

Holidays or Short Breaks for the elderly or disabled persons can present particular difficulties, either in costs, getting to and from their holiday destination, or in obtaining suitable accommodation that offer the facilities that suits them or the level of care they require. Some of the following information may be of some assistance or applicable to you, but please note that whilst based on Age Concern knowledge, inclusion does not constitute a recommendation by Age Concern and you are strongly advised to reach your own personal decision based on your personal enquiries, requirements, expectations and costs.

Travel Insurance. Travel insurance - which covers illness and medical emergencies, loss of money and documents, cancellation costs, loss of personal possessions, delayed baggage, legal expenses, emergency and necessary expenses and personal accident and personal liability for the elderly or disabled - is strongly recommended and is often difficult or expensive for the aged or disabled to obtain. There are numerous sources to obtain a quote or cover for insurance, for example Saga and Asda.

Disabled Aids If you require the use of any Disabled Aids Equipment whilst on Holiday, the Age Concern Disabled Loans Service can loan you a low cost wheelchair, or free walking frame, walking stick, a walking trolley, or any number of other aids to assist you. Please also see our Age Concern Information Sheet No 9 listing over 100 different Aids or telephone 01322 668106 for more information.

Home Arrangements If going on holiday, you should make sensible arrangements to keep your home safe whilst you are away. Make sure you leave your home secure, all windows shut and locked - preferably with secure window locks and all doors shut, securely bolted and locked - preferably with five lever mortice deadlocks, necessary electric and gas appliances turned off at the appliance or at the main, water taps turned off, sink and bath plugs clear of the waste, and - in winter months - make sure all water pipes and tanks are adequately insulated to prevent freezing. Cancel all milk, papers and any other deliveries. Leave a forwarding contact number where you can be reached, and possibly a door key, with a friend or neighbour so they can check everything is all right each day and maybe turn different lights on and off in your home to deter burglars. It is worth considering investing in a couple of time switches to switch your lights or radio on and off to give an impression someone is at home. A neighbour could check and clear any post or papers showing in your letterbox. Mark any valuables with your postcode and house number, as this will aid the police should any stolen items be recovered. Consider investing in a burglar alarm and having outside lights fitted. Make sure out buildings are securely locked and that all ladders and equipment are locked up or out of sight. Do not leave spare house keys under flowerpots or mats. Consider joining or setting up a local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. Make very sure you have valid and adequate insurance on your contents and on your building if you own your property, and that your insurance covers you for the period you will be away. Make suitable arrangements for any pets. It is a good idea to make a check list of items you need to take with you, such as tickets, passport, medications, keys, money, spectacles, address of holiday premises, umbrella or wet weather clothing, telephone numbers for people you may want to contact, addresses for postcards, etc, and a check-list of actions to take at home when you leave, such as locking doors and windows, turning off electrical, gas and water appliances, making arrangements for pets, etc. Advise local Police, neighbours and deliverymen, like papers and milk, of the dates you are away.

Holiday Arrangements Check Social Security leaflet T6, Health Advice for Travellers, for details of injections/vaccinations advisable or necessary. This leaflet also gives details of arrangements and costs involved if you receive medical treatment abroad on form E111, a form you are strongly advised to obtain, available free from Post Offices, which ensures you receive medical treatment abroad similar to the national population. Check if you require a Visa and apply in good time. Make sure you have enough medication for at least the period of your holiday, preferably longer, in case your return is delayed for any reason. It is advisable that your Travel Agent or Tour Operator is a member of ABTA, Association of British Travel Agents, who provide minimum standards and certain guarantees.

State Benefits/Pension. If going abroad for less than one month, you can cash your orders when you return, but remember that orders cannot be cashed later than three months after date printed on it. If going abroad for more than three months, inform your local Social Security office well in advance to make arrangements for the payment of your pension to be sent to a bank abroad. If you are receiving other benefits like Housing or Council Tax benefits, contact your Local Authority to see if/how your payments are affected by your absence.

Financial Assistance. Assistance towards holiday costs for people on low income is sometimes possible. Social Services (SS) have power to give financial help but the amount will not be large and means tested, contact your local Social Services Elderly Care Team on 01322 665667 (Swanley) 01322 277744 (Dartford). Social Security (DSS) will not assist. The National Benevolent Fund for the Aged, 020 8688 6655 provide group holidays, and limited individual holidays for over 65's on a low income who have not had a holiday for several years or have suffered recent bereavement. The Holiday Care Service, Tel: 01293 774535 can provide a detailed information sheet on National Charities which have been known to give grants for holidays, but conditions may apply. Your local Age Concern, town hall, bank manager or Citizens Advice Bureau may know of local charities or trusts, which could help. Contact the local Tourist Information Centre or the Holiday Care Service for details of companies/hotels offering holidays at discounts to the elderly/disabled. The Greater London Association for Pre-Retirement, Tel: 020 7221 3020 can provide a cheap booklet, Holidays and Travel Concessions.

