



SUMMER

[*made easy*]

Just a couple of months ago we were in the grip of one of the coldest spells on record – now we’re shaking off the layers, dusting off our sunnies and hoping for a not so traditional British Summer.

While we can’t guarantee you sunshine, we can give you some top tips from the Financial Ombudsman Service – the free service that can help sort out problems with a bank or insurer – to stop you getting hot and bothered with your finances this year.

To insure or not to insure: Travel insurance may not seem that important when you’re planning your big getaway and can often be a last minute purchase. But ensuring that you have a good policy can help you out if things go wrong. Bear in mind that travel policies can vary considerably so check what the policy does, and more importantly, does not cover. If you sort out your insurance early enough it could also protect you if the worst happens and you have to cancel your trip so it pays to ask. Remember – the cheapest policy is not necessarily the best one for you.

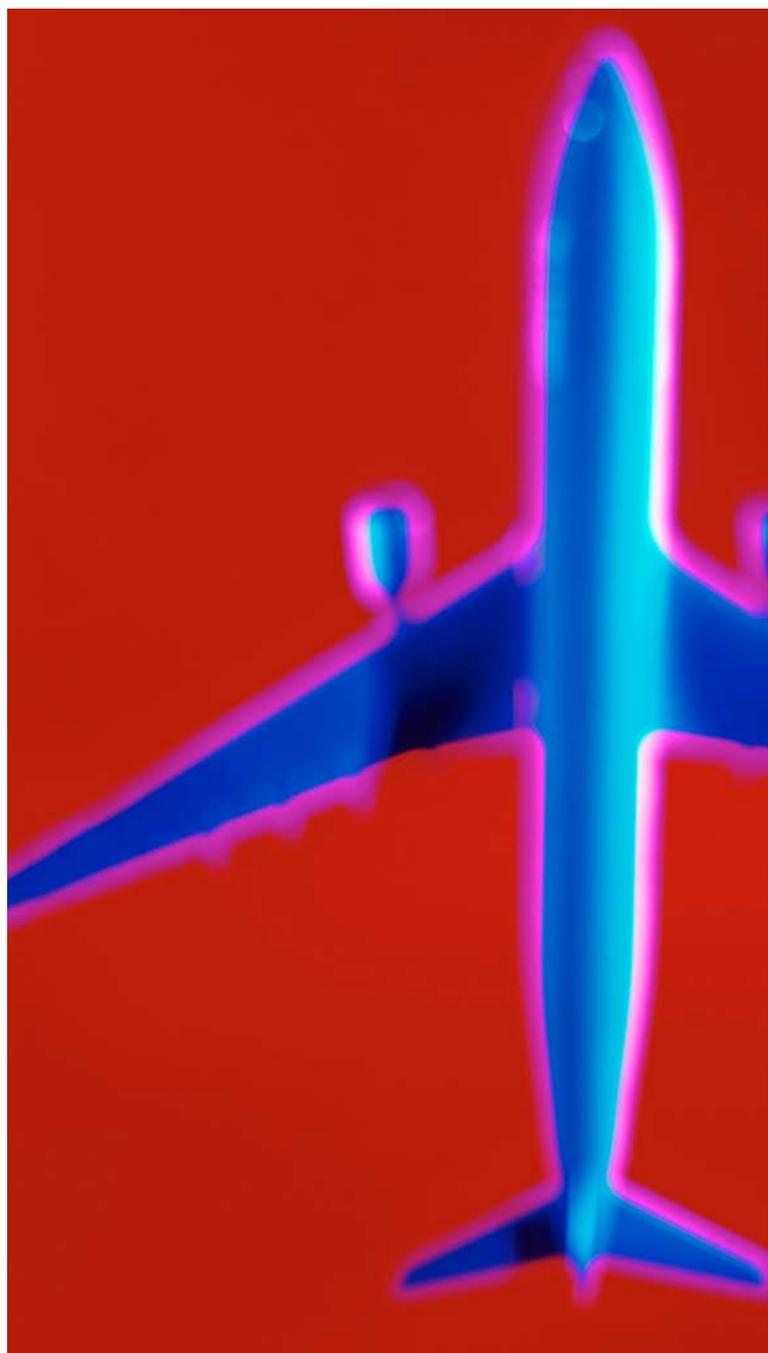
Keep covered with credit: Using a credit card to pay for your holiday – or making some holiday purchases – could offer you extra legal protection by something called section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act. Section 75 only applies under certain circumstances, for example if the purchase price is between £100 and £30,000. But, if you meet the requirements you’re your purchase isn’t of the required standard – or you don’t receive it at all – you may be able to get your money back from the credit provider.

Last minute bargains: If you’re tempted by an online deal on a new summer wardrobe or a last minute holiday, think before you click! If you’ve not used the holiday company or website before it’s a good idea to run a quick internet search for reviews from people who have used them. Reading a few reviews can show if there are any common problems that other users of the site have experienced. If the deal looks too good to be true, then it might just be, so don’t hand over any personal information or account details if you are unsure about the company or site.

Summer wardrobe: Everyone wants to look great in their holiday snaps and a new summer wardrobe can help you feel fabulous. There are some great deals and discounts to be had online so it pays to shop around. While store cards can come with big money off incentives, the interest charged on them can be as high as 40% so check before you sign up and stay on top of your repayments. Using a catalogue can be a good way to spread the cost of a purchase but the repayment dates can vary. Some companies will ask for payments every 28 days so the payment date will shift every month. Keep a note of when they are due to avoid any late payment fees.

Have a back up plan: From lost wallets on the beach, to

problems with plastic cards, it’s a good idea to have back up funds to hand should something go wrong. If you’re going abroad, let your bank know in advance if you’re planning on using your card as this can help you avoid any trouble accessing your money. Your bank may still need to identify you for security reasons while you’re away, so keep a record of their international phone number just in case.



Hopefully taking these steps can ensure that you are able to enjoy some carefree fun in the sun (however much or little there may be) without a financial problem casting a shadow over you. However, if a problem does crop up the ombudsman may be able to help – 0300 123 9 123 or www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk.