



Travel and holidays

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Introduction

This information sheet is for people with dementia who are considering travelling alone and for carers of people with dementia.

It covers practical information about how to cope with travelling if you have dementia, and what to consider if you are a carer. Useful addresses and telephone numbers are given towards the end.

We have not included any specific holidays or establishments since these are subject to change. The organisations listed under *Useful addresses* and *Specialist holidays* can help you source a holiday or break that fits your needs.

People with dementia travelling alone

Travelling alone can be difficult even for people with early stage dementia, who may be worried about getting lost in unfamiliar places,

or coping if there is a problem such as a cancelled train or plane. However, many people with dementia do travel alone successfully.

People who are used to the routine of travelling may be able to cope with travelling alone for longer, especially if they have help. This might be help with getting to the station or airport and being met at the other end. Other people may feel safer with an escort.

Letting people know you need help

If you are planning on staying with family or friends, you should be as frank as possible about any help you might need, for example with dressing, eating or going to the toilet. Remember you will be out of your usual routine and in unfamiliar surroundings, so you may need a little more help than you would at home. People are generally very willing to help if they know what to expect.

Helpcard

Alzheimer Scotland has a card for people with dementia to use to help people who serve the public to understand their special needs. You can show this to transport staff as well as in shops, etc. Call the Dementia Helpline (**0808 808 3000**) or see www.alzscot.org/pages/info/helpcard.htm to get a free Helpcard.

Thistle Travel Card

This is a special card for people in Scotland who have difficulty using public transport because of age, disability, illness or simply lack of confidence. When the card is shown to

transport staff they should recognise that the person carrying it may need extra help during a journey, such as

- providing extra time to find a seat before a vehicle moves off
- ensuring the correct bus or train is boarded
- a reminder of the place to get off
- counting out change
- providing spoken rather than written information
- operating special ramps.

A plastic wallet on the back may be used to provide extra information such as destination, emergency contact – anything helpful for transport staff to know.

Thistle Travel Cards are available from transport booking offices, local authority concessionary travel offices, day centres, carers centres etc. or from the Dementia Helpline – **0808 808 3000**.

Air travel

Planning ahead

It is very important that you let the airline know what help you will need well in advance of your flight. According to the airlines, most people who travel with a 'permanent or stable condition' will not require medical clearance, but you should check and make sure at the time of booking what, if any, medical information is required.

Remember – even for flights within the UK and to the Republic of Ireland some form of identification which has your photograph on it must be shown. Check with individual airlines first, but acceptable identification generally includes:

- a current UK passport or an expired passport (can be used on domestic flights for up to two years after expiry)
- a valid photographic driving licence

- a CitizenCard
- a valid Government-issued identity card
- a SMART card
- a National Entitlement Card.

Depending on the extent to which you are affected by dementia, some airlines may not let you fly alone if it is possible you may become distressed while in the air. Airline staff do not have the necessary training to be able to assist a passenger who has nursing requirements or other medical needs and the airline would insist that a person who might require this type of help had an escort for the flight.

To help you get the assistance you need at the airport and on the plane, you may need to complete a form called an Incapacitated Passengers Handling Advice (INCAD). Check with your travel agent or the airline if this will be necessary. British Airways advises that you contact their Passenger Medical Clearances Unit (PMCU) before booking, as they would be able to advise whether they would allow a person with dementia on the flight. The PMCU offers a free advisory service to doctors, other healthcare professionals and passengers in relation to flying on all British Airways mainline, franchise and alliance flights. Final clearance can often be provided over the phone but if further information is needed, your doctor will be asked to complete a "Medif" form, available through your travel agent, British Airways reservations or the PMCU. Tel: 020 8738 5444, fax: 020 8738 9644.

The Medif form may also be downloaded from: www.britishairways.com/cms/global/assets/pdf/BA_Medif_123.pdf

At the airport

Always let the airline know if you will need help at the airport, such as with getting from the car park, railway station or taxi stand to the terminal. If the airline cannot do this, contact Airport Information and ask what

assistance they can provide. Most airports publish a booklet with information about facilities at the airport including information for those with special needs. Additional services which may be available include assistance with:

- registration to check-in
- proceeding to the gate
- boarding and disembarking
- stowing baggage.

Accessibility on individual airlines

Most airlines offer a "meet and assist" service, however there are many airlines and the amount of extra support varies. There is a list called "The All Go Here Airline Directory" at: www.allgohere.com/startframes.htm which, although aimed at passengers with physical disabilities, contains information on the policies, restrictions and additional services of individual airlines.

On the plane

When you are on the plane you will need to be able to manage by yourself or have a companion/escort with you. The airline cabin staff cannot offer special medical, feeding or continence assistance. British Airways can provide an escort for someone travelling alone, however the person travelling would have to pay for the escort's fare.

Heathrow Travel Care (an airport-based charity) can be contacted on 0208 745 7495. They offer advice on travel arrangements. There is also a Travel Care service at Gatwick Airport, Gatwick Travel Care - 01293 504283.

Rail travel

All rail companies provide assistance for passengers. Contact the company in advance and they will make sure that you are met at the departure station and escorted onto the appropriate train. If you need to change trains they will also take you to the connecting train.

Telephone the National Rail Enquiries line on 08457 48 49 50 to arrange assistance from the appropriate rail company. If you need assistance from different rail companies to complete your journey, this is also possible.

National Rail Enquiries have a website with contact and accessibility details for train operators and stations throughout the UK: http://nrekb.nationalrail.co.uk/passenger_services/disabled_passengers/index.html

Make sure you contact the rail companies at least two days in advance of your journey to organise the help you will need, and always confirm the day before that this is in place properly. Also ensure that you have organised the assistance you will need for the return journey.

Eurostar provides a complimentary assistance service for passengers with special needs who are travelling to continental Europe. Assistance is arranged in person on the day of departure at the assistance desk and is subject to availability. If you think you might need help getting to or from the train, please arrive as early as you can (preferably at least 1 hour prior to departure). Assistance can also be provided at any Eurostar terminal. Please remember that you need a valid UK passport for travelling abroad.

Disabled Person's Railcard

You should be entitled to this if you:

- are registered as visually impaired
- are registered deaf
- have epilepsy and are disabled by recurrent attacks in spite of drug treatment
- receive Attendance Allowance
- receive Disability Living Allowance (higher rate for help getting around or higher/middle rates for help with personal care)
- receive Severe Disablement Allowance

- receive a War or Service Disablement Pension for 80% or more disability
- are the driver of a vehicle provided under the pre 1976 Invalid Vehicle Scheme.

Meeting any of the above criteria enables you to buy a Disabled Person's Railcard (£18). The railcard entitles you and an accompanying adult to travel at reduced rates (eg a third off) on certain rail journeys. Contact the Disabled Person's Railcard office in Laurencekirk (0845 605 0525) for a leaflet and application form or download an application form from: www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/information-downloads

Ferry or cruise ship travel

You will need to let the ferry or cruise ship operator know what assistance you will need for the journey. They will then be able to advise you if you will have to have a companion/escort and whether you will need medical clearance for the journey.

Coach travel

If you need help getting on and off the coach or any other help, let the coach company know when you book your ticket. You will be responsible for seeing your luggage on and off the bus; however the driver should assist with actually putting the baggage onto the bus. Take all valuables, tickets and medication onto the bus with you for security.

If you need wheelchair access there are a number of specialist companies who offer UK and European coach holidays with fully accessible vehicles. Travel agents might have this information but, if not, contact Tourism for All UK for information on these companies (See Useful addresses section).

Scotland-wide Free Bus Travel Scheme

If you are over 60 or disabled you can now apply for a Scottish Citizen's National Entitlement Card which will allow you to travel

on any local bus service or scheduled long distance coach service anywhere in Scotland, free of charge.

The card also allows people who live in the area covered by Strathclyde's Concessionary Travel Scheme to get cheaper fares on First ScotRail trains and the Glasgow Subway within the area covered by the Strathclyde Scheme. This applies throughout the day, including the morning rush hour. The scheme is operated by Transport Scotland. For more information, contact your local council or Transport Scotland: 0141 272 7100, e-mail: info@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk

Going abroad

See the checklist for travelling abroad at the end of this information sheet.

Passports

For travelling outside the UK you will need a valid passport. Forms are available at Post Offices. Alternatively you may phone the application request line on 0300 222 0000 to be sent one by post (open 24 hours a day, seven days a week). Calls to this number are charged at your network provider's national rate.

You can also apply online and have the partially completed form returned to you for checking and inclusion of the supporting documents, photos and fees, at: www.ips.gov.uk/passports/index.asp

If you need to obtain or renew a passport, it might be worth using the "Check and Send" service. This service is provided by selected Post Office branches. For a handling charge they will:

- check that your application form has been filled in correctly
- check that you have included all the supporting documents and the correct fee, and

- forward all the relevant paperwork plus your payment.

Passport applications sent via the Check and Send service are usually processed more quickly than standard postal applications (you can expect your new passport in around two weeks rather than three) and are much less likely to be returned and/or delayed because of queries.

You can also get advice and guidance on filling in passport forms directly from the UK passport office call centre on *0300 222 0000* which is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

European Health Insurance Card

A European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) entitles you to reduced-cost, sometimes free, medical treatment that becomes necessary while you're in a European Economic Area (EEA) country or Switzerland.

The EEA consists of the European Union (EU) countries plus those who apply the EHIC arrangements through an agreement with the EU. The EHIC is valid in: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus (not Northern Cyprus), Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

To get a European Health Insurance Card

Before you apply, you will need to have the following information to hand for everyone you are applying for:

- name and date of birth
- your Community Health Index (CHI) number (in England NHS number and in Northern Ireland the Health and Care number).

The EHIC is issued by the Prescription Pricing Authority (PPA) and is free of charge.

To apply by phone: call *0845 606 2030* and have the information listed above ready. When your application is completed, your card will be delivered within 10 days.

To apply by post: pick up the EHIC form from the Post Office. Your card will be delivered within 21 days. For a nominal fee, the Post Office will check your completed application form and forward it for processing. This service is optional.

To apply online: <http://www.ehic.org>

What does the EHIC cover?

The EHIC is normally valid for three to five years and covers any medical treatment that becomes necessary during your trip, because of either illness or an accident. The card gives access to state-provided medical treatment only, and you'll be treated on the same basis as an 'insured' person living in the country you're visiting. This might not cover all the things you'd expect to get free of charge from the NHS in the UK. You may have to make a contribution to the cost of your care.

You are advised to take out comprehensive private insurance for visits to all countries, regardless of whether you are covered by your EHIC.

Travel insurance

Make sure you have a good insurance policy that covers you for all your medical conditions. Some policies do not cover claims arising from a 'pre-existing medical condition or defect', which could mean that any illness or accident linked to dementia may not be covered. This may mean that the premium will be increased, so shop around if you can.

It might be worthwhile talking to your GP before buying health insurance. The health

declarations are very detailed and require information on conditions and medications going back years. These details will all be checked if you later try to make a claim. Any omissions or mistakes you make can be used as grounds to refuse your claim.

If you have a problem with a mainstream travel insurance company try one of these specialist companies who cater for those with special needs:

- Age Concern Insurance Services
0845 600 3348, quote reference ALL 721.
www.ace.org.uk/AgeConcern/travel_insurance.asp
- All Clear Travel Insurance
08712 088 579
www.allcleartravel.co.uk/
- Chapman Hirst Insurances
0870 750 6711
www.able2travel.com
- En Route Insurance Consultants
0800 783 7245
www.enrouteinsurance.co.uk/
- Freespirit
0845 230 5000
www.free-spirit.com/
- It's So Easy Travel Insurance
0845 222 4205
www.itssoeasytravelinsurance.com/
- Medical Information Anywhere
01268 782745
www.miaonline.co.uk
- Orbis Insurance
01424 220110.
www.bureauinsure.co.uk/orbis_travel_insurance.htm
- Pulse Travel Insurance
0871 2088 630
www.pulse-insurance.co.uk/

- Travelbility
0845 338 1638
www.travelbility.co.uk/
- Venturesure
020 8295 1234 or Freephone *0800 181 532*.

Benefits and holidays

If you take a temporary break from caring for someone, for example, a holiday - you may continue to receive **Carer's Allowance**. A total of 4 weeks break can be taken in any 26 week period for holidays. Carer's Allowance may also continue throughout periods when you or the person you care for goes into hospital.

You must tell the Carer's Allowance Unit if you take a break from caring due to a holiday, or another reason, such as going into hospital, or if the person you are caring for goes on holiday or into hospital.

If your stay abroad is temporary, including a holiday, you can usually continue getting **Disability Living Allowance (DLA)** for 26 weeks. You may be able to continue getting DLA for longer if you are going abroad for medical treatment for your illness or disability. Your stay must still be temporary. The same applies for **Attendance Allowance**.

