

Travel and Holidays

People with dementia travelling alone

Travelling alone can be difficult even for people with early stage dementia. They 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 – particularly if they're used to travelling.

Letting people know you need help

If you are planning on staying with family or friends, you should be honest 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 may need more help than you would at home.

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. You can call the [24 hour Dementia Helpline Freephone 0808 808 3000](tel:08088083000) to order a free Helpcard.

Safe Journey Card

You can download a "First Group" safe journey card to use if you travel by bus or train. This is a ticket shaped card that you can print off to show the driver or conductor to discreetly ask for assistance or patience when boarding or leaving.

There are pre-printed cards with requests on them such as: "Please wait until I sit down before driving off"; "I have difficulty speaking"; "I have difficulty hearing" and

so on, plus a blank one for you to fill in yourself.

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 photo ID is required. 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.

People with more advanced dementia may not be advised to travel alone. Airline staff are not trained to assist a passenger who has nursing requirements or other medical needs.

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 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.

The Medif form is available through your travel agent or British Airways by calling 020 8738 5444 or downloading 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 the airport information desk and ask what assistance they can provide. 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.

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.

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://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations/44971.aspx

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

Eurostar passengers can access 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 can get cheaper train travel with a Railcard. They give you 1/3 off most journeys for a year.

Disabled Railcard

This gives you plus someone travelling with you 1/3 off. To qualify you must have one of a list of disabilities or be getting Attendance Allowance or the higher or middle rate of Disability Living Allowance.

Senior Railcard

This gives you 1/3 off most train fares. To qualify you must be over 60 and provide proof of age.

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 can then advise if you need 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.

Scotland-wide Free Bus Travel Scheme

The Scottish Government provides free or subsidised bus and train travel to older (60+) and disabled people across Scotland – proof of age or disability is required.

The scheme allows for free bus travel throughout Scotland and across the border to Berwick-upon-Tweed and Carlisle. It also gives those based in Shetland, Orkney and the Western Isles four free return journeys to the mainland per year. For more information call Transport Scotland on 0141 272 7100.

Going abroad

Passports

For travelling outside the UK you will need a valid passport. Application forms are available at Post Offices or you can phone the 24/7 application request line on 0300 222 0000 to be sent one by post. 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

Some post offices provide a "Check and Send" service both for new passports and renewals. 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.

European Health Insurance Card

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

For a full list of all EEA countries see: www.ehic.org.uk

What does the EHIC cover?

The EHIC is normally valid for three to five years and covers any necessary medical treatment during your trip, due to 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.

Applying for an EHIC 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, NHS number (England) or Health and Care number (Northern Ireland)

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: www.ehic.org.uk

Travel insurance

Make sure you have an 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.

These insurance companies specialise in cover for people with pre-existing conditions:

- All Clear Travel Insurance
01708 339295
www.allcleartravel.co.uk
- Able2Travel
01892 839 501
www.able2travel.com
- En Route Insurance Consultants
0800 783 7245
www.enrouteinsurance.co.uk
- Freespirit
0800 170 7704
www.freespirittravelinsurance.com
- It's So Easy Travel Insurance
0330 606 1422
www.itssoeasytravelinsurance.com
- Medical Information Anywhere
01268 782745
www.miaonline.co.uk
- Orbis Insurance
01424 215 315
www.orbisinsurance.co.uk
- P J Hayman & Company Ltd
02392 419 050
www.pjhayman.com
- Pulse Travel Insurance
01280 841 430
www.pulse-insurance.co.uk

Benefits and holidays

Carer's Allowance

If you receive Carer's Allowance you can take a total of four weeks break 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.

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

If your stay abroad is temporary, including a holiday, you can usually continue getting 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 but 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. Taking a break from caring is very important to allow you to rest, relax and recharge your batteries. 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.

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 as well. If you run yourself into the ground, your own health is likely to suffer, and affect your ability to look after someone else.

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 Dementia Helpline Freephone 0808 808 3000. Holidays with the person you care for

Going on holiday with the person you care for can allow you both to have a change from your usual routine.

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. However, people with dementia can become 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. This may mean that you do not get to enjoy your holiday as you have to provide extra support for the person. You should bear in mind that even someone who is quite independent at home may need more supervision in an unfamiliar place.

