

Money-Saving Tips and Discounts for People with Physical Disabilities in Kent

Living with a physical disability can often come with additional financial challenges, but there are many ways to save money and access discounts specifically tailored to your needs. There are many initiatives on both a local and national level which can help you manage your costs when out and about and here we are taking a look at some that may be available to disabled people in Kent.

1. Cinema and Theatre Discounts

Many cinemas and theatres in Kent provide discounts for disabled patrons and their companions. For example, the CEA Card is a national scheme which allows a disabled cinema-goer to receive a complimentary ticket so that you can take someone else with you when visiting participating cinemas across the UK. Local theatres often have similar schemes, making cultural outings more affordable.

How to Apply: You can apply for a CEA Card online with proof of your disability and further information is available here <https://www.ceacard.co.uk/>. For theatres, check the venue's website or contact the box office directly to learn about available discounts.

2. Community Transport Services

Getting around can be a challenge, but Kent has several community transport services that offer affordable travel options for disabled residents. Services like Kent Karrier provide flexible dial-a-ride services for those who find it difficult to use public transport, at a reduced rate.

How to Apply: Contact your local council or community transport providers in Kent, such as Kent Karrier, to find out how to register for these services. Further information can be found at <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/travelling-around-kent/community-transport#tab-1>

3. Free Bus Travel and Discounted Train Travel

If you are able to travel by bus, you can apply for a bus pass which gives you access to free off-peak travel on weekdays, over weekends and on public holidays. Having a

disability or being over state pension age will qualify you and you can also apply for a disabled person and companion bus pass if you are unable to travel alone. If you regularly travel by train, a Disabled Persons Railcard may be beneficial as it will save a third on rail fares for you and an adult companion. This costs £20 a year to get the railcard but if you are likely to use this often, you may save more than this within just a few journeys.

How to Apply: For further details and to apply for a bus pass, visit <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/travelling-around-kent/bus-travel/bus-passes/bus-passes-for-older-or-disabled-people>. Further information about a Disabled Persons Railcard can be found at <https://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/>

4. Discounted Activities and Workshops

Many community centres and organisations in Kent offer discounted rates for workshops, classes, and activities specifically designed for people with disabilities. These can range from art classes to accessible yoga sessions, providing both social engagement and skill development at a lower cost.

How to Apply: Check with local community centres for upcoming events and activities. They often advertise these opportunities on their websites or social media pages.

5. Discounted Gym Memberships and Leisure Facilities

Staying active is important and our blog post last month explored several ideas of how you can incorporate more activity into your life. Many leisure centres in Kent offer discounted memberships to people with disabilities. The Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) is one such program, promoting accessible fitness facilities across the country, including in Kent. These gyms often have specially adapted equipment and trained staff to assist you.

How to Apply: Contact your local leisure centre or check their website to inquire about IFI participation or any specific discounts they offer for disabled users.

6. Free or Discounted Entry to Local Attractions

Kent is rich in cultural heritage, and many local attractions offer free or discounted entry for disabled visitors. Whether it's visiting a historic site like Leeds Castle or exploring wildlife parks, you can often find reduced rates or special offers that make these outings more affordable. There are also various schemes which can help you to obtain discounts or to communicate your access needs, such as the Access Card from Nimbus, which can be used at a number of places nationwide.

How to Use: Before visiting, check the attraction's accessibility page on their website or contact them directly to inquire about discounts. Many places offer free entry for carers or companions as well. A great resource is the Visit Kent website <https://www.visitkent.co.uk/stay-and-eat/getting-here/accessible-kent/>

How to Find Out About More Discounts and Support

Staying informed about available discounts and support is key to making the most of what's available. Here are some ways to stay updated:

- **Community Centres and Libraries:** Many community centres and libraries in Kent offer bulletin boards or newsletters with information about local discounts and support services.
- **Social Media:** Following local disability groups and charities on social media can keep you updated on new offers, discounts, and community events in your area.
- **Word of Mouth:** Engaging with local disability communities or attending support group meetings can be a great way to learn about unadvertised discounts and resources.

Making the Most of Discounts in Daily Life

To maximize the benefits available to you, try the following suggestions:

- **Ask Locally:** When visiting places or booking services in Kent, always ask if there is a discount for disabled people. Local businesses may offer concessions that aren't widely advertised. This does not apply to every location or business so is not guaranteed, however there is no harm in asking.
- **Stay Connected:** Join local disability networks or forums where members share tips and information about new discounts and opportunities.



- Plan Ahead: Research local events and services in Kent to find discounted or free activities that you can enjoy.

By tapping into these resources, you can help manage the additional costs associated with living with a physical disability while making the most of all of the wonderful things Kent has to offer.