

Factsheet

Leisure opportunities for children and adults with complex health needs and/or limited mobility

Everyone needs to get out and about and have fun, and for children and adults with complex health needs this is just as important. This factsheet suggests different ways to get mobile, from motorhomes and trikes to hiking, barge and adventure holidays. Whether you are 7 or 97, there are all sorts of exciting activities you can get involved in!

Motorhomes

Motorhomes are a great way of getting around and visiting new places. They are ideal for disabled people and their families, friends or carers who are looking for a self-catering holiday, especially since there are various models that have been specially adapted.

Hiring, buying or adapting

You have a few options: you could hire a motorhome, buy a new or second-hand one, or adapt an existing vehicle.

Where to get a motorhome

A number of companies across the UK sell, rent or adapt wheelchair-accessible motorhomes:

- Bruce Trust (www.brucetrust.org.uk) has an adapted motorhome for hire, as well as canal barges.
- Coachbuilt GB (www.coachbuiltgb.co.uk) sells wheelchair-accessible caravans and motorhomes.
- JC Motorhomes (www.jcmotorhomes.com) has adapted vehicles available for hire.
- SimplyWav (www.simplywav.co.uk) sells accessible vehicles.
- Nirvana Mobility (www.nirvanamobility.co.uk) sells accessible vehicles.
- Preloved (www.preloved.co.uk) is a website selling second-hand things including accessible vehicles.
- Wheelyindependent (www.wheelyindependent.co.uk) has accessible motorhomes for hire. WildAx Motorhomes (www.wildaxmotorhomes.com) builds motorhomes.

Hiring costs

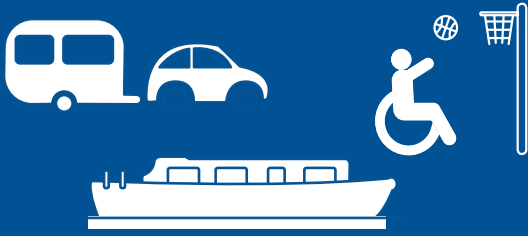
Hiring a motorhome can cost anything from £500 to £1,000 per week, so it's a good idea to shop around before committing to anything. A good place to start looking is your nearest Wheelchair Users Group (www.wheelchairusers.org.uk). In certain cases, people with disabilities can buy or hire an adapted motorhome without paying VAT, so do check the HMRC site to see if you're eligible: www.hmrc.gov.uk.

General resources

- Disabled Motoring UK (www.disabledmotoring.org) the UK charity for disabled drivers, can give you general information on motorhome options.
- MMM Mobility (www.outandaboutlive.co.uk) is worth a look – it's a free, online, annual guide to motorhoming with a disability.
- Wheelgotravelling (www.wheelgotravelling.info) is a blog written by a couple who travel around in a wheelchair-accessible motorhome.

Trikes

Having your own adapted tricycle is another great means of getting out and about. Trikes can help children with disabilities gain independence and explore, enabling them to truly participate in outdoor family life. What's more, they are recommended by many therapists as a brilliant way of



improving muscular development.

You can choose from a variety of models designed to meet the specific needs of different ages and conditions. Here is a selection of what is available:

- **TomCat Trikes**

TomCat trikes are custom-built to suit the individual needs of children and adults with a range of disabilities. For details on the ranges available, from the Classic TomCat Trike to TomCat Trailer Trikes, visit: www.tomcatspecialneeds.co.uk.

- **Mission Cycles**

Mission Cycles' range includes models such as the Mission Piggyback Mk 2, which has been designed to give more stability than the traditional trailer bikes with a single rear wheel. The Piggyback Mk2 will tow with no side-to-side movement, which makes it ideal for children with a balance problem. For details visit: www.missioncycles.co.uk.

- **The Mobility Aid Centre**

The Mobility Aid Centre has a range of models, including the Therapy Terrier Tricycle. Visit: www.themobilityaidscentre.co.uk.

- **Get Cycling Disability**

Get Cycling Disability provides cycles and cycling support to special schools, community groups and individuals, and supplies new and refurbished cycles to the Family Fund charity. They have a shop in York and they run try-out roadshows across the UK: www.getcycling.org.uk.

