

# Holidays

It is best to start off with some ideas on the type of holiday and the destination that appeal to you - and your wallet - and then tackle the practicalities of access, always being prepared to compromise if the obstacles are genuinely insurmountable. If, instead, you first seek advice about accessibility, you risk being herded into the 'suitable' packages or destinations, which may not suit your tastes or even your disability.

Once a destination has been selected, whether as a result of chatting to friends or a travel agent, of reading a book or watching a travel programme, the next step depends very much on individual taste, for disabled people no less than able-bodied people.

Whichever way you play it, there is a good chance that to be reasonably sure of a trouble-free holiday, and to get the most out of your travels, you will have to seek information and advice from specialists in disability/accessibility and in travel.

## ***Voluntary Agencies who give advice***

**Holiday Care (HC)** 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, Sunley House, 4 Bedford Park, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 2AP Tel: 08451 249971. Fax: 08451 249972.

Website: [www.holidaycare.org.uk](http://www.holidaycare.org.uk) E-mail: [info@tourismforall.org.uk](mailto:info@tourismforall.org.uk)

A central resource for holiday information and support for people with disabilities, older people, and for people with other special needs. It provides a range of information including:

Information on holidays in Britain and abroad, including a book on inspected accommodation for each region in the UK

Information on respite care

A reservation service offering discounted rates at inspected accommodation in the UK is also available by phoning the Holiday Care Reservations Helpline  
Tel: 08451 249973

**Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR)** 12 City Forum, 250 City Road, London EC1V 8AF Tel: 0207 250 3222. Minicom: 0207 2504119

Website: [www.radar.org.uk](http://www.radar.org.uk) E-mail: [radar@radar.org.uk](mailto:radar@radar.org.uk)

RADAR produces a range of information including the book Holidays in Britain & Ireland - A guide for disabled people, price is £13.50

**DPTAC** a government website for disabled and less mobile people giving advice and information about using all forms of transport. The information can only be accessed via the website.

Website: [www.dptac.gov.uk/door-to-door](http://www.dptac.gov.uk/door-to-door)

**John Groom's Holidays and Shaftesbury Christian Care** have now merged to become Livability; Choices for disabled people. Website: [www.livability.org.uk/](http://www.livability.org.uk/)  
Email: [holidays@livability.org.uk](mailto:holidays@livability.org.uk)

Livability offers a wide range of holiday accommodation for disabled people, to include a variety of Hotels and self-catering units around England and Wales

**Scout Holiday Homes Trust** Gilliwell Park, Bory Road, Chingford, London E4 7QW. Tel: 0208 433 7100 Information line: 0845 300 1818  
Email: [www.scoutbase.org.uk/hq/holhomes/index.htm](http://www.scoutbase.org.uk/hq/holhomes/index.htm)

Offers low-cost self-catering holidays in 6 berth chalets and caravans at a number of resorts. Any family with a disabled member welcomed - not only those in Scouting.

**Vitalise** 12 City Forum, 250 City Road, London, EC1V 8AF. Tel: 0845 345 1972  
Website: [www.vitalise.org.uk](http://www.vitalise.org.uk)

Vitalise (formally The Winged Fellowship Trust) provides holidays for people with physical disabilities at five purpose-built centres in England. Volunteers help permanent staff provide assistance for guests as required and all centres have 24 hour nursing supervision. Disabled guests can also bring their own companions at reduced rates.

## ***Specialist Commercial Organisations***

**Access Travel Ltd** 6 The Hillock, Astley, Lancs M29 7GW Tel: 01942 888844  
Website: [www.access-travel.co.uk](http://www.access-travel.co.uk) E-mail: [info@access-travel.co.uk](mailto:info@access-travel.co.uk)

Offers a programme of holiday packages designed for disabled people in Ireland, Europe and North America. Self-catering, holiday centre and hotel options are available.

**Assistance Travel Service Ltd** ATS House, 1 Tank Lane, Purfleet, Essex RM19 1TA Tel: 01708 863198  
Website: [www.assistedholidays.com](http://www.assistedholidays.com) Email: [atstravel@aol.com](mailto:atstravel@aol.com)

An established tour operator arranging holidays for disabled people and their families in Britain and abroad. Accessible accommodation is used and transport trips and insurance can be arranged. Self-catering, touring, hotels and boating holidays are offered.

**Chalfont Line Ltd** Chalfont House, 4 Providence Road, West Drayton, UB7 8HJ.  
Tel: 01895 459540  
Website: [www.chalfont-line.co.uk](http://www.chalfont-line.co.uk) E-mail: [holidays@chalfont-co.uk](mailto:holidays@chalfont-co.uk)

Offers a range of holidays in Britain and overseas for disabled people and their families, both travelling individually and on escorted tours. Packages of personal care can be arranged.

**Camping and Caravan Club** have a list of sites that have facilities for disabled people. Contact the Club at the following address: The Caravan Club, Wood Street, East Grinstead House, East Grinstead, W. Sussex RH19 1UA Tel: 01342 326944. For camping information Telephone; 01203 694995  
Website: [www.caravanclub.co.uk](http://www.caravanclub.co.uk)

## **Getting There**

### **By Air**

Air travel is often the easiest way of reaching a holiday destination. However, the general rule about giving as much notice as possible and explaining special requirements are particularly important where airlines are concerned. It is essential that they are given all relevant details about a disabled passenger at the time the flight is booked.

Wheelchair users are catered for at most UK airports. All the major terminals are equipped with ramps, dropped kerbs, automatic doors, lifts and low-level telephones.

Different carriers have varying procedures with regard to intending passengers who are disabled. Some require medical clearance using a MEDIF (standard medical form) which needs to be completed by the traveller's own doctor.

