

Factsheet

For single parents in England and Wales **May 2017**

Freephone

0808 802 0925

Gingerbread Single Parent Helpline

Holidays

This factsheet is about planning and making the most of your holidays, whether you are going away as a family or organising a break for your child. There are details of organisations that arrange holidays for children and single parent families or that can help with the cost of a break. You'll also find practical advice on taking your child on holiday. We cannot recommend specific organisations, so make sure you shop around and get a deal that suits your family.

Help with the cost of holidays

Gingerbread is not able to help with the cost of holidays. Financial help may be available from grant-giving trusts or other organisations. Turn2us provides an [online grant search](#) that you can access on the Gingerbread website. You can also call the Turn2us helpline on 0808 802 2000. You could also look at 'A Guide to Grants for Individuals in Need' and the 'Directory of Grant Making Trusts' in your local library.

Check with local church groups, Rotary Clubs and Lions Associations who may arrange low cost holidays for single parent families. Ask at your library or Citizens Advice Bureau for information on local charities. Assistance is also sometimes available to employees or ex-employees of large organisations. Trade unions and families or widows of members of the armed services may also have access to benevolent funds.

To the right is a list of organisations that may be able to provide help with the cost of a holiday. See page two for further sources of financial help if you or your child are disabled.

Before applying, ask for guidelines on how to apply and find out what your application needs to include. Applications will often need to be made by a professional who knows your family circumstances, for example your GP, social worker, health visitor, or your child's teacher. Don't let this put you off; you can ask any of these professionals who know you and your child to support an application.

Care for the Family – Take a Break

029 2081 0800

www.careforthefamily.org.uk

Activity breaks for single parent families with children aged five to 16. A limited number of bursaries are available for parents claiming jobseeker's allowance or income support.

CCHF – All About Kids

01273 847 770

www.cCHF-allaboutkids.org.uk

Provides UK holidays and short breaks for children aged seven to 11. This can include children from low income families, those who have been excluded from school or have experienced bullying.

CHICKS

01822 811 020

chicks.org.uk

Provides activity respite breaks for children aged eight to 11 and 12 to 15. Children usually have to be referred by a teacher, care worker, social worker, or other person who works with the child in a professional capacity.

Family Holiday Association

020 3117 0650

www.familyholidayassociation.org.uk

Allocates holiday grants to families in certain circumstances. Information about applications can be found on their website. Applications can only be received from 'welfare agents' (health visitors, social workers, caring or support agencies, GPs, schools etc) on behalf of families.

Kings Camps

0114 263 2160

www.kingscamps.org

Kings offers supported places on their holiday activity schemes to children whose family is experiencing difficult circumstances. This can include financial hardship, bereavement or illness. Applications should be made in writing, giving reasons for applying. You should include proof of circumstances such as benefit and tax credit letters and/or a supporting letter from a professional who knows your family such as a teacher or health visitor. You also need to provide details of your household income and the number of children you are applying for.

The Mary Macarthur Holiday Trust

02920 359091

www.mmht.org.uk

Provides financial assistance towards holidays for women who are in need of a holiday, for example due to experiencing social difficulties, disability or financial hardship.

Women's Holiday Centre

01729 860 207

<http://hortonwhc.org.uk>

The Women's Holiday Centre is run by a women's co-op to provide holidays for women and children who are on a low income or claiming benefits. Payment is by a sliding scale according to income.

YHA Summer Camps

01629 592 530

summercamps.yha.org.uk

Residential activity summer camps run by the Youth Hostelling Association for children aged ten to 19. Parents can apply for a bursary of up to 75 per cent towards the cost of a five night summer camp if their child is eligible for free school meals.

Taking a holiday with other single parents

The organisations listed below arrange holidays for single parents and their children, which can be a great way to meet other families. Discounts may be available but they do not help with the cost of paying for the holiday.

Camp Mates

0330 323 1130

www.campmates.co.uk

Camp Mates run all-inclusive camping holidays in the UK for single parent families. You can book onto a 2017 Gingerbread holiday with Camp Mates at the Lepe Beach campsite in Southampton. To book, please [visit our website](#). Camp Mates also run holidays all year round at other sites for single parent families.

Acorn Family Holidays

01384 398 870

acornfamilyholidays.co.uk/single-parent-holidays.html

Provides family activity camping holidays including holidays exclusive to single parents.

Mango

01902 373410

www.mangoholidays.co.uk

Arranges group holidays in the UK and abroad for single parent families.

Single With Kids

0845 166 8119

singlewithkids.co.uk

Specialises in organising a variety of holidays for single parent families. Also arranges day trips and regional events.

WAY Foundation

www.widowedandyoung.org.uk

Members organise holidays and days out for other widows and widowers. Annual membership costs £25.

