



Ability News – December 2017

Welcome!

Welcome to the first edition of Ability News, the Ability Borders newsletter designed and written for people with physical disabilities and long term conditions in the Borders.

We hope that you will enjoy our news and articles and find them informative. We aim to produce the newsletter every 2 to 3 months but welcome your input with respect to this and any other aspect of the newsletter.

This first issue of Ability News is currently available online only. However, we completely understand that this is not inclusive and are looking at ways to make it accessible for all. Please be patient with us as we endeavour to do this.

If you would like us to cover a particular topic, or have ideas and suggestions regarding the content, format, frequency and methods of distribution then please let us know! You will find our contact details on the final page.

In this issue you can learn about Ability Borders and what we are currently up to. We also talk about a number of great initiatives such as the diabetes type 2 project, living safely in your home and Food Buddies. We introduce you to a forthcoming support group alongside some great existing ones.

Are you warm enough in your home? Read about Warmer Homes Scotland and how they might help. We also have tips and advice from the Citizen's Advice Bureau and the Hugh Petrie Stoma Support Group along with how to get the most out of your healthcare appointment.



Finally, we would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year!



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Our Organisation

Ability Borders is a signposting, information and support service for adults with a physical disability and/or long term condition.

How many adults in the Borders have a physical disability or long term condition? Well, according to the Census 2011, there are over 32,000 and that number is growing significantly according to current trends and predictions.



Though we are inclined to think that most of these people are over 65 years old, approximately 18,000 working age adults have a physical disability or long term condition – that's about 1 in every 4.

Many of the current services are tailored to support those with the most critical needs and often this involves having eligibility criteria based on age. This can mean that those whose needs are less critical or who are under 65 find it harder to access the services or the information that they require.

This gap in services is something that Ability Borders is working to address. We understand how critical it is to have the right information, have access to the right services/support and be in receipt of the right benefits so that you are enabled to live independently and care for yourself.

We also understand how the absence of these can negatively impact the physical and mental health and wellbeing of you and your family.

Alongside signposting and the provision of information, we have two Information Sharing Groups in Duns and Galashiels who meet monthly to help develop the Ability Borders and look at ways to improve services.

We are looking to establish two more groups in Peebles and Hawick and would love to hear from anyone interested in joining. Membership is open to anyone with a physical disability or long term condition and their family.

Welfare Benefits Service

Recent announcements from the Head of Customer Services, Jenni Craig at the Scottish Borders Council have caused growing concerns about changes to the Council Welfare Benefits Team, as this vital service is substantially reduced.

In a letter to local organisations it was revealed that the Welfare Benefits Service, Homelessness Service and Customer Services are currently under review.

As part of that review, telephone enquiries about benefits are being “streamlined”.

The letter also stated that anyone looking for help in relation to welfare benefits will be told to contact customer services. They may then be advised to visit a local contact centre or library rather than be directed to the welfare benefits team.

“Where necessary, the customer services adviser may arrange a call back from welfare benefits staff. There is no longer an allocated duty worker.”

The letter added that further changes will take place in the future.

There is great concern regarding the lack of clarity and public consultation regarding the review. It also appears that there is no equality impact assessment being carried out to determine how these changes will affect local people or how local organisations will be able to cope with increased demand for help.

Of particular concern is talk of a reduction in the specialist Macmillan support service due to funding being removed, along with the removal of the specialist Mental Health Adviser post.

Though other agencies such as the Citizen’s Advice Bureau can provide assistance with complex benefit issues, there is no additional resource available to help cope with an increase in demand.

In the Scottish Borders there are 4014 Disability Living Allowance (DLA) claimants and 2698 Personal Independence Payments (PIP) claimants.

Those claiming DLA who are between 16 and 65 will be re-assessed for PIP at some point. In the Borders there are over 1900 who are still to be reassessed.

(Note – if you were 65 or over on 08/04/13 you will continue with DLA and do not need to be reassessed for PIP)

According to government statistics

- approximately 23% of the re-assessments from DLA to PIP are unsuccessful
- For new PIP claimants approximately 48% are unsuccessful

This implies a potentially significant number of claimants who may need to appeal an unsuccessful decision and possibly go to tribunal. This process can be complex and labour intensive, which is why Ability Borders, along with other organisations,

signpost clients to the Welfare Benefit Service and Citizen's Advice Bureau for assistance.

Any reduction in this service can, therefore, have a profound impact on those needing help to claim the benefits they are entitled to.



Handy Tips from the Citizens Advice Bureau

The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) provides a comprehensive welfare benefits support service to the public. Of key importance with respect to DLA and PIP benefits is their vital support with the appeals process and tribunals.

Here are some helpful tips the CAB would like you to consider when you are in the process of applying, or being assessed for disability benefits.

Firstly, understand that new benefits are not based on the conditions or illnesses you have. They are awarded on the impact those conditions have on your life.

Completing the application forms

Think about how you manage to carry out tasks, the help, supervision, support or prompting you need to complete daily tasks. Break it down bit by bit. Try to have an understanding of how to explain your difficulties using clear language.

Get help

If possible, get help from someone with experience and knowledge of the application process. You can make an appointment at your local Citizens Advice Bureau or other disability rights organisation to assist with this.

Evidence

If you are attending an appointment with a consultant, specialist, physiotherapist etc. ask for a copy of any reports, assessments or referral letters. These are an easy way to build evidence to support your claim. If they are printing a copy for themselves, then it's not too much work to print a copy for your records. If you can get hold of tailored evidence in addition to the ones in your possession, then do it. Don't be caught unawares - start your prep NOW.

The Assessment

Practice for your assessment as you would for any other interview. Please remember you are allowed to have someone accompany you and they are permitted to take notes. This is your chance to show the impact your conditions have. Never minimise your pain, symptoms or conditions.

Paper trail

Keep copies of everything you submit to the DWP. If possible, send all applications recorded delivery and keep the proof of postage in a safe place. An A4 ring binder is your friend!

Dates

Always be very aware of strict time limits for submitting some applications, mandatory reconsiderations and appeals and ensure you act within those limits.

Be persistent

Applying for and appealing benefits can take time. Don't give up and remember there are organisations happy to assist you.

Stirling Citizens Advice Bureau have recently published an easy read document about benefits. You can access this via their website at <http://stirlingcab.org.uk/>

Have you been affected?

Ability Borders would like to get a clear understanding how the DLA & PIP claims process has affected those in the Borders.

We believe that there are already a significant number of people who are not claiming the benefits that they are entitled to. We also know that the impact of losing the benefits you have is profound, including the loss of your mobility vehicle, help with care and other related benefits. Of critical importance is the stress that this places on you, your health and your family.

We need to capture this information so that we are able to address this with the relevant organisations but, more importantly, to determine the support and services needed to help you through this difficult experience.

Please contact us and let us know your experience – help us to help you!



Drop in Service St. Boswells



As part of an outreach pilot, Ability Borders and the Citizens Advice Bureau have recently come together to hold drop in session in St. Boswells. We are currently holding these sessions monthly and have already been able to help a number of lovely residents in the St. Boswells area with benefits and care.

Our next drop in session is on Monday the 18th December from 1:30 – 3:00pm at 1 Orchard Park, St. Boswells, TD6 0DA

Come and have a coffee and a chat – we look forward to seeing you there!



Singing for Breathing



People with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, bronchiectasis and other conditions which make you feel breathless, can benefit significantly from singing.

In many of these conditions, the main problems are breathing out. People with COPD for instance, will often take shallow intakes of breaths because their lungs are storing too much trapped air so there is less space for new air to come in.

The Cheyne Gang, is a community singing group which was set up by 3 practice nurses in Edinburgh to look at the benefits that singing can have on breathlessness and general physical and mental health.

In the singing group the songs and exercises are specially designed to help release trapped air from the lungs in a controlled and fun way. Members are taught techniques that help them to phrase a song in a way that reduces breathlessness whilst singing. These techniques are easily used as exercises to do at home.

Alongside improvements in mood and new and lasting friendships, members have also reported:

- Better sleep,
- More energy
- Generally improved quality of life.

Plans are now in place to establish a similar singing group in Innerleithen in early 2018. The two ladies behind this fantastic initiative are Anne Ritchie and Julie Harvey.

Anne Ritchie is a recently retired General Practice Nurse and former Module Leader for the COPD/Spirometry course at the Queen Margaret University/NHS Lothian Collaborative Framework. Anne has been singing all her life and with people with respiratory illness for the last four years with The Cheyne Gang.

Julie Harvey has a background in speech therapy and is an experienced singing and piano teacher and leader of the Traquair Community Choir. She has recently been trained in the techniques used by the Cheyne Gang.

Scottish Borders health board area is currently the only one in Scotland that does not offer Pulmonary Rehabilitation to COPD patients. This is an exercise programme, delivered by physiotherapists, that improves exercise tolerance.

Julie and Anne hope that their singing group will bring benefits which will go some way towards filling this gap in services.

If you are interested in attending this group or would like further information, contact:

Anne Ritchie

07769322583

anne-ritchie@sky.com

Diabetes Groups

Over 13,000 people are newly diagnosed with diabetes each year in Scotland. If this rate continues, along with a growth in obesity levels and an increase in those over 65 years old, then by the year 2032 approximately 500,000 people in Scotland will have diabetes.

Many people now consider diabetes a common condition which is relatively easily managed. However, the truth is more alarming:

- Diabetes is the leading cause of lower limb amputations with 100 people a week affected in the UK
- Foot ulcers are a complication, which, when untreated, are responsible for as many as four-in-five diabetes related amputations.
- Almost 30% of people with diabetes have retinal damage as a complication of the condition
- Stroke is 2 to 4 times more likely in people with diabetes
- Heart attacks are 3 times as likely and account for half the deaths in those with type 2 diabetes.
- Kidney failure accounts for 11% of deaths in type 2 diabetes patients
- Diabetes costs NHS in Scotland £1 billion a year, almost 10% of its total spending.

Positive changes to lifestyle choices, such as exercise and healthy eating can be key to helping to prevent the onset of diabetes. These same lifestyle choices, along with medical treatment, can also help to prevent or delay the onset of further conditions for those who already have diabetes, in particular for those with type 2 diabetes.

Although there are over 7,000 people in the Borders with diabetes, until recently there has been no active support group locally. Working alongside Diabetes Scotland and service users, Ability Borders helped to establish and support the first of three such groups. Peer support can be incredibly important in helping individuals to deal with their condition and to share information.

There are now three peer support groups which meet every two months. The next meeting dates are:

Eyemouth Community Centre, 2.15pm on 11th December

Kelso Health Centre – 10am on 14th December

Galashiels Focus Centre – 7:00pm on 21st February

For more information or to register your interest in attending one of these groups contact Diana Findlay

Tel: 01835 823 374

Email: diana.findley@btinternet.com

New Type 2 Diabetes Project

Type 2 Diabetes is an increasingly prevalent long term condition which is highly associated with being overweight or obese. Currently in the Borders, 27% of adults are obese and this figure is continuing to rise.



Without intervention, the rates of diabetes will continue to rise alongside the related conditions and healthcare expenditure.

Programmes which combine tailored exercise, nutrition, social and psychological support have been shown to significantly improve physical and mental health and wellbeing.

In line with this, LIVE Borders have recently trialled a project in Galashiels for people aged 30 – 70 years old with type 2 diabetes. By providing support tailored to the individual, the aim of the project was to improve physical fitness and encourage healthy eating, leading to an improved quality of life.

After being weighed and measured at the start, each participant was asked to attend:

- 2 diabetes specific exercise routines per week
- a meeting with a health physiologist once per month
- nutritional and healthy eating input sessions

During this time the participants were entitled to use all LIVE Borders facilities and receive ongoing support from health instructors. The project lasted for 6 months at a cost of £10 per month for the first 3 months increasing to £20 per month for the remaining 3 months.

At the end of the 6 month period participants could continue to pay £20 per month for a further 12 weeks and then had access discounted direct debit membership options.