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 it's likely that you'll enjoy the holiday more.

Some places offer more help and special facilities, for example The Holiday Care service has information on places all over the UK and abroad.

Some Alzheimer Scotland branches and services organise holidays for small groups of carers and people with dementia, together with volunteer helpers. Call the 24 hour Dementia Helpline Freephone 0808 808 3000 for more information.

Holidays without the person you care for

Going on holiday without the person you care for allows you to have a proper break from caring and get some alone time, however you will have to organise alternative care for the person with dementia.

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 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) and the health visitor or district nurse. Ask the social work department about this.

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

If no one 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.

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 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 Inspectorate 0345 600 9527 or visit their website www.careinspectorate.com

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.

It may also be possible to use part of a Self-Directed Support budget towards a holiday. Speak to your local social work team for more information.

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.

Charities

Some charities offer help towards the cost of a holiday, and perhaps towards the cost of taking a helper.

There is a book called A Guide to Grants for Individuals in Need (15th edition, 03/16, £85.00) 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 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 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 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
0345 600 9527
www.careinspectorate.com

Crossroads (Scotland)
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)
c/o Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London, SW1P 4DR
dptac.enquiries@dft.gsi.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disabled-persons-transport-advisory-committee

National Benevolent Fund for the Aged
10 New Square
London, WC2A 3QG
www.nbfa.org.uk

Shared Care Scotland
Shared Care Scotland
Unit 2, Dunfermline Business Centre
Izatt Avenue
Dunfermline, KY11 3BX
01383 622462
www.sharedcarescotland.com

Tourism for All UK
7A Pixel Mill
44 Appleby Road
Kendal
Cumbria , LA9 6ES
info@tourismforall.org.uk
www.tourismforall.org.uk

Specialist holidays

Can Be Done Holidays
020 8907 2400
holidays@canbedone.co.uk
www.canbedone.co.uk

Holidays for All
0845 124 9971
www.holidaysforall.org

Vitalise
0303 303 0145
www.revitalise.org.uk

Checklist for travelling abroad

At least six weeks before you travel	
Speak to your GP:	
Discuss whether you need to take any extra health precautions (e.g. vaccinations, anti-malarial tablets) for the country you are visiting	
Make sure you have enough medication for the duration of your trip	
Ask for a letter about your medication and a copy of your prescription which you can show to customs officers if you are visiting a country with strict drug controls	
Find out 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	
Identify 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	
Make sure that you have an European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) if you're travelling within the EEA (European Economic Area)	
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	
Check if you need a visa – your travel agent should be able to advise	
Check with your mobile service provider whether it will work abroad and how much it will cost	



24 HOUR
Dementia
Helpline

Alzheimer Scotland
Action on Dementia

Freephone 0808 808 3000
Email helpline@alzscot.org

Alzheimer Scotland
22 Drumsheugh Gardens
Edinburgh EH3 7RN
Email: info@alzscot.org
Tel: 0131 243 1453
www.alzscot.org

Alzheimer Scotland – Action on Dementia is a company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland 149069. Registered office: 22 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh EH3 7RN. It is recognised as a charity by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, no. SC022315

A week before you travel	
Make two copies of a personal informal sheet, including: 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 for emergencies.	
Postpone regular deliveries, for example newspapers or groceries	
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 with the airport for items you're not 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 (avoid putting your home address on the outside label – use an e-mail or mobile phone number instead)	
Attach something bright on your luggage that will enable you to identify it at a distance, for example 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	
Currency/credit cards/traveller's cheques	
Small denomination currency for arrival/on board plane	
Insurance certificate and emergency contact details	
Inoculation certificates	
Any medication you might need and accompanying doctor's note	
Driving licence if you are hiring a car	



24 HOUR
Dementia Helpline
 Alzheimer Scotland
 Action on Dementia
 Freephone 0808 808 3000
 Email helpline@alzscot.org

Alzheimer Scotland
 22 Drumsheugh Gardens
 Edinburgh EH3 7RN
 Email: info@alzscot.org
 Tel: 0131 243 1453
www.alzscot.org

Alzheimer Scotland – Action on Dementia is a company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland 149069. Registered office: 22 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh EH3 7RN. It is recognised as a charity by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, no. SC022315