If you or your child are disabled

Several holiday parks offer accessible holidays. Some travel companies claim that their package holidays are suitable for disabled people but you should double check before you book.

Many organisations provide information about holidays for disabled children going away with or without their family. Financial help towards the cost may be available. There are also organisations that grant 'wishes', for example, organising holidays for children who have a life-limiting condition.

Below is a list of organisations that provide holidays for disabled travellers. Some offer help with the cost.

3H Fund (Helping Hands for Holidays)

01892 860 207

www.3hfund.org.uk

Organises subsidised group holidays for disabled children and adults. Volunteer helpers accompany them so that carers can take a respite break. When funds are available, 3H Fund provides grants to enable a modest UK holiday break for low income families where a dependant has a disability.

Family Fund

01904 550055

www.familyfund.org.uk

Provides grants for the additional needs of disabled children and young people, which can include holidays. Call or visit the website for an application pack. Applications should be made by the parent or carer of the disabled child.

Happy Days

01582 755 999

www.happydayscharity.org

Funds and organises holidays, residential trips, days out and theatre trips for young people with special needs. Grants can be provided for family holidays. Children must be aged three to 17. Their definition of special needs includes physical disabilities, learning disabilities, ill health and children who have been bereaved or who have witnessed domestic abuse.

KIDS Direct Short Breaks

03330 142 990

www.disabledchildren.org.uk

Flexible service to help disabled children and their parents. A trained worker can give carers a break or lend an extra pair of hands on a day trip or outing. Short break sessions can last between one hour and a day. The service is available to all but there may be a charge.

Holiday Homes Trust

0208 433 7290

www.holidayhomestrust.org

Affordable self-catering holidays in wheelchair accessible caravans and chalets, mainly in southern England.

Open Britain

www.openbritain.net/places-to-go

This free and constantly updated online resource contains details of accessible venues and places to stay across Britain.

Starlight Foundation

020 7262 2881

www.starlight.org.uk

Offers 'special wishes' to children aged four to 18 who have a life-threatening illness.

Tourism for All UK

0845 124 9971

www.tourismforall.org.uk

Provides information to people with disabilities and older people in relation to accessible accommodation and other tourism services.

The Rough Guide to Accessible Britain

www.accessibleguide.co.uk

Ideas for days out reviewed by disabled visitors. Includes information on accessibility and available services.

Tips for booking and preparing for a holiday

Share the holiday experience. Consider getting together with family, friends or your child's friends' parents for your holiday. That way you could share the costs and also share the holiday experience with other adults as well as your children.

Choose a place that has activities suitable for the ages of your children. Ask if children's clubs or crèche facilities are available. If your child has special needs you could book with an organisation that caters specifically for them.

Shop around for a good deal. You often get the best price by booking online but be sure to use a reputable company that is Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) registered. If you are travelling with an independent tour operator or travel organiser, check that they have a valid Air Travel Organisers' Licensing (ATOL) number.

Ask if any extras such as free insurance or free child places are on offer. Some travel companies offer special 'single parent deals' and may not charge the usual single room supplement. Always check and compare to see if these holidays are good value overall.

Read online customer reviews of the place you are visiting and the company you want to book with.

Make a list of all the items you have to take for the journey to check before you leave. This will help you to remember everything you need.

If your children are small pack everything into one suitcase with wheels that can be easily pushed around.

If you have a mobile phone check with your provider whether your phone will work abroad, and also how much using it will cost. If you have a smartphone get advice about using it abroad as this can be very expensive. Depending on where you are travelling to, it is sometimes cheaper to buy a pay-as-you-go SIM card in that country, rather than using your own. Get advice before you travel.

If you are flying, check with the airport for up-to-date information about security measures so you know how much extra time you need to allow and what you can take on the plane. If you find out you cannot take something after you have checked in your bag, you may have to throw things away. Buying food and drink at the airport and on the plane is expensive, so you might want to take some snacks or a packed lunch. You won't be able to take drinks through airport security, but you can usually take solid food.

Enjoy it! This holiday is for you, as well as your children. Try dividing your holiday time between doing things that you all enjoy, activities that your children enjoy and things that you enjoy, which could include time to yourself. Involve your children in these plans before you book and while you are on holiday. That way, they learn to organise their day, share their time and consider what others want to do too.

Passports

Your passport

- You need a full ten-year passport if you are travelling outside the UK, including to other European Union countries
- Application forms are available at selected Post Office branches or by calling the UK Identity and Passport Service on 0300 222 0000
- Applications to renew passports usually take three weeks but can take longer during peak holiday periods. Online applications take longer as the form will be sent back to you to sign. They are not officially classed as received until the signed form has been returned with all relevant documentation

- If this is your first passport allow at least six weeks for your application to be processed. You may need to attend an interview to confirm your identity. At the interview you would be asked questions about yourself, which someone trying to steal your identity may not know. The Identity and Passport Service advises not to book any travel until your passport has arrived.

