledge that older people contribute

to our communities while combating loneliness and isolation.

Everyone can get involved, whether that's organising an event, spreading the word, or simply attending an activity.

This year's Silver Sunday was organised by Duns Senior Citizens and Borders Council Community Capacity Building Team and held on the 7<sup>th</sup> October in Duns Volunteer Hall.



Attended by around 150 people the day was a great success filled with fun activities to celebrate older people and community life.

The day started at 10:30am with lunch served at 12 noon. Tea and coffee was flowing all through the day with delicious home baked shortbread, and for those wanting something stronger the bar was open serving beers, spirits and wines.

A raffle was held with the prizes being donated by local businesses, raising over £250 for the Heart for Duns.

There was a full day of presentations and entertainment including music, song, poetry, movement and much more.

A big thank you must go to Juliana Amaral for organising this special day and for also allowing Ability Borders to take part.



And special thanks to our members of the Ability Borders Dun`s group, John Cobb and Dougie Anderson, who attended to help promote the organization.

For more information about Silver Sunday contact:

Email: [info@silversunday.org.uk](mailto:info@silversunday.org.uk)

Twitter: [@SilverSundayUK](https://twitter.com/SilverSundayUK)

Facebook: Silver Sunday



## Forget Me Not Café

Alzheimer Scotland provides services and support across Scotland to help you live as well as possible with dementia.

Whether you want information and advice, personalised support services, or activities in your community, they can help.

The Duns Forget Me Not Café is a friendly, supportive meeting place where people with Dementia and their carers can meet with others in a similar situation to enjoy refreshments, good company, information and support, and just to have a good time.

Our community groups are there to be enjoyed by anyone living with Dementia or experiencing difficulties with their memory, including family and friends.

All are welcome. However, people who are unable to attend independently should come with a companion who can provide support for them.

Unfortunately transport for these groups is not provided and therefore it is your responsibility to get to and from the community activity safely.



**Starting 7<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

**1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month 10am-12pm**

**Southfield Community Centre**

**Station Road, Duns, TD11 3EL**

For more information please contact;

Rebecca Rogers

Alzheimer Scotland

Tel: 07884187962



## Help to Heat Scheme

Along with their free gas locking valve scheme, SGN are helping make homes warmer by offering free or discounted gas connections to low-income and vulnerable households.

Through their **Help to Heat** scheme they are working with householders, private landlords, housing associations and local authorities to connect the most vulnerable households to their gas network, helping to heat homes for less.

The scheme is designed to support customers who are:

- Receiving certain income-related benefits (including Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payments)
- Living in one of the 25% most deprived areas within our network
- Living in fuel poverty based on the government's definition

The cost of energy prices can differ substantially, particularly between gas and electricity prices.

## Heating or eating?

Those who are less active due to age, disability or long-term condition typically need the temperature in the home to be higher. If the cost of heating the home becomes too expensive it can become a choice between heating or eating. Either way, health can deteriorate.

There are many schemes like this one available. Please seek help to reduce your energy bills where possible and let's keep you warm and fed this winter

For more information, or if you would like to apply to the Help to Heat scheme or discuss how you, your tenant or your community might benefit, contact:

Email: [helptoheat@sgn.co.uk](mailto:helptoheat@sgn.co.uk)

Tel: 0800 912 1700

Web: <https://www.sgn.co.uk/Responsibility/Help-to-Heat/>



Housing Options Scotland provide housing information and support for disabled people, military veterans and older people. 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.

Every housing situation is unique, so their expert staff and trained volunteers are there to support you every step of the way.

If you wish, they can provide an advocacy service and enter into discussions on your behalf with the council or your landlord. They can also help you to explore buying your own property.

Housing Options Scotland were at Langlee Community Centre in August to promote their services and were joined by other organisations including **Ability Borders**.



The event was very interesting and some really beneficial discussions were held.



If you have a disability you're over 60 years old, or if you've served in our armed forces, Housing Options Scotland can help. Their Promise is:

- Our service is free.
- We help everyone who comes to us.
- We are here for as long as you need us

For more information or to request help contact:

Email: [info@HousingOptionsScotland.org.uk](mailto:info@HousingOptionsScotland.org.uk)

Tel: 0131 247 1400

Web: <https://www.housingoptionsscotland.org.uk/>

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## Singing for Breathing Group

A lot has changed since Ability Borders last spoke to the Cheyne Gang for our first newsletter in December 2017 when they were trying to establish their first group in the Borders.

The Cheyne Gang is a community singing group for people living with long-term respiratory conditions which started in 2013 as a research project. Since then it has grown from 1 group to 6 groups (5 across Edinburgh and 1 in the Borders) and from 8 members to over 80 members.



Singing in a community group brings physical, mental and social benefits with members noting positive effects which include improved breath control, fewer flare ups, better sleep, reduced anxiety and some even requiring less medication.