Carers and holidays

Caring for someone with dementia is often very hard work. It can be a 24 hour, 7 day a week job. Getting some time away from it all is very important for several reasons. Everyone deserves a holiday. No matter how much you love someone, caring for them all the time without a break now and then is unlikely to be good for either person. A holiday can allow you to rest, relax and recharge your batteries, and so cope better when you return.

Sometimes carers feel guilty about the idea of having a holiday, especially if they are considering going away without the person

with dementia. But it is extremely important to look after yourself properly. After all, if you run yourself into the ground, your own health is likely to suffer, and affect your ability to look after your relative.

You may find it helpful to talk over your feelings about taking a holiday, perhaps with friends or relatives, or completely confidentially on the 24 hour freephone Dementia Helpline, *0808 808 3000*.

Together or separately?

Once you have made the decision to take a holiday, you will have to decide whether to go with the person with dementia or not.

The positive points for you and the person going away together include:

- you might enjoy a holiday together away from your usual routine
- you might be able to go somewhere where there is help in caring for the person with dementia, to allow you to relax
- you won't have to make other arrangements for the person's care
- you won't worry about how the person is doing while you are away.

On the other hand:

- people with dementia will often be confused and upset by a change of environment. It may be very difficult for them to learn the way around a new place and get used to unfamiliar people
- you may not get a proper break from caring
- you may have a limited choice of where to go
- a long journey may be difficult, especially if the person with dementia tires easily, or has continence or behavioural problems.

The positive points about going on your own or with a friend or relative, other than the person you care for, include:

- you get a proper break
- you can spend some time on yourself, which many carers find very difficult to do from day to day
- you will be less restricted in what you can do or where you can go.

But of course you will have to make alternative arrangements for the person with dementia so that you don't worry while you are away.

Holidays together

Where you can go will depend on what help the person with dementia needs. Often ordinary hotels and guest houses will be very happy to welcome you, as long as you make contact in advance and ask them if they could cope with any special needs the person has. However, they will be unlikely to be able to offer very much help.

You should bear in mind that even someone who is quite independent at home may need more supervision in an unfamiliar place. Consider how much of a holiday it will be for you if you are 'on duty' all the time.

Try not to choose a holiday that means a lot of travelling, or one where you are doing the housework or catering, as that will be no rest for you. It is often a good idea to book a holiday out of season, as staff will be likely to be less busy, and to be able to give you more attention. If you can take someone else with you as a helper, you will probably enjoy the holiday more.

Some places offer more help and special facilities. We list some of those in Scotland at the end of this information sheet. The Holiday Care service have information on places all over the UK and abroad which they will send out to you.

Some Alzheimer Scotland branches and services organise holidays for small groups of

carers and people with dementia, together with volunteer helpers. Holidays have been arranged by Alzheimer Scotland branches in Edinburgh and Fife, for example. Call the 24 hour Dementia Helpline on 0808 808 3000 for details of your nearest Alzheimer Scotland contact.

Community care

Under community care arrangements, you can ask your local social work department to assess the needs of the person with dementia. This includes the need for a holiday or respite care.

If they assess the person with dementia as needing a holiday, they have a legal duty to provide one, under section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act. They will charge for this according to the person's income.

If the social work department assess the person with dementia as needing respite care they should provide it, but they are not legally obliged to do so. They will charge for respite care according to the person's income.

If the social work department does not agree that a holiday or respite is necessary, you can ask them to review the assessment, or make a complaint.

Care for the person with dementia while the carer goes away

If you decide to go on holiday without the person you care for, you will probably have to make arrangements for care while you are away. There are several ways of organising this.

Care at home

You may be able to put together a package of care at home with extra time or visits from home helps, care attendant schemes such as Crossroads (contact details at the end of this

information sheet) and the health visitor or district nurse. Ask the social work department about this. Friends and neighbours may also be able to help.

Often the simplest is to ask a friend, relative or neighbour to look after the person. They may move in or just undertake to call in as often as necessary and perhaps see to things like meals or shopping.

If no friend, relative or neighbour is available, you may be able to pay someone; perhaps someone with experience as a care attendant or a nurse. You can ask around to see if anyone can recommend someone suitable. Members of your local Alzheimer Scotland or Age Concern and Help the Aged in Scotland branch may know someone.

Another alternative is to advertise locally. If you do this, it is very important to interview the applicants and to take up references. A nursing agency will be able to provide people who should be experienced; but this can be an expensive option. Again, it is important to take up references.

If you are employing someone to care for the person with dementia, you should make the arrangements in advance so that they can get to know each other before you go. You should put in writing what is expected and how much you have agreed to pay. Make sure you leave them written information on what they need to know about the house and appliances, the local shops and the person with dementia's normal routines.

Care away from home – respite breaks

Many local authority and private sector care homes provide respite breaks, although there may be charges for both. Short term admissions are available in local authority residential homes. Contact your social work area office to find out about this. Home support schemes may be extended to give overnight or weekend care as part of a

package of care organised through a care manager.

If the person with dementia needs help with the costs of respite care in a residential nursing home, you should contact your local social work department who will arrange to assess your relative's needs. If he or she is assessed as needing respite care, the social work department should arrange this. The cost will depend on the income of the person with dementia.

For a list of care homes in your area, or to read inspection reports contact the Care Commission 0845 603 0890 or visit their website at:

www.carecommission.com/index.php

You can also obtain a printed list of care homes in your area by contacting the Dementia Helpline on 0808 808 3000.

There is a searchable database of care homes, including those which provide short breaks at: www.bettercaring.com

Financial help

It may be possible to get some financial help towards your holiday. It is a good idea to start applying well in advance.

Social work departments

Social work departments may be able to help towards the cost of a holiday if you and the person with dementia haven't had one for several years. However, their funds for this are often limited. Your local social work department will be listed in the telephone book under your council.

Charities

A charity may be able to help towards the cost of your holiday, and perhaps towards the cost of taking a helper.

There is a book called *A Guide to Grants for Individuals in Need* (11th edition, 09/10,

£50.00) which lists most of these charities; it is available in every Citizens Advice Bureau, or in libraries. This book also provides a model of how to make an effective application and advice on sourcing the type of funding to apply to. It may also be purchased from the **Directory of Social Change** website -

www.dsc.org.uk

Tourism for All UK (0845 124 9971 – full contact details in “Useful addresses”) can provide you with information on which charities to try. Your relative may be eligible for help from a specific charity because of a former occupation, trade union membership, connection with the armed forces, religion or ethnic background, or where they have lived or worked. They also publish *A Guide to Financial Help Towards the Cost of a Holiday, Respite Care or Convalescence* (£3.50) which includes a large variety of trusts and funds that consider applications for financial assistance towards the cost of a holiday, or in some instances, run their own holiday schemes.

Counsel and Care (0845 300 7585 – full contact details in “Useful addresses”) can also advise you on finding money towards the cost of care for the person with dementia at home.

National Benevolent Fund for the Aged (020 7828 0200 - full contact details in “Useful addresses”) provides assistance for people who are 60 or older and in receipt of either housing benefit, council tax benefit or income support. The provision of free holidays has formed the main part of their work for over 25 years. Around 1000 free holidays each year are arranged.

Useful addresses

Care Commission

*Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee.
DD1 4NY
01382 207100*

www.carecommission.com/index.php

Counsel and Care

Counsel and Care is a charity for older people focussing on community care issues. Can offer advice and help on social services responsibilities such as home care, and on paying for care. They can also advise carers on finding a charity to help towards the cost of care for the person with dementia at home while they are on holiday.

Counsel and Care, Twyman House, 16 Bonny Street, London, NW1 9PG.

Advice Line 0845 300 7585 (Mon-Fri 10-4 Except Wed 10-1) This line is often busy but keep trying. Fax: 020 7267 6877, admin line: 020 7241 8555.

E-mail: advice@counselandcare.org.uk

website: www.counselandcare.org.uk

Crossroads (Scotland)

Crossroads (Scotland) is the national organisation established in 1978 to develop local services for carers throughout Scotland. There are now 46 local schemes providing over 1 million hours of care and short breaks for Scotland's carers.

*Crossroads (Scotland) - Caring for Carers
24 George Square
Glasgow*

G2 1EG

0141 226 3793

www.crossroads-scotland.co.uk/

Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)

DPTAC is an independent body which advises the UK Government on the transport needs of all disabled people. It maintains and updates a website "Door-to-Door" originally compiled by charity Tripscope which ceased to exist in March 2006. The website was developed to give disabled people information about transport and advice about travelling using all forms of transport.

www.dptac.gov.uk/door-to-door/

National Benevolent Fund for the Aged

*32 Buckingham Palace Road
London
SW1W 0RE*

Tel: 020 7828 0200, fax: 020 7828 0400.

Website: www.nbfa.org.uk

Shared Care Scotland

Shared Care Scotland promotes and supports the development of flexible, imaginative and person centred short breaks (respite care) throughout Scotland.

These include:

- holiday respite breaks – available within guest houses / hotels
- themed respite breaks – may include, for example, art classes, cooking courses
- activity respite breaks – the chance to take part in outdoor pursuits and sports eg fishing, sailing, climbing, horse riding
- family placement respite – breaks where respite is offered within another family home
- respite leisure breaks – the chance to go on day trips/outings eg. boat trips, visits to places of interest.

Their Online Short Break Information Service (OSBIS) is designed to provide easy access to information on all forms of short break and respite care services including:

home and residential based breaks, family placements, befriending projects, activity clubs, holiday breaks and more specialized guest houses and hotels. Go to:

www.carebreaksscotland.org/

As well as the online database, Shared Care Scotland also provides a telephone enquiry service for those without access to the internet, and for those who can't find what they're looking for.

Shared Care Scotland

Unit 7, Dunfermline Business Centre

Izatt Avenue

Dunfermline

KY11 3BX

Tel: 01383 622462

Fax: 01383 622813

E-mail: office@sharedcarescotland.com

www.sharedcarescotland.com

Tourism for All UK

Tourism for All UK is a national registered charity which provides information to people with disabilities and older people in relation to accessible accommodation and other tourism services. They publish information on accessibility in London and many other cities in the UK.

Tourism for All, c/o Vitalise, Shap Road Industrial Estate, Shap Road, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 6NZ

Tel: 0845 124 9971, fax: 01539 735 567.

E-mail: info@tourismforall.org.uk

Website: www.tourismforall.org.uk/

Specialist holidays

Alzheimer Scotland Edinburgh Branch

runs holidays at Strathyre for people with dementia and their carers. You must be a member of Alzheimer Scotland and the person with dementia must be accompanied by a carer.

Alzheimer Scotland, Edinburgh Branch, 139 St Leonard's Street, Edinburgh, EH8 9RB. 0131 667 6289 (10am - 12 noon Monday - Friday).

Can Be Done Holidays

Can Be Done Holidays specialise in wheelchair accessible destinations. Can Be Done likes to discuss your requirements directly with you and learn about any special needs - such as a wheel-in shower or specially-adapted transfer vehicles.

Call 020 8907 2400 or e-mail

holidays@canbedone.co.uk

www.canbedone.co.uk/

Holidays for All

Holidays for All is an umbrella group of the UK's leading disability organisations working together to promote quality, accessible holiday breaks providing improved choice and flexibility for holiday makers. Members include Accessible Travel and Leisure, Access Travel, Action for Blind People, The Calvert Trust, Chalfort Line, Forresters, Holidays with Help, Jubilee Sailing Trust, Leonard Cheshire

Disability, Livability Holidays, Option Holidays and Vitalise. www.holidaysforall.org.uk/

Vitalise

Vitalise (formerly Winged Fellowship Trust) is a national charity providing essential breaks for disabled people and their carers. Vitalise also runs holidays for visually impaired people. They aim to offer choice through their enabling environment and inspirational opportunities for volunteers.

There are five accessible Vitalise Centres in the UK - in Nottingham, Southport, Southampton, Chigwell in Essex, and Lanlivery in Cornwall - with restaurants, bars and leisure facilities such as swimming pools and gardens. Vitalise also run an extensive programme of short breaks with 24-hour personal care-on-call in a supportive environment. Trained staff and volunteers help to make guests experiences both enjoyable and memorable, whether they choose to just relax and unwind, or join in with activities.

The essence of a Vitalise break is freedom and choice, and they aim to provide a break to suit individual needs wherever possible. With over 35 different Theme Weeks run at Vitalise Centres each year, people have the opportunity to try different things and make new friends, whilst carers also have a break so that the quality of life is improved for everyone.