Your child's passport

- All children under 16 need to have their own passport. Passports for children are valid for five years
- You must have parental responsibility to obtain a UK passport for a child. All birth mothers should have parental responsibility, but some fathers do not. If you are unsure see the Gingerbread factsheet [Parental responsibility](#).

Visas

If you are visiting another country you may need a visa. To find out whether you need a visa to visit a particular country, check online, or with your travel agent or contact the UK consulate or embassy of the country in question. Check in advance if there are any particular conditions – for example, you may need to have a certain number of months left on your passport.

Money if you go abroad

Take a mixture of ways to access money

Consider 'spreading the risk' by using a mixture of ways to access your money when abroad, for example cash and credit/debit card. Traveller's cheques are still an option but pre-paid foreign currency debit cards may be cheaper, more secure and convenient. For more information see the [Money Advice Service guide to travel money options](#).

Shop around for foreign currency

Shop around for the best prices on foreign currency. Look out for commission-free deals but make sure the exchange rate means you are still saving money overall. Also, check if the company will buy back excess holiday money and if so, at what rate.

Bank cards and extra fees

Check that any bank cards you wish to take can be used in the country you are travelling to. You will probably need to contact your bank to tell them that you will be using the card abroad. If you are planning to use a bank card abroad check for any extra fees and interest that you may have to pay to buy goods or withdraw cash.

In case of loss or theft

Keep account details and emergency phone numbers for lost and stolen bank or prepaid currency cards and travellers' cheques (along with a note of the cheques' serial numbers) in a safe place. Keep the details separately from your cards and cheques so you can phone immediately should anything happen.

Making arrangements with your child's other parent

I am taking my child abroad. Do I need permission from their other parent?

- If you have sole parental responsibility, you do not need the consent of the other parent to take your child abroad
- If you have joint parental responsibility you will need the consent of anyone else with parental responsibility, unless you have a residence order or a child arrangements order where you are named as the parent with residence
- If you have a residence order for your child, or a child arrangements order where you are named as the parent with residence, you can take them abroad for up to a month without the consent of anyone else with parental responsibility.

For more information see the Gingerbread factsheet [Parental responsibility](#).

I am finding it difficult to come to an agreement about holidays with my child's other parent

If you are able to, plan well in advance how your child will spend holiday time and special dates. Try to involve your child in planning the arrangements (depending on their age and understanding) so they feel included and secure about what is happening. If they are spending time with their other parent and/or other family members, give them as much notice as possible.

If either you or the other parent feel worried about your child going away try to share as much information as possible about the trip. For example, details of travel arrangements, where your child will be staying and how you can contact them. It may also help to discuss your child's needs and abilities, for example, eating habits and swimming ability.

See the Gingerbread factsheet [Help when you can't agree](#).

Holidays during term time

If you have school-age children it is tempting to avoid peak prices and crowds by taking your holiday during term time. To do this you will need permission from the head teacher or you risk being fined.

You should consider the following:

- Avoid critical times of the school year, such as the start of terms and exams
- Contact the school at the earliest opportunity and discuss it with them. They cannot authorise your child's absence from school for a family holiday unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'
- If you take your child on holiday without the school's permission, the school may refer the matter to the local education authority. In England, if you take your child out of school without the head teacher's permission you could be fined £60, or £120 if it is not paid within 21 days.

Health and insurance

Check whether you need vaccinations as early as possible	Check with your GP whether you and your child need vaccinations for the destination you are travelling to, or see the ' healthcare abroad ' section of the NHS website at www.nhs.uk . Do this as early as possible, as some vaccinations are not effective immediately.
Make sure you have adequate travel insurance	<p>If you are travelling abroad make sure you have adequate travel insurance. Check all of the terms and conditions to see what is and is not covered. Shop around for the best deal but do not buy a policy that does not cover all of your needs. It is usually cheaper to buy a policy directly from the insurance company or online, rather than through a travel agent.</p> <p>Remember that some bank accounts include travel insurance; this is particularly likely if you pay a monthly fee for your bank account. Check with your bank and ensure the policy covers everything that you need.</p>
Get a free European Health Insurance Card	If you are travelling within the European Union, Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway get a free European Health Insurance Card. You can apply online , by phone or by post using a form you can get from your local post office. The card will entitle you to some free or reduced-cost medical treatment in case of emergency. As this only entitles you to emergency medical treatment be sure that any insurance you buy includes adequate health cover.
Make a note of basic medical information	Make a note of basic medical information such as blood types, any allergies you or your child have and medication you take. Keep a copy of this with you. If you can, get the information translated into the primary language of the country you are visiting.
If you need medical treatment	If you do need medical treatment whilst abroad, call the emergency helpline provided by your travel insurer as soon as is practical and get their advice. They may refuse to pay for certain treatment if you do not follow their recommendations.