The Cheyne Gang now have Scottish charitable status and continue to fundraise and seek grants to sustain their groups. They have been fortunate to have won two

awards for their efforts and received national lottery funding last year that has helped expand their reach.



They also obtained a grant from Creative Scotland to develop and deliver a Singing for breathing course last year to create more specialist voice coaches who will be able to set up similar groups throughout Scotland. This was well received and already two of their new coaches are running Singing for breathing groups.

Moving forward the charity want to continue with their quest to get the NHS to recognise the value of singing for breathing and also singing for health in general. Evidence has shown that singing in a community group benefits those with dementia, low mood, Parkinson's disease, stroke and any number of other conditions where people are disabled, isolated or lonely.

You can find out more details about them on their website:

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

Or follow them on Facebook and Twitter

For more information about the group in the Borders contact:

Anne Ritchie – 07769322583

Please follow our Facebook page – Ability Borders. We regularly post news, developments, events and updates there. If you would like us to find out more about something important to you or your family and community, then just let us know.

Please also let us know about your own tips and advice.

## Update from the Hugh Petrie Stoma Group.

Services for those with stoma's are being revised. Nurses are stopping the annual check-up which involves travelling to the BGH to see the stoma nurse. Instead, patients will receive a phone call. However, if you are having problems you will still be seen.

For those with a new stoma, changes to the service also means that the number of follow up visits will be reduced, again unless you are having problems.

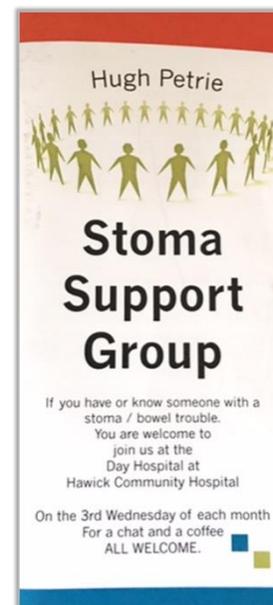
The Hugh Petrie Stoma Group would like to you to know that they are there for anyone who might need reassurance, or who just want to chat, moan or to have a laugh ... and of course a cuppa!

The group currently meet in Hawick, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month, but if you would like to meet others in your area they are willing to help you start a group.

If you would like more information about the group, you can find them on Facebook under Hugh Petrie Stoma Group or you can contact Nancy Fraser (Chairwoman) for a chat:

Tel: 01450 374012

Email: [nancyfraser@talktalk.net](mailto:nancyfraser@talktalk.net)



### Top Tips!



People with a stoma no longer receive some of the products previously supplied by the NHS. One such product is bed pads which are designed to save beds from unexpected leaks, something that is common to all stoma patients.

To save money, a member came up with the idea of using puppy training pads instead. You can get them at around half the cost of bed pads and they work just as well, giving you some confidence especially when away from home. Great idea!



Thanks to Nancy for sharing this with us. The Hugh Petrie Stoma Group shared many other tips in our first issue of Ability News which came out in December 2017.

You can view or download a copy of all our newsletters via our website. If you would prefer a printed copy just email or phone and we will be happy to send you one out. You can find all our contact details on the final page of this newsletter.



## Grace's Sign

When Grace Warnock was 10 years old she noticed judgmental looks from strangers when she would use accessible public bathrooms.

Grace has [Crohn's disease](#), an inflammatory bowel disease. Though she doesn't appear to be disabled in any way the condition can be painful and requires her to make a lot of bathroom stops.

Grace decided to design a sign that would include a symbol for people with invisible impairments to highlight her experience and to hopefully encourage people to stop making assumptions about disabled people that use accessible bathrooms.

Alongside the traditional person in a wheelchair, the sign shows a male and female image with a heart to symbolize people with invisible conditions.

Grace then launched her 'Grace's Sign' campaign to get buildings near her home in Edinburgh to hang the signs.

Since then many places have used the sign including Edinburgh Airport and our Scottish Parliament which installed the signs on three of its accessible bathrooms.



The caption under the sign at Edinburgh airport reads: 'Grace's hidden disability sign. Not all conditions are visible, please be patient with everyone using these facilities. Thank you.'

In smaller writing it then goes on to say who Grace is, what Crohn's disease is and Grace's hopes for this to be adopted as the global symbol for accessible toilets.

A great story to end on! That's all for now. We aim to produce our newsletter quarterly, so our next issue will be due out in January.

Thank you for all your support in providing information and please feel free to forward this newsletter to anyone you feel would benefit.

## 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.**

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](mailto:enquiries@abilityborders.org.uk)

Tel: 0300 999 2273

Facebook: Ability Borders

Web: [www.abilityborders.org.uk](http://www.abilityborders.org.uk)

1 Orchard Park, St.Boswells, TD6 0DA

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