The results of the trial were very encouraging in terms of both weight loss and improved health. All 9 participants who completed the project have chosen to continue with the exercise sessions and have been offered peer mentoring roles to support new referrals.

A further outcome has been the launch of diabetes specific exercises classes which anyone who has type 2 diabetes can be referred into.

This excellent project is now due to start in Eyemouth in January 2018 followed by a further 2 locations which are to be determined.

For more information or to enrol in this new project, contact Paul Davis:

Email: pdavis@liveborders.org.uk

Phone: 07458 040 481



Riding for the Disabled Association

The Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) provides equine therapy to children and adults with a wide range of disabilities.

There are significant physical benefits from equine therapy. Balancing on a horse works a large number of muscles; the horse's movement is transmitted through the rider's body, gradually making it more relaxed and supple. Core stability is strengthened as a result with a reduction in spasms, improved balance, posture and coordination. Wheelchair users have the rare chance to experience being in control and find riding more fun than traditional physiotherapy.

There are also strong recreational and psychological benefits through increased confidence and self esteem, taking control, decision making, building relationships and improving communication skills.

Equine therapy can therefore, also be a vital support for those with emotional problems, learning disabilities and those on the autistic spectrum.



Recently the Berwickshire RDA was honoured to welcome HRH The Princess Royal to mark the opening of Sandy's stable at the group's arena in Sunnyside.

Sandy is a mechanical horse which can be used to increase rider confidence, practice or improve riding skills. The group were able to purchase Sandy through fund-raising initiatives and the generous donations of business and supporters.

You can find out more about the RDA organisation on their website

<http://www.rda.org.uk/>

For more information about the Berwickshire RDA group contact Mrs Margaret Morgan:

Tel: 01890 761 311

email: Land1morgan@aol.com

Website: www.berwickshirerda.org.uk/index.asp

For details of other RDA groups in the Borders look at www.rdasouthscotland.org.uk/groups.htm



Is Your Home Warm Enough?

A household is said to be fuel poor if, to maintain a satisfactory heating and energy consumption regime, it would be required to spend more than 10% of the net household income (including Housing Benefit or Income Support for Mortgage Interest) on its total energy use.

Fuel poverty typically affects the elderly, people with disabilities or long term conditions, families with children and low income households.

Over 21,000 homes in the Scottish Borders are considered to be in fuel poverty:

- 34% are off the gas grid (which is the cheapest type of heating)
- 36% are long-term sick and disabled
- 5% are homebound
- 58% are single Pensioners.

Reasons for fuel poverty include energy prices, low income, poor energy efficiency, weather and location and high heating demand (typically, the elderly, young children and people with disabilities require warmer homes).

Poor energy and low temperatures can lead to :-

- > Increase in falls
- > Depression and anxiety because of debt
- > Poor diet - high sugar intake - lack of fruit and vegetables
- > Poor physical health
- > Exclusion
- > Deterioration of the home
- > Death

'Warmer Homes Scotland' is a national Scottish government initiative which was launched in 2015 designed to support customers living in fuel poverty to make their homes warmer and more comfortable by installing a range of energy efficiency measures.

The initiative offers over 40 different energy efficiency measures which include things such as insulation, heating, controls, secondary glazing and renewables.

Recently one of our members learned that his back boiler was obsolete and faced having to replace the heating system. He received 4 quotes from various companies ranging from £3500 to £4600. Not one of these companies told him that he may be entitled to financial assistance.

After an initial conversation with Home Energy Scotland, a home visit was arranged during which a thorough survey of his property was conducted. The assessment confirmed that our member was entitled to a free new heating system through the Warmer Homes Scotland initiative.

The company who would be installing the new heating system made a follow up visit shortly after to assess the work that was required. Installation was then done within a week. In the words of our member:

‘The company who installed the system was excellent, laying down floor coverings, hovering up etc., and generally keeping any disruption to a minimum. So, one phone call can result in an awful lot of money being saved, not to mention stress.’

If you worry about your fuel bills or find your home hard to heat, then contact Home Energy Scotland, they can arrange a home visit and the service is free.

Home Energy Scotland

Tel: 0808 808 2282

Email: advice@se.homeenergyscotland.org

Web: www.homeenergyscotland.org

You can find more information about the Warmer Homes Scotland initiative at

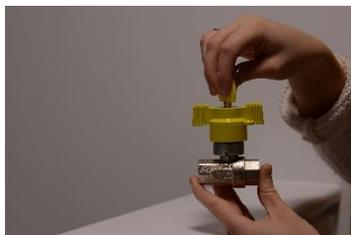
<http://www.greenerscotland.org/home-energy/advice-and-grants/warmer-homes-scotland>



SGN Free Locker Cooking Valve

Gas distribution company SGN is offering a free safety device to help keep vulnerable people across Scotland gas safe in their own homes.

SGN understand that their vulnerable customers, such as people with Alzheimer's or autism, need extra safeguarding in place. The locking cooker valve helps people retain their independence at home and provides reassurance to family, friends and carers.



The simple safety device is fitted to existing gas cooker pipework. When the valve is locked, the gas supply to the cooker is stopped. This eliminates the risk of the cooker being unintentionally turned on or left on, and gives peace of mind to the carer or relative that the cooker can't be used when they leave the house or the room. The carer or relative can easily turn the valve on using the key when the cooker is required, enabling the vulnerable person to continue to use their gas cooker safely.

SGN offer this free service across Scotland. To find out more about our locking cooker valve or to make a referral, please visit our website: sgn.co.uk.

Living Safely In The Home

An initiative led by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has recently produced a very positive evaluation. A pilot launched in the Cheviot area in June 2016 offered older people the opportunity for a free safety visit to their home.

Living Safely in the Home involves firefighters visiting households to provide an assessment of a number of potential risks, not only in terms of fire hazards, but also with respect to falls and frailty.



The project targets those who are 65 and older. This age group accounts for three-quarters of all falls at home which result in emergency admissions to hospital. In addition, falls:



- ❖ **Are the leading cause of injuries and death in the over 65's**
- ❖ **Can result in reduced mobility and independence**
- ❖ **Are a contributory factor in 40% of admissions to nursing homes**

To date there have been over 141 falls assessments completed. Of those, 73 met the falls criteria and with consent, were referred to the Cheviot Community Healthcare team for action.

A recommendation from the consultation is to open the service up to the Teviot and Liddesdale area next, which is hoped to start early in 2018.

If you or someone you know would benefit from the home fire safety visit, then call 0800 0731 999 or text 'FIRE' to 80800 from your mobile phone.

To obtain more information regarding this project contact 01835 824 728 or email E.Melbcat@firescotland.gov.uk

STEADI - Falls Prevention Classes

STEADI (Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths and Injuries) is an initiative based on falls prevention. If you have had a fall or are potentially at high risk of falling you may be referred to the STEADI – Falls prevention class.



Working together with NHS Borders, Live Borders delivers classes over a minimum 12-week period, though many continue to attend the class weekly. The class consists of between 8-10 individuals working with resistance bands and chairs for balance.

Individuals are grouped according to their ability, so that the class is tailored to their mobility level. If satisfactory improvements are made, then they can progress to health condition classes if they so wish.

Referrals to these classes are through your doctor or falls prevention physiotherapist. Classes cost £3.50. If you are already attending other activities such as swimming, then you will also be offered the £20 health membership

STEADI classes are currently provided in Tweedbank and Hawick only. However, there are also low level mobility classes available in Peebles & Kelso which do not require a referral and can be booked by anyone.

Other Health Classes

LIVE Borders also offer a range of other health classes which may be of significant benefit such as:

- **Mental Health Project** – a limited supported gym session which operates once a week. A much broader MH programme offering culture and physical activity options is currently being developed
- **MS Society** – members of the MS Society can receive free access to a power plate along with a 30 minute personal training session with a health instructor
- **Active Ageing** – various types of gentle exercise classes for those aged 60+ to improve overall strength and mobility and decrease the risk of further health issues
- **Bump to Baby / Mentally flourishing mums** – NHS midwives can refer anyone who is currently pregnant and has a BMI of over 35. They have the option of 6 aqua aerobic classes or 6 personal training sessions
- **Macmillan – Move More** – this is a joint venture between Live Borders and Macmillan enabling those who have had cancer to become more physically active through walking, gentle exercise and gardening.
- **Swim Referral Programme** – patients are referred from the Borders General Hospital hydrotherapy physio to receive discounted swimming pool access.

For more information about any of the LIVE Borders groups in this newsletter please contact Paul Davis:

Email: pdavis@liveborders.org.uk
Phone: 07458 040 481

Borders Food Buddies

Food Buddies develops peer support for people in Scottish Borders who have dementia and for their carers around food and keeping well – shopping, cooking, eating at home and eating out.



The project also aims to raise awareness about the importance of food for people with dementia and their carers, how people's needs change and the things families and others in the community can do to make it easier for people who are affected by dementia. This will enable them to reach more people with dementia and their carers as well as building the capacity of others in the wider community.

Activities and Plans

- In December 2016 they launched the Winter Tips booklet with lots of ideas and recipes for surviving the winter and festive season
- They have been in discussion with a range of other organisations and agencies to talk about joint working and getting the word out about the food Buddies Project
- They are gathering information, ideas tips and recipes for elderly and frail people who are vegan and vegetarian – this publication will be available in November 2017
- The Eastgate Theatre in Peebles is now recognised as a dementia friendly environment
- They have worked in partnership with a range of groups and organisations including: Berwick Housing Association, The Food Foundation, The Eastgate Theatre, Red Button Arts, SBC Capacity Building Team, SBC CLD, the Federation of Village Halls, Caddonfoot Hall and Fountainhall Village Hall, Vegetarians for Life, Ability Borders, Borders New Horizons
- They are beginning to gather tips from people about ways to make shopping, cooking and eating easier for people with dementia and will be sharing these with people across Scottish Borders
- T42 in Galashiels has been recognised as a Dementia Friendly business and the Food Buddies Sticker is proudly displayed on their premises in Stirling Street

Would you like to help?

Food Buddies are looking for people who can give time as a volunteer to help plan and provide cooking sessions, give some buddy support and other activities. Family experience of living with dementia or understanding how people's food needs change as they get older will be very helpful.

They are keen to work with community groups, care services and local businesses to develop partnership activities.

If you would like more information or like to get involved contact:

Jan Laing, Development Worker – jan@otbds.org

Christine Ryder, Project Worker – Christine@otbds.org



Personalised Dementia Book For Children

The Ally Bally Bee Project

Question “how do you explain dementia to a six year old?”

It can be difficult enough for adults to understand dementia, so how is a child to make sense of it?

For the Äikäs-Adams family, this question led to the creation of a personalised children's book which can be tailored to your own family's situation. This unique solution helps to explain this difficult condition in a gentle way and has been a great success.

For more information and to order your own personalised book contact

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



DIGNITY BIBS

Dignity Bibs

Bibbles are hand-made dignity bibs for all ages.

Uniquely styled to look like a bandana or upper garment, the bibbles come in a variety of styles and colours to complement any outfit and can therefore be worn without any embarrassment.

The unique combination of cotton and fleece means that the outer cotton layer absorbs wetness whilst the fleece under-layer acts as a barrier, preventing the clothing from becoming wet. The design also allows the Bibble to dry out quickly and is fully machine washable.

To order, visit their website or phone 0115 849 0174

<https://www.bibbleplus.co.uk/>



S'up Spoon for Shaky Hands

This award winning innovative spoon has been especially designed for people with shaky hands, offering them the opportunity to eat independently with minimal spillage.

Created by a gentleman with cerebral palsy, the spoon is available to anyone who may benefit and is eligible for 0% VAT if purchased for, or on behalf of, someone who has a disability.

The spoon can be purchased online for £12.50 (exc. VAT). Additional spoons ordered at the same time are available for £10 each (exc. VAT).

