

PARTNERS' NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2011

Pension, Benefit and Healthcare Team



CALLING ALL PENSIONERS!!

The International Pension Centre (IPC) recently started a 'life certificate' campaign and will soon be sending forms to many of you in Spain.

As we've mentioned before, the life certificate is a form you must complete, **within a certain time period**, to demonstrate you continue to have the right to a pension. It is important the letter reaches you as soon as possible.

We would therefore like to ask you to ensure the IPC hold your up to date contact details. Although you will have provided them with your Spanish address when you first moved over, if you have since moved house, or your address has changed due to increasing urbanisation in your town, inform the Pension Service on 0044 191 218 7777.

Remember, you should inform the IPC of any changes in your circumstances, such as changes in address, within 28 days as you could receive correspondence from them at any time throughout the year.

If 'updating your details with IPC' is a resolution you keep all the way through to 2012, you'll save yourself trouble regarding your pension in the year ahead!

AND ANOTHER NEW YEAR TOP TIP...

Although it's impossible to know what the year ahead may have in store, we can try to make sure we are as prepared as possible for whatever 2011 throws at us. In social security terms, one of the easiest ways to do this is to keep all your paperwork in a safe place.

If you are in receipt of a UK State Pension or benefit, the International Pension Centre will soon be sending you an 'advice notice'. This letter informs you of the new weekly amount you will receive in the coming tax year. And it could come in very handy.

For example, if you apply for a means-tested benefit in Spain, or home help through social services, you may well be asked for a certificate from the British Consulate, in Spanish, confirming your pension or benefit amount. We are able to issue this certificate much more quickly if you are able to provide us with your latest statement of benefit as proof of your income.



OUTREACH 2011

The PBHT, in conjunction with the British Consulate, has a handful of events coming up across Spain.



These events are to raise awareness of social security entitlements for those of you living in Spain.

The team also talk about the responsibilities that go hand in hand with receiving money from the UK Government.

For details of an upcoming event in Orihuela Costa (24th Feb) and other events as and when they become available, see <http://ukinspain.fco.gov.uk>

A message from the British Consulate

We know that the withdrawal of the old "Residencia" ID cards has caused inconvenience to many British citizens living in Spain. However, ultimately this is a matter for the Spanish Government in the same way that not going ahead with the UK ID card project is a decision taken by the British Government. As you may know, Spain withdrew the Residents Card for EU citizens in order to comply with the EU Directive 2004/38/EC on the freedom of movement within the European Union which prevents a member state from issuing compulsory ID/residence cards to citizens of another EU country.

Nevertheless, we will continue talking to the Spanish authorities in order to find an alternative solution that can help British and other European residents. In the meantime, the only legitimate form of ID for British citizens that is recognised by the Spanish authorities is the British passport, although you may find that a photo driving licence, a photo credit card or a certified copy of your passport is accepted in some shops and stores.



Age Concern Acción Social Asistencial (ACASA)



ACASA has developed from the British Consulate/Age Concern Partnership Project (BC/ACPP). At the end of 2010, the BC/ACPP was receiving **4 new cases per week**, had distributed over **€130,000** to beneficiaries throughout Spain and had over **70 dedicated, trained volunteers**.

With the instability of the economy, the rising cost of living and the decreasing value of pensions, the plight of pensioners is more real than ever. This is why the development of the project into an **independent umbrella charity organisation** called **ACASA** underpins the continuing importance of the work that we are doing in Spain.

ACASA will continue to help thousands of older British nationals to overcome poverty, combat isolation and assist with integration into Spanish life.

- We help older people **gain access to benefits** both in Spain and the UK.
- We help those with a **military background** of any age.
- We provide **social contact** and support.
- We source **grants** from UK charities.
- We provide **help and advice** on living in Spain or returning to the UK.

If you would like further information about our services or would like to make a donation to help us continue our work please contact **Sarah Rogers** at **CCM@ageconcern-espana.org**.



The Royal British Legion

The Royal British Legion (TRBL)'s successful Partnership with the FCO is now 3 years old! It provides a coordinated and holistic approach in responding to the welfare concerns and needs of the ex-service community in Spain.



As a result of this initiative TRBL, has developed effective working relationships with the official Partners of the FCO and other charitable organisations working in Spain.

The Legion works very closely with Age Concern España/ACASA & the Pension Benefit & Healthcare Team (PBHT) and this improved communication ensures that benevolence in Spain reaches far & wide. In addition, our volunteer training programme now regularly incorporates training sessions conducted by the PBHT, providing a major source of information for our incredible team of Volunteer caseworkers.

Example of partnerships in action:

- An ex-serviceman contacted PBHT when having problems in accessing Spanish benefits because his 3 young children (born in Spain) had no British passports – PBHT asked if TRBL could help and we were able to assist with the associated costs.

District South of the Royal British Legion

In January 2011, British Consul for Andalucía, Steve Jones (pictured alongside Donna Wilson, County Welfare Officer for TRBL) was appointed president of District South.



Steve, who is very committed to the RBL/FCO partnership and to supporting our dedicated volunteers, says that he is both proud and honoured to accept the appointment and has pledged to continue supporting and promoting the wonderful work of The Royal British Legion.

Working in Partnership

Each month we would like to show you the ways in which the British Consular Network and its Partners work together to help British Nationals in Spain. We hope you will find this informative in terms of the help we may be able to provide. **For example...**

The British Consulate in Alicante was contacted by a private care home as a British resident was unable to afford the 24 hour care he needed. The Consulate contacted ACASA, whose volunteer carried out an assessment, discovering that the customer had a military background. ACASA therefore tapped into funds from The RBL and the British Benevolent Fund in Madrid to arrange repatriation to the UK, while at the same time the PBHT gave guidance on returning to the UK. The customer is now in a UK nursing home with the 24 hour care he needs.

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