Safety measures

Get information about recent events	Get advice about the country you are travelling to by contacting the Foreign and Commonwealth Office . Information includes risks to personal safety and recent events that may affect travel.
Carry a photo of your child	Carry a recent photo of your child in case you become separated. You can also give your child a recent picture of you to carry with them.
Give your child a contact information card or make a wristband	Write your child's name, your mobile number (if you have one and it can be used in the area you are holidaying in) or telephone number for where you are staying on the back of a card. Give this to your child to carry with them during the holiday, or make a band with these details for your child's wrist.
Tell your child what to do if they get lost	Talk to your child about what to do if they are lost and who they should talk to, for example, somebody who works at the resort, a security guard or police officer. Make sure they understand that it is an absolute rule that they do not go anywhere without telling you or the person who is looking after them.
Take a list of important phone numbers	Make a list of important phone numbers, such as your country's embassy details if travelling abroad, your travel insurer, the number for cancelling any bank cards and the numbers of family or friends who might be able to help in case of an emergency. Take a copy with you and keep another at the place you are staying.
Take a copy of your travel insurance policy	Make a copy of your travel insurance policy, including the emergency telephone number and leave a copy with a friend or family member so they can access it if they need to for any reason. You might want to make a copy of your passport and take it with you, keeping it separate to your passport.

Benefits and tax credits if you go on holiday

Can I continue to get benefits if I go on holiday?

You are required to tell Jobcentre Plus if you go abroad. The table below shows what happens to your benefits if you go on holiday. It is intended as a guide only.

The rules are different if you go abroad for a child's medical treatment, for NHS medical treatment for yourself, or if you are considered to be incapable of work. Call the Gingerbread Single Parent Helpline for more information.

Benefit	Holiday abroad	Holiday in the UK
Income support	You can continue to receive it for up to four weeks. You are required to inform JobCentre Plus if you are going abroad.	You can continue to receive income support. Make sure that you do not miss any work focused interviews while you are away.
Jobseeker's allowance	You cannot get jobseeker's allowance if you are on holiday overseas.	To get jobseeker's allowance whilst on holiday in the UK you must continue to be available for work even when you are away from home. You must be willing to cut your holiday short if you are notified of a job. You can claim for up to two weeks in any 12-month period.
Housing benefit	The general rule is that you must not be absent from your home for more than four weeks. Your entitlement could be affected if you are away longer than this. There are some exceptions, so you should check with your local council housing benefit office before going away for more than four weeks.	The general rule is that you must not be absent from your home for more than four weeks. Your entitlement could be affected if you are away longer than this. There are some exceptions, so you should check with your local council housing benefit office before going away for more than four weeks.
Tax credits	Tax credits are not affected if you leave the UK for less than eight weeks.	Tax credits are not affected.
Child benefit	Continues to be paid for the first eight weeks of a temporary absence.	Child benefit is not affected.
Universal credit	Please call our helpline on 0808 802 0925 if you are receiving universal credit. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.	Please call our helpline on 0808 802 0925 if you are receiving universal credit. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Further help and information

**Gingerbread
Single Parent Helpline**
Freephone 0808 802 0925
www.gingerbread.org.uk

Provides free, confidential advice for single parents. No matter the challenge – around your finances, contact arrangements or help you could receive – our trained advisers are here with tailored advice that works for you.

**One Parent Families Scotland
Lone Parent Helpline**
0808 801 0323
www.opfs.org.uk

Run by our partner organisation, One Parent Families Scotland, the Lone Parent Helpline provides free, confidential advice and information for single parents in Scotland.

More from Gingerbread

The following related Gingerbread factsheets for single parents are also available:

- > [Parental responsibility](#)
- > [Making arrangements for your children](#)
- > [Help when you can't agree](#)

Download them from our [website](#) or call 0207 428 5420 to request them

Become a Gingerbread member

Membership is available to single parents in England and Wales. Join a community of thousands of single parents who benefit from the mutual support, free advice and information provided by Gingerbread. You can also meet other single parents at one of our local support groups.

Visit our [website](#), call 020 7428 5424 or email membership@gingerbread.org.uk

Gingerbread
Single parents, equal families

Gingerbread, the charity for single parent families, is registered in England and Wales as a company limited by guarantee, no. 402748, and a registered charity, no. 230750. The Gingerbread Single Parent Helpline is supported by the Department for Education, HMRC, The Big Lottery and other funders and is accredited by the Helplines Partnership.

www.gingerbread.org.uk

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