

## What is a “Platform and Voice”?

### Background

A Platform and Voice is a forum set up by, and for older people in Midlothian, to address older people’s issues.

In 2002 we held an open meeting to look at whether to develop a Midlothian-wide forum for older people. Seventy people attended, and fifty-five people voted. Of these, fifty-four voted to set up a forum for older people.

### Progress . . .

Since then, a Platform and Voice have met regularly at the MVA offices.

People have attended from :

- Bonnyrigg Seniors Forum
- Gorebridge & District Forum for Older People
- Woodburn Day Care Club
- The Tuesday Club
- Dalkeith Older People’s Welfare
- Scottish Pensioners Association

There has also been support from organisations such as *Help the Aged*, *MVA*, *Midlothian Community Care Forum*, *Midlothian Council*, and the *NHS*.

So far the Forum has:

- a) Developed a draft constitution
- b) Developed Aims and Objectives
- c) Recruited support and Membership

## Gorebridge & District Forum for Older People: a success story

With the support of a Platform and Voice a local group for older people has been set up in Gorebridge. The group meets every fortnight and gives people a chance to raise issues with local Councillors and police, as well as having fun. The group has organised a trip to the Scottish Parliament with Rhona Brankin MSP. A representative from the group sits on a Platform and Voice to put forward the views of the whole Gorebridge group.

## How does a Platform and Voice work?

Representatives from older people’s groups are the Core Members of a Platform and Voice. They must be able to consult with a wider group of older people. Paid workers also attend, but only to support the core members. They do not have any power to make decisions for the group.

### A Platform and Voice has the following aims:

1. to enable the voice of older people to be heard
2. to provide an effective, representative and independent advocate for older people
3. to provide opportunities for older people to work, and raise issues, with service providers
4. to monitor new services and developments that affect older people
5. to provide organisations with views of older people about existing and proposed services
6. to influence policy and practice concerning older people at a local, regional and national level

### Benefits of speaking with one voice are:

- there is more chance of being heard: it gives the Voice more strength
- more people can have their say more easily
- more co-ordination means less duplication - you won’t need to speak twice
- it allows the voice of older people to be formally recognised and be part of the planning process

How will your  
voice be  
heard?

**Example:** consultation on Older People's health services

- the NHS ask a Platform and Voice what local Older People's health services are like
- Older People's Representatives attend a Platform and Voice and hear about the consultation
- The representatives attend their local group and ask people their opinions
- The representatives report back the opinions of their group to a Platform and Voice
- This information is put together into a report and given to the NHS

Contact Us:

If you are interested in becoming involved in a Platform and Voice, please contact us. Whether you are a member of a local group or an individual who wants to have their say, we can help you become a part of the forum.

**Contact:**

***Eric Johnstone***

**Phone or Fax:**

***0131 663 9471***

**eMail:**

**[eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk](mailto:eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk)**

**or Write to:**

***Midlothian Community Care Forum  
4/6 White Hart Street  
Dalkeith  
Midlothian  
EH22 1AE***

# a Platform & Voice for Older People