**Care in the Air** gives general advice for disabled air passengers. It is available free from Advanced air transport users council, CAA House, 45-59 Kingsway, London WC2B 6TE Advice line: 0207 240 6061 Website: [www.auc.org.uk](http://www.auc.org.uk)

**Access to Air Travel** gives information on services for disabled passengers offered by many airlines operating from the UK, available from RADAR contact details on page one.

[www.allgohere.com](http://www.allgohere.com) summarises the major airlines' policies towards disabled passengers and has a database of over 2,000 UK hotels with disabled access.

**Flying High - A Practical Guide to Air Travel for People with Disabilities** a booklet giving information on journey planning, general arrangements at airports and on aircraft, personal toilet and using and storing equipment when flying.

Available from the Disabled Living Foundation, 380-384 Harrow Road, London W9 2HU. Tel: 0207 289 6111. Fax: 0207 266 2922 Website: [www.dlf.org.uk](http://www.dlf.org.uk)

**Holiday Care** Website: [www.holidaycare.org.uk](http://www.holidaycare.org.uk) gives information about oxygen while travelling by air, as follows. "If you require supplemental oxygen during your flight, then you or your travel agent must contact the airline you plan to travel with. Whilst most airlines will provide oxygen, they will differ on their policies on oxygen provision. When approaching airlines you should ask them; if they provide oxygen; do they charge and if so how much; do they supply masks or must you bring your own. Because of CAA regulations, the oxygen supply in an aircraft must be

equipped with a special valve to cope with fluctuating pressure. As a consequence, passengers cannot take oxygen supplies with them. However if they are travelling in the EEC they can obtain oxygen supplies through the E111 form. For countries outside the EEC or for general information about oxygen, contact the British Lung Foundation. Always remember to give the airline plenty of notice for them to organise your oxygen provision.

## **Rail**

More than 130 stations have been adapted for ambulant disabled passengers, wheelchair users, and hundreds of disabled people travel successfully by train every day. For more information obtain a copy of the leaflet, *British Rail and Disabled travellers*, available at any station, and consult TRIPSCOPE.

## **Sea Travel**

Ships and port access points are not ideally suited to those in wheelchairs or with walking difficulties, but if you travel by car and book a ticket in advance you can usually drive through the terminal and onto the ferry without leaving your car. To ensure as easy a crossing as possible, it is essential you let the ferry company know in advance of any help you may need.

## **Channel Tunnel**

An information leaflet is available for disabled people planning to use the "Le Shuttle" service for motorists passing through the Channel Tunnel. When checking-in motorists who are disabled are requested to make themselves known so that appropriate assistance and loading arrangements can be made. For further information contact Eurotunnel Customer Service Centre. *Tel: 0990 353535*

## **Adapted Vehicle Hire**

The MND Association has an information sheet on Car Hire for Disabled People, please contact the national Helpline to obtain a copy.

## **Finances**

Every year some 40 per cent of the UK population do not get away on holiday and financial problems are often a major constraint. Many people find that local sources of funding are the most effective, including:

Holiday Care produces a guide that gives brief details of trusts and funds that offer financial assistance towards the cost of a holiday. Send 4 x 1st class stamps (see page one for contact details).

**Citizens Advice Bureaux** who may know of local funds to help in emergencies and hardship - see local telephone directory for your nearest branch.

**Carers Special Grants** a government initiative enables Carers to take a break. Social Services have to carry out an assessment of the needs of the Carer, in order for the Carer to qualify. The Special Grant will then be provided by Social Services, or your local Carers organisation. Contact your local Social Services office for more information.

**Rotary Clubs, Round Tables and Lions Associations** are all known for their generosity.

The MND Association Helpline also has details of other holiday accommodation in the UK, *Tel: 08457 626262*.

The MND Association may be able to help towards the cost of a holiday. Contact your Regional Care Adviser for more information

## ***Useful publications***

**Automobile Association's Guide for the Disabled Traveller** giving access information on AA inspected accommodation in Britain and Ireland. Available from AA shops.

**Care for Carers** booklet giving information on holiday and short break accommodation that offer care services for disabled people whether on their own or accompanied by a regular carer. Available from Holiday Care (address on page 1) price £1.

**Holiday - Disabled Traveller** booklet prepared annually in association with the BBC TV "Holiday" programme. Available from BSS, PO Box 7, London W3 6XL. Send a large SAE.

**The National Trust - Information for Visitors with Disabilities** gives information on the Trust's most accessible properties. Send SAE to: The National Trust, 36 Queen Anne's Gate, London, SW1H 9AS *Tel: 0207 222 9251*.  
Website: [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)      E-mail: [accessforall@ntrust.org.uk](mailto:accessforall@ntrust.org.uk)

## ***Insurance***

This can be a bit tricky, some policies contain conditions that at first sight may seem to exclude you, but this may not be the case. It is also important to note that your premium or excess may be higher because of your diagnosis. In addition, medical treatment is more expensive in some countries, so this will increase the amount you pay and any excess.

The MND Association has a separate information sheet on Holiday Insurance, please contact the national Helpline for a copy.

RADAR and Holiday Care also give advice about Holiday Insurance.

## ***Booking the Holiday***

Be completely honest about your disability and its effects. Make sure accommodation is suitable - a phone call well in advance and again just before departure. Even if the accommodation says it is suitable for wheelchairs, BEWARE! Ask whether staff are able to give help, prepare special meals, etc. Any aids to daily living that are needed can sometimes be arranged through the branch of the British

Red Cross nearest your holiday destination. Do check this out before you book your holiday.

Have a lovely time.

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