Website: <http://www.sup-products.com/product/sup-spoon-black/>

Tel: 0131 343 6821 between the hours of 9:00am to 5:00pm

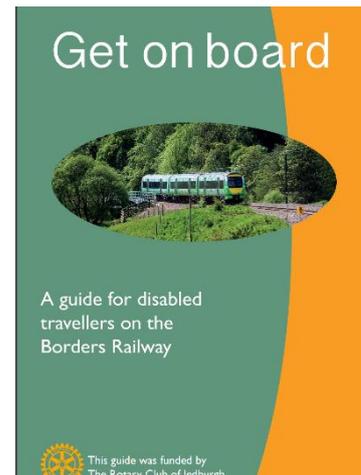
Borders Railway Disabled Travel

A Borders resident, Isobel McLeish, recently completed a guide for disabled travellers on the Borders Railway titled 'Get on board'.

Funded by the Rotary Club of Jedburgh, this compact guide covers important information about travelling on the train including arranging a ramp, obtaining travel cards, buying tickets, station facilities etc. You can get a copy of the guide from:

SBC Library/contact centres
Galashiels Interchange
Tourist Information Centres
Citizens Advice Bureau
Carers Centre

Ability Borders web site <http://abilityborders.org.uk/news-and-events/>



Hawick Stoma Support Group

What is a stoma?

Stoma is a Greek word meaning 'mouth' or 'opening'. Stoma surgery results in a small opening on the surface of the abdomen being surgically created in order to divert the flow of faeces and/or urine. Some of the most common underlying conditions which result in a stoma are colorectal cancer, bladder cancer, ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease.

The Hugh Petrie Stoma Support Group provides a warm friendly welcome and essential peer support to anyone with a stoma or bowel trouble and their family and friends. Their aim is to help take the embarrassment out of having a stoma or bowel problem and to help individuals cope with daily living.

This lovely group meets for a coffee and chat on the 3rd Wednesday of each month (except January and July) at the Hawick Community Day Hospital.

For more information on the group contact Nancy Fraser:

Tel: 01450 374 012

Mob: 07904 032 458

Email: nancyfraser@talktalk.net

Tips from the Hugh Petrie Stoma Support Group

‘Not all stomas are the same and all people are different’.

- If you are new to having a stoma, when travelling in a car place a cushion between yourself and the seat belt.
- If you find ordinary tights are rather tight, then buy maternity tights which have more room
- Travel with hand sanitiser and wet wipes or a small water tight bottle in case there are no facilities to wash.
- Use clothes pegs to hold your clothes out of the way when changing or emptying bag.
- Peppermint oil in the bag will help deodorise and prevent pancaking (air getting in the bag). Baby oil can also be used but make sure it doesn't get on to the seal otherwise you will have a leak.
- Active stoma especially at night with ileostomy eating bread, jelly babies, potatoes, marshmallows, or pasta will help thicken the output. Most people find what works for them personally.
- Avoid apple, potato skins, nuts, etc. as these can cause blockages.
- When emptying bag place 2-3 sheets of toilet roll in toilet, this cuts down splashing.
- Check the public toilet is working before emptying your bag.
- If there are no public toilets available where you are going take an ice-cream or margarine tub that seals. Line it with a disposable bag and toilet paper, then you can empty your bag into this and dispose of it when you are home or at a toilet.
- Use disabled toilets when you can as they should provide a shelf for putting your items on and a hook to hang up your coat and bag. Remember, you are entitled to use the disabled facilities, not all disabilities are visible. Also, to use most disabled toilets you will need to have your radar key.
- For leakages at night which can happen the Stoma Support Group can supply waterproof mattress protectors.

Our most important advice:

If you receive bowel screening kits please use and return them! Then you may not need any of the above.



Handbook

Ability Borders and its members are currently working on an Ability Handbook. The handbook will provide extensive information related to physical disability and long term conditions including disability support services, benefits, organisations, support groups, mobility aids, clinics and more.

We would like the handbook to be available in all formats and to be given to people as soon as possible following diagnosis of their condition. The handbook will act as a guide to the world of disability and long term conditions providing you with a directory of services and information.

