

PENSION BENEFIT AND HEALTHCARE TEAM

START AS YOU MEAN TO GO ON...

How many of you made a traditional New Year's Resolution to get fit, lose weight or stop smoking in 2010? Well, how about adding one more to the list? From time to time, the International Pension Centre may need to contact you regarding your pension or benefit entitlement. For this reason, you should inform them of any change of address, indeed any change in your circumstances, within 28 days, to ensure you continue to get the money you are entitled to. So in the spirit of 'new year, new start', how about making 'Updating the International Pension Centre' one resolution you keep this year!

BACK TO BLIGHTY



For one reason or another, there may come a time when you wish to go back to the UK after living in Spain and it is important to remember that your return should be as well planned as when you made the move to Spain in the first place.

In practical terms, a good place to start is deregistering with the Spanish authorities such as the town hall and the National Police (for the padrón and residencia respectively). Also, you'll need to deregister with the health centre and, if you're registered under an E106 or E121, with the INSS as well. The UK authorities will also need to be updated on any change in your circumstances and contact details.

But what about access to healthcare and financial support? Well, as soon as you return to the UK, you should be able to register with your local GP. To apply for some income-related benefits however, you must first pass the Habitual Residency Test (HRT). As this process is a little more complicated, an information sheet is now available on our website.

See the downloads on the *Returning to the UK* pages of www.ukinspain.fco.gov.uk for more details.

BREAKING NEWS: EHIC CHANGES

As you may already be aware, UK State Pensioners who are resident in Spain and who receive their healthcare under an E121 will soon be affected by changes concerning the issue of the European Health Insurance Card



If you fall into this group, are registered as a dependant on an E121 or receive healthcare under an E109, from 1st May 2010 the UK will be responsible for issuing your EHIC, rather than the INSS. All those affected will receive a letter and an application form from the Department of Health over the coming weeks. If you return your completed form by the end of March, you should receive your card before the new European Regulations come into force.

Remember – The EHIC does not replace your E121 in Spain - it is only valid for necessary treatment while you are on holiday abroad, including in the UK

For further information, see the Department of Health's website or contact your local PBH Team

LA LEY DE DEPENDENCIA



There are many people who, due to age, disability or illness, would be unable to care for themselves without depending on the help of others. The *Ley de Dependencia* is a Spanish law which provides support to these individuals, in the form of services such as home help, telephone assistance and residential care. Financial help may also be available to go towards residential or carer's fees. In order to qualify, you must have been resident in Spain for 5 years (2 of which must be the last 2 years before your claim) and you must be assessed at a certain level of dependency. To make a claim, contact the social worker at your town hall. The delays in processing applications have been widely publicised. However, recent meetings between the Spanish health authorities and local governments have addressed the issue and applicants should now receive a decision on the assistance they have been awarded within 6 months of applying

GOOD NEWS STORY!

A British couple in Gran Canaria contacted the PBHT in Malaga after having trouble registering for healthcare. Although they had registered their E106s with the INSS, they had so far been unable to receive treatment at their health centre. Following liaison between PBHT Malaga and the Canarian health authorities, the couple have now had their E106 forms accepted at their local centre and are able to access any treatment they require. (Case dealt with by Pension, Benefit and Healthcare Team, Malaga)

British Consulate/Age Concern España Partnership Project (BC/ACPP)

HISTORY OF ORGANISATION

Age Concern España is a national Federation established in 1994 that provides specialist information and advice for British people over the age of fifty in Spain. It currently has five local member Age Concern Organizations in Costa Blanca, Costa del Sol, Ibiza, Menorca and Mallorca.

At a national level there is a telephone based information line which links into the **National Casework Service**. This service offers support for the most vulnerable in acute difficulty: particularly those suffering from dementia, disability, social isolation, or those with complex care needs. Demand for this service has increased significantly over the past year.

The Casework service has thus far been supported and implemented by over 50 volunteers, who carry out assessment visits, follow-up with support interventions and sacrifice significant amounts of time and effort to support vulnerable older people.

Until this point, both services have been managed on a voluntary basis by Judy Arnold-Boakes, MBE, founder President and Co-Patron, but this arrangement is no longer feasible. Need for the service has grown, driven both by the economic crisis and by a retired population that is living on less money than expected. Currently, Age Concern España has direct contact with **15,000** British nationals a year. Therefore, there is even greater necessity for a professional service with strategic direction and connections in order to maximize the benefits and potential of the service.

As a result of these issues, Age Concern España, Age UK and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office have entered into a joint project (**British Consulate/Age Concern Partnership Project**), to bring greater capacity and a more professional approach to the service. To manage the project a **Country Casework Manager** (Sarah Rogers) has been recruited and is based in Madrid.

HOW CAN I HELP?

The aim of the project is to ensure there is **representative coverage and a high quality service across the whole of Spain**. Currently, there is an ongoing **recruitment campaign** across Spain in order to steadily increase the network of Federation volunteer case-workers.

So, if you want to become involved or you know someone who would be interested please contact:

CCM@ageconcern-espana.org.



The Royal British Legion

About the Legion

The Royal British Legion provides financial, social and emotional support to millions who have served or are currently serving in the Armed Forces, and their dependants. Members in Spain meet through a network of branches for social events and meetings and can also become involved in many of the activities of the Legion, such as caseworking, fundraising and Legion in the Community events.

Partnerships

As part of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office partnership project, a **Royal British Legion Country Welfare Officer** (Donna Wilson) is based at the British Consulate in Malaga alongside the Pensions, Benefits & Health Care Team. The partnership has been a great success –resulting in a more holistic approach to solving complex cases which includes helping clients to access services and benefits available in Spain.

The Country Welfare Officer's role is to coordinate the delivery of welfare, training and recruitment of Legion volunteers and of course, work closely with other key organisations and all those involved in the partnership.

How can you help?

You do not have to be a member of the Legion to become a volunteer. If you are interested in becoming a welfare volunteer and would like to find out more, contact dmwilson@britishlegion.org.uk.

Legion Welfare Work in Spain

A study into the living conditions of veterans living in Spain – *Caring In Spain* (see www.britishlegion.org.uk) showed that among the British Nationals who have made Spain their home, as many as **154,770 could be Legion Beneficiaries**.

The study along with locally gathered information is being used to develop plans for future delivery of welfare support in Spain – which is provided by a dedicated and much valued team of volunteer caseworkers who work tirelessly to help our beneficiaries. The term *beneficiary* refers to those who are eligible for Legion support – for information on eligibility please contact the Country Welfare officer.



For all Welfare enquiries - please contact Donna Wilson on 0034 95 235 23 00 or email spain@britishlegion.org.uk

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