Age Concern Holidays Age Concern occasionally arranges a limited number of escorted holidays and daytrips suitable for the elderly and disabled from its Day Centres and Clubs. Contact the Age Concern office or any Age Concern Day Centre for further details.

Further Information See also 14 page **Age Concern Fact Sheet No 4** - Holidays for Older People - available free to read or a copy

for 50p, and 23 page **Age Concern Fact Sheet No 26** - Travel Information for Older People, free to read or 70p, from Age Concern.

HOLIDAY INFORMATION ON PAGES 2 & 3

Disabled Living Tel: 0161 832 3678. Organise group holidays and outings throughout the year for people with physical disabilities, including door-to-door transport wherever possible. Advice on accessible hotels & activities Contact Company for further details.

RADAR. Tel: 020 7250 3222, provide holiday factsheets and publish several books in regard to holidays, travel and older people. Provide special keys to use dedicated toilets for the disabled in many towns. Lists & information available from RADAR.

Greater London Action on Disability Tel: 020 7346 5800 provides the London Disabled Guide. Ring for details.

The Assistance Travel Service Ltd. Tel: 01708 863198 specialises in arranging holidays for the elderly, the frail, or people with disabilities including their families and/or carers. Telephone the Company for leaflet or for further information.

3H Fund. (Tunbridge Wells) Tel. Peggy King, Holiday Organiser, 01892 547474, for application pack. Specially designed number of group holidays arranged in UK and abroad for physically disabled of all ages, providing full care by volunteer helpers, a leader and a nurse. Holidays heavily subsidised through 3H fundraising. 3H or Age Concern will also advise on the elderly funding residual costs.

Arthritis Care Hotels Tel. 01253 347543 or 01202 707946. This Charity manages four hotels in the UK, specially designed for people who have arthritis and their families, located in Blackpool 01253 347543, Poole 01202 707946, Cairn 01667 453298 and Largs in Scotland 01475 687235. Please ring Hotels direct on numbers listed for further information.

Scout Holiday Homes Trust. Tel. 020 7584 7030 for an application Pack. This Trust maintains luxury caravans and chalets at eleven holiday or leisure parks around the UK. Their aim is to enable families with disabled members or those struggling to provide a holiday for children in order to have a break from the daily routine.

The Chalfont Line Ltd Tel: 020 8997 3799 provides escorted holiday's worldwide. Contact Company for leaflets and details.

Tripescope Tel: 0345 585641 or 020 8580 7021 provide specialised information for door to door transport for older, frail or disabled people and, with Co-op Travelcare, produce an information pack with practical advice on travelling for people with impaired mobility.

Grooms Holidays. National Charity providing facilities for holidays for the disabled. 01446 772608 or www.groomsholidays.org.uk

Saga Holidays. The Saga Building, Middelburg Square, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 1AZ. Free phone 0800 300 500. This commercial Company only deal with persons over 55 years of age and for reasonable cost arrange various different types of holidays all year round for UK, Europe, Mediterranean or World Wide such as Winter Sun, River or Sea Cruises, Group or Single Holidays, Christmas Breaks, Garden-Musical -Religious appreciation holidays, etc. Booklets and leaflets detailing all holidays and costs are available by contacting the Company.

Winged Fellowship Trust. Angel House, 20-32 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9XD, Tel: 020 7833 2594, is a Registered Charity that provides reasonable cost Holidays and Respite Care for Frail and Physically Disabled people and their Carers. They have six Centres in the UK and arrange various overseas holidays, all with suitable care and facilities for the disabled including one to one care 24 hours a day. Special interest holidays and breaks for people who require only limited assistance are also arranged. Brochures, leaflets and further information are available on request from the Trust.

Respite Breaks. Kent Action for Respite Choice (KARC) Tel: 01622 662306, is a Kent based Charity that can provide information on Respite Breaks, Transport to & from breaks and the issues relating to Respite and Respite Breaks generally.

Respite Care Homes Facilities, Holiday Care, 2nd Floor, Imperial Buildings, Victoria Road, Horley, Surrey, RH6 7PZ. 01293 774535. Holds database of care respite care home facilities in UK.