This handbook has been identified by our members as a vital tool which was missing in their own personal journey following diagnosis. We hope to be ready to publish in the first half of 2018 and are currently logging interest from individuals who would like to receive a copy. You can register your interest by contacting us via email or telephone. We look forward to hearing from you.

Tips for Preparing for your Healthcare Appointment

Whether you are visiting your GP, a consultant or specialist or a mental health assessment there are things you can do to prepare in advance so they you get the most out of your time with the health professional.

Many of us will forget everything we want to talk about during our appointment so make some notes of:

- Things you want to discuss and the important questions you wish to ask
- Things you need to remember to tell the doctor like the details of your symptoms, including when they started and what makes them better or worse
- The list of medications you are currently on including vitamins and supplements

Take these notes with you to your appointment and tick off each one as you go through them. Don't be afraid to ask questions and ask the health professional to explain it to you until you understand. If you like, take someone with you for support.

And remember - Ask your hospital or surgery for an interpreter or communication support if needed.

There are many guides available to assist you with preparing for your appointments. Below are some of the most common questions related to tests and treatments that you may find useful:

Questions relating to tests (blood tests, scans etc)

- What is the test for?
- How will I receive the results?
- When should I expect to receive them?
- Who do I contact if I don't get the results?
- Will the results be explained to me?

Questions relating to treatment:

- How effective is the treatment?
- Are there any side effects or risks? If so what are they?
- How will I know if the treatment is working?
- Is there anything I should avoid or stop doing?
- Are there any other ways to treat my condition?
- What are your recommendations?
- Is there a support group or any other source of help?

Before you leave your appointment make sure that you:

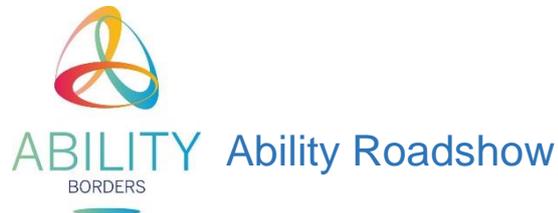
- Understand what you have been told – don't be afraid to keep asking for things to be explained until you understand.
- If there are words you don't understand, ask for them to be written down and explained
- Check you have covered all that you wanted to discuss and ask at the appointment
- Make sure you understand what will happen next and when it will happen.
- Write it down – make notes of what you discussed and what will happen next

If you would like accessible information like this which is easy to read and accompanied by pictures then please visit <http://www.easyhealth.org.uk/>

You will find over 500 leaflets on Easyhealth, made by many different organisations. You can print off nearly all the leaflets straight away and also access health videos on a variety of conditions.

Many charities have also developed condition specific questionnaires that you can use as a starting point for your conversation with a specialist. For example, look at the questions from The British Heart Foundation or Macmillan cancer support. Your pharmacist can also help you answer questions about medicines you have been prescribed.

Finally, remember to check your current prescription with the pharmacy for contraindications. Many people are given prescriptions they do not use – these cannot be reused, recycled or sent abroad and cost the NHS millions of pounds each year.



Ability Borders are planning an Ability Roadshow in spring 2018. The roadshow will be hosted in 6 locations across the Borders, namely; Duns, Eyemouth, Galashiels, Hawick, Kelso, and Peebles.

We aim to bring together a large number of organisations, services and support groups to increase awareness and access to the services and products which support independent living.

Once the dates are confirmed, we will promote the roadshow through all available methods available to us. However, if you would like to register your interest and request an email confirmation of the date, then simply contact us via telephone or email.



If you would like to find out more about what's happening in the Borders, then look at Link news online.

Link was recently established to provide charities, social enterprises and community groups in the Scottish Borders with the opportunity to promote their services.

The news and information on the website has proved it to be an excellent resource for the third sector, with a growing audience among the residents of the Borders.

We will be promoting many of our initiatives on Link as they progress so check it out and enjoy reading about all the great work being done in our communities.

<http://www.linknews.org.uk/>

Contact Us

We hope you have enjoyed this newsletter. Please get in touch if you would like more information or to be involved in any of the initiatives covered here.

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.

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Ability Borders is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation

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