Many cycle trail centres have adaptive bikes to hire, for example, www.pedalabikeaway.co.uk in the Forest of Dean.

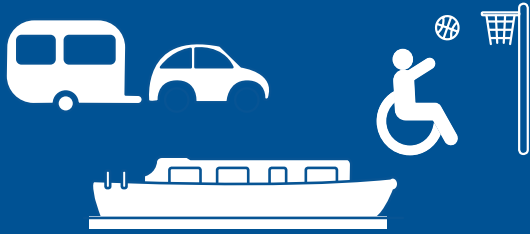
Living Made Easy provides a list of all the charities and organisations that fund equipment for children with limited mobility. For more information visit: www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk.

Adventure Holidays

For an overview of some of the adventure holidays available in the UK for people with disabilities, have a look at the Disability Holidays Guide: www.disabilityholidaysguide.com. This online guide enables you to search for a whole range of activities and breaks, with lots of suggestions for children's activities.

Activity centres recommended to us by families include The Calvert Trust, whose motto is 'It's what you can do that counts!' The Calvert Trust supports people with disabilities to have exciting and challenging adventure holidays individually or as a family, helping them to fulfil their dreams and do things they never thought they could do. Whether you're interested in abseiling, archery, canoeing or just exploring the outdoors, the Calvert Trust is the place to go! For details on their range of accessible activities and centres, visit: www.calvert-trust.org.uk.

Other recommendations are CenterParcs (www.centerparcs.co.uk), which offers accessible lodgings in a variety of settings in the UK, and Avon Tyrell Outdoors Activity Centre (www.avontyrell.org.uk), based in the New Forest, Hampshire, which provides day and residential holidays that are fully accessible.



Barge Holidays

A few charitable trusts specialise in providing self-drive canal boats with specially adapted wheelchair facilities, enabling people with limited mobility to enjoy a holiday with friends or family.

Here are some organisations that offer barge and canal boat holidays:

- The Bruce Trust (www.brucetrust.org.uk)
- The Lyneal Trust (www.lynealtrust.org)
- The Canal Boat Project (www.canalboat.org.uk)
- The South Staffordshire Narrowboat Company (www.ernestthomas.co.uk)
- The Willow Trust (www.gloucesterdocks.me.uk)
- The Disabled Afloat Riverboats Trust (www.glosdart.co.uk).

And for a full region-specific list of organisations that provide narrowboats or widebeam boats for people with mobility difficulties, visit: www.waterwaysholidays.com

Hiking

Hiking or rambling in the countryside is another popular leisure-time activity.

The Disabled Ramblers offer a wonderful way of getting involved. They help people with limited mobility to get out and explore the countryside, and organise a range of graded rambles according to difficulty and needs. They go out in all weathers and explore many different terrains. Some of the routes are suitable for power chairs or shopping buggies, whereas others require large scooters capable of travelling over rough terrain.

Many of their rambles are led by staff who live locally, which is great for learning about the area. Whatever your mobility needs, the Disabled Ramblers can help you have the freedom to explore. For details visit: www.disabledramblers.co.uk.

Walking for health (www.walkingforhealth.org.uk) promotes local organised walks or rambles and often includes accessible routes.

Other Leisure Opportunities

Here are some links to some other popular activities and resources:

- horse riding (www.rda.org.uk)
- gardening (www.gardeningfordisabledtrust.org.uk)
- swimming (www.swimming.org)
- art (www.disabilityartsonline.org.uk)
- skiing (www.skiclub.co.uk and www.disabilitysnowsport.org.uk)
- reading or story-telling – the second generation Kindle by Amazon has a read-aloud function for people who are unable to read but enjoy books and stories (www.amazon.co.uk). You may also want to consider multi-sensory books such as Bag Books (www.bagbooks.org.uk) or Joanna Grace's website (<http://jo.element42.org>) which are an interactive resource aimed at those who are unable to read or benefit from books. Stories are told in a very tactile way through actions, smell and touch.
- Accessible Britain (www.accessiblebritain.co.uk) is a good source of information on what accessible activities and events are available in your local area.
- PHAB (www.phab.org.uk) runs holiday clubs and provides opportunities for group activities if you want to join up with other families or young people on supported holidays.