River Cruises. Adventurous Cruises, Tel: 01279 600848 arrange relaxing day trips on a large barge reasonably suitable for the frail and disabled at reasonable cost. Based in Hertfordshire, used and enjoyed by Age Concern clients. Not suitable for wheelchair bound clients.

Crusader Holidays. Tel: 01255 425453, arrange a multitude of UK and European coach holidays at reasonable cost, departures from Dartford, Sidcup, Bromley or Gravesend. Not specifically for disabled but helpful drivers and all coaches have toilets, air suspension, comfortable reclining seats and air conditioning.

Shandon House, Eastbourne. Tel: 01323 723333 A privately run Rest and Convalescent Home with 25 Bedrooms, 12 ensuite. Lift, Gardens, Hairdressers, Dentists, Doctors, Chiropractors, Diets and organised trips available as required. Age Concern has been sent details of this Rest Home but we have no actual direct knowledge. Costs according to level of care required, telephone for quotation.

Kingsmere Guest House, Eastbourne. 01323 721889, Privately run, BB&EM plus drinks, Door-to-Door car available.

Grand UK Holidays. 01603 619933, Exclusive for over 55's, Escorted Single or Group Holidays in UK & abroad, Coach, Air or Cruise.

Southlands Travel. Coach Station, London Road, Swanley, BR8 8BY, Tel: 01322 660661 are a local Company that organise various Coach Daytrips and Mini-breaks in the UK and Europe. Not specifically for disabled but discounts given to Senior Citizens. Brochure available on request from Company or Clarkes Travel, 12 High Street, Swanley. Local Company.

Rank Group Holidays. Tel: 0870 2421111 arrange many group holidays at many famous locations such as Butlins, Haven, Warner, Leisure, etc. Not especially for disabled. Large well known Company. Brochures and further information from Company on request.

Caravans in Caistor, Norfolk. A special scheme makes reduced price 3 double bedroom caravans, available to elderly in the London

Age Concern area for limited dates. Situated in Haven Holiday Park with sandy beach, two swimming pools, bars, restaurants & entertainment. Contact Age Concern office for details.

Collette Tours. Tel: 0800 0921888. Escorted World Wide Touring Holidays for all age groups, ABTA/ATOL member, single people travelling can normally be paired up with another traveller of the same sex for companionship and economy via room sharing, brochures available, Family owned & operated since 1918.

National Tourist Boards for: England 020 8846 9000, **Wales** 029 2049 9909, **Scotland** 0131 332 2433, & **Northern Ireland** 01232 246609, **East of England** 01473 825609, will supply general advice and books and leaflets on holidays in the UK available. **National Tourist Centres** for foreign countries are usually in London, Tel. No's in London Telephone Directories available from local libraries.

Holiday Care Service. Tel: 01293 774535. This specialist information service provides free information on accessible accommodation for holidays and travel for the elderly and disabled, enabling them to make their own arrangements. Also holds database of Respite Care Home facilities in the U.K.

Other Commercial Companies providing holidays for older people in the UK or abroad: **Cosmos Holidays** 0161 480 5799, **Golden Rail** 01904 628992, **Portland Holidays** 020 7387 9321, **Shearings** 01942 244246, **Wallace Arnold Tours** 020 8688 7255, **Young at Heart** 020 7387 9321, **Holiday Club Pontins** 0990 331199, **British University Accommodation Holidays** 0115 9504571.

Swanley Tourist Centre Tel: 01322 614660 can provide information and leaflets on a wide range of holidays, breaks and transport for local, regional or national holidays and trips. They can also supply a certain amount of maps, travel timetables, brochures, etc.

Swanley Town Council organises subsidised day trips and short breaks for its older residents. Contact the Town Council office for details.

Please contact Age Concern on 01322 668106 or 01322 666116 in office hours, or on 07889 133633 out of office hours, should you have any queries or require further information and we would be pleased to assist in any way that we can. Please remember that inclusion of any information in this fact sheet does not constitute a specific recommendation and you are strongly advised to satisfy yourself that any particular holiday, company or costs involved are suitable for your needs and best interests, as holiday providers can generate considerable complaints from people going on holiday. We do hope if you arrange a holiday or short break from our information sheet that you have a satisfying and lovely holiday.

If you have any information on good low cost holidays suitable for the elderly or disabled, please let us know and we will include the information in our future fact sheets. We would also be grateful to receive any feed back from you on any holidays you have taken, whether from information on this fact sheet or otherwise.