Vitalise Holidays, Shap Road Industrial Estate, Shap Road, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 6NZ 0845 330 0149. www.vitalise.org.uk

Publications

Holidays in Britain & Ireland 2009: a guide for disabled people – published by Radar (price £14.50)

A directory of holiday accommodation in the UK catering for people with physical disabilities. The current edition includes detailed information on around 1500 places to stay in all parts of the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland. These include hotels,

guest houses, self-catering cottages and flats, holiday parks, activity centres, camp sites and centres where specialist service and care are provided. The guide also gives information on advice services, voluntary and commercial organisations and transport. The guide aims to give information that will be useful to people with as wide a range of disabilities as possible. Choosing your holiday accommodation will be made easier by individual listings stating, amongst other details, the size of entrance doors, ground floor bedrooms, lifts, whether there are specially designed bathroom facilities, and if waterproof or feather-free bedding is available.

Published by RADAR, 12 City Forum, 250 City Road, London, EC1V 8AF

Tel: 020 7250 3222; Fax: 020 7250 0212;

Minicom: 020 7250 4119. email:

radar@radar.org.uk; website:

www.radar.org.uk

RADAR also publish a free fact sheet on holidays for elderly people, some of which are suitable for people with dementia.

Checklist for travelling abroad

At least six weeks before you plan to travel

Speak to your GP:

- to discuss whether you need to take any extra health precautions (eg vaccinations, anti-malarial tablets) for the country you are visiting
- to make sure you have enough medication for the duration of your trip
- if you are visiting a country with strict drug controls ask for a letter about your medication and a copy of your prescription which you can show to customs officers
- about whether any health issues (eg diabetes, obesity, recent surgery) will put you at increased risk of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) during and after air travel

- about any information you would need to disclose on an application for travel insurance.

Organise your paperwork:

- check that your passport is still valid for a minimum of 6 months at return date
- if travelling within the EAA (European Economic Area) make sure that you have an European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)
- get adequate and comprehensive travel insurance
- order foreign currency or traveller's cheques and make sure your credit cards are valid
- check the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) up-to-date travel advice and travellers tips on the internet at www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas or call *0845 850 2829*
- check if you need a visa – your travel agent should be able to advise
- if you have a mobile phone check with your service provider whether it will work abroad and how much it will cost. Ask your network which foreign network will be the cheapest for you to connect to when you arrive.

A week before you travel

- start to let family and friends know where you are going and how long you will be away
- make two copies of a personal informal sheet. This should include your passport number, insurance policy, ticket details, itinerary, traveller's cheque numbers, credit card emergency numbers, home and away contact details. Keep one and give the other to friends or family so that they can contact you in an emergency and so that you can contact them if you lose any of the information you need
- cancel any services such as milk or newspaper delivery
- check your buildings and contents insurance is up-to-date and let your insurers know if your house will be unoccupied for more than two weeks

- let a friend or neighbour know that you will be away and ask them to make sure the house is secure in your absence.

Packing:

- check your ticket for the weight restrictions for checked-in luggage and weight and size restrictions for hand luggage
- check the tickets for items which you may not be allowed to pack
- remove any old airline tags and make sure your luggage is labelled inside and out with your name, contact details and destination address but avoid putting your home address on the outside label – use an e-mail or mobile phone number instead
- put something bright on your luggage that will enable you to identify it at a distance eg a ribbon, coloured tape or a large sticker.

In your hand luggage you should have:

- passport and visa (if necessary)
- tickets
- contact details for your destination
- contact details for your friends and family at home
- traveller's cheques/credit cards/currency
- small denomination currency for arrival/on board plane
- insurance certificate and emergency contact details
- inoculation certificates
- any medication you might need
- driving licence if you are hiring a car.

Keep a copy of your personal information sheet in a separate place from your documents.

During an aeroplane flight:

- move around the seat and cabin as much as possible to stretch your legs. Exercise your calf muscles while seated and avoid crossing your legs or ankles
- stay hydrated. Avoid caffeine and alcohol and drink lots of water and soft drinks instead.

If you know of holiday accommodation which is particularly welcoming to people with dementia, please let us know. In particular, we would like to know about hotels and guest houses with helpful and sympathetic staff.

Contact Maureen Thom, Information Manager, Alzheimer Scotland, 22 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh EH3 7RN Tel: 0131 243 1453, e-mail: alzheimer@alzscot.org



Alzheimer Scotland

22 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh EH3 7RN
Telephone: 0131 243 1453
Fax: 0131 243 1450
Email: alzheimer@alzscot.org

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