

Edinburgh MSP supports Age Scotland's Still Waiting campaign

Local MSP backs campaign against older isolation at Age Scotland Nicolson Street shop

Alison Johnstone, Lothian Green MSP, visited Age Scotland's shop on Edinburgh's Nicolson Street at lunchtime today to give her backing to the Charity's Still Waiting campaign to tackle isolation among older people. She signed the Still Waiting petition which calls on the Scottish Government to extend the free bus pass scheme to include community transport services that help older people who find it difficult or impossible to use mainstream bus services, and encouraged local residents to do the same. Petitions can be signed in Age Scotland's Nicolson Street, Stockbridge and Morningside shops, [and online](#).

Alison Johnstone said:- "Isolation is one of the largest problems facing our older population and it's clear that extending the free bus pass to include community transport would be a very positive step. All the evidence shows that increasing the independence of older people leads to better physical and mental health and fewer demands on our health system. I urge people to show their support the Still Waiting campaign by signing their petition"

Local Age Scotland Development Officer Laura Dunkel said: "Being unable to use mainstream transport can leave you isolated and lonely; a health risk comparable to life-long smoking. If successful, our campaign will benefit older people in Edinburgh who can't use ordinary bus services, by allowing them to travel free on Community Transport.

"It will also help secure the future of local Community

Transport providers, such as Pilton Equalities Project, that are vulnerable in the current economic downturn. And everyone stands to gain, as older people who are supported to maintain their independence and quality of life are less likely to need hospital or residential care, which is costly to the public purse.”

Leith resident Agnes, who is age 66 and suffers from a number of health conditions, said: “I couldn’t tell you the last time I would be able to get a bus. I do sometimes feel very isolated. Some days I cry, but you’ve just got to be strong and put it in the back of your mind – but it’s horrible when you can’t get out.

“I really think that if we could use our bus passes on community transport, it would make a great difference, not just to me, but to all older people.”

Siu Pang, Age Scotland Nicolson Street shop manager, said:- “If you pop into one of our friendly Edinburgh shops between now and the end of September, you’ll find that signing our campaign petition couldn’t be easier. And you’ll find some great bargains to take away with you too.”