

PARTNERS' NEWSLETTER - JULY 2011

Pension, Benefit and Healthcare Team



REVIEW OF INCAPACITY BENEFIT

As some of you may know, incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance are being phased out. But if you're in receipt of either of these benefits, don't panic!

Since October 2010 anyone who is unable to work due to illness or disability has claimed Employment Support Allowance (ESA), rather than Incapacity Benefit. And the idea is to now see whether people claiming incapacity benefit or severe disablement allowance can get ESA instead.

If you are due to reach state pension age before 6th April 2014 you will not be affected. However, if your benefit is to be reviewed, you will receive a letter from the International Pension Centre, detailing exactly what you need to do and what happens next. Not everyone will receive their letter at once, as this is a gradual process starting from spring 2011 to April 2014. Rest assured you will continue to receive your current benefit without change in the meantime, as long as you continue to satisfy the eligibility criteria.

For more information on the review and what it could mean for you, see www.direct.gov.uk

ASK THE TEAM!

Hannah Thronicker is the Country Manager for the Pension, Benefit & Healthcare Team (PBHT). Having lived in Madrid for 5 years (and still loving it!) she tells us a few tips for a trouble-free life in Spain:

- **Keep the authorities updated with any change in your circumstances** – this is to avoid suspension of current benefits or problems with applying for help in the future
- **Don't leave it until it's too late to seek help** – look to see which authorities could help at the first sign of trouble
- **Do your research** – plan for the future and find out about what help you might be able to get from both the UK and Spanish authorities, should you need it
- **Use official sources for your information** – avoid the confusion caused by rumours and know what you can and cannot apply for as a resident in Spain.

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH



Those of you who were interested to read our article 'Every little helps' last month, may also be interested to see our website of the month for July – www.imserso.es

IMSERSO is the body in Spain which is responsible for social services, providing help for older and/or dependant residents and administering non-contributory benefits to those on a low income.

Whether you are on a low income yourself, or you know of an elderly or disabled friend or relative who needs some extra support, seek help. Have a look at the links in the left-hand menu – especially those for 'Benefits & Grants' and 'Personal Autonomy & Dependency'.

It is possible to put the website into English, although not all of the information has been translated.



The British Consular Network, Spain

The FCO launches a parental child abduction awareness campaign

This month the FCO has teamed up with leading parenting websites Mumsnet and the Fatherhood Institute to help tackle international parental child abduction, spread the prevention message and make people aware of the support it can provide.

For many people the issue of parental child abduction is something with which they may not have had direct personal contact. There's often a perception – fuelled by a number of high profile cases - that it's about fathers abducting their children, however statistics show it is mainly mothers – either intentionally or unintentionally.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister Jeremy Browne said the campaign will help people become more aware of what they could do if they think their child may be at risk. "We are very concerned that we continue to see an increase in the number of cases of international parental child abduction. If you are worried your child might be at risk, or if your child has been abducted you can call the Child Abduction Section at the Foreign Office on 0044 207 008 0878 or www.fco.gov.uk or Reunite on 0044 116 2556 234."

For more information on Living in Spain, see <http://ukinspain.fco.gov.uk>



The Royal British Legion (TRBL)

'Shoulder to shoulder with all who Serve'

Throughout 2011 the Legion is celebrating 90 years of continuous service to the whole Armed Forces Family.

Are you part of that family and eligible for our support?

Those eligible for Legion support fall into the following categories:

Beneficiaries, Dependants & Carers.



Beneficiaries include:

- Any man or woman who is Serving and has received seven days' pay or who has previously received seven days' pay as a Regular, Reserve or Auxiliary member of the Royal Navy, Army or Royal Air Force and is aged 16 years or over.
- Any man or woman who has served with the Mercantile Marine afloat in hostile waters or as a full-time member of the Allied Civil Police Forces or who is entitled to the campaign medal issued to the Royal Navy, Army or Royal Air Force to those giving them direct support or under their command.
- Any member of a **voluntary aid societies**; who has served full time and in uniform in direct support of the United Kingdom Armed Forces .
- Any British subject (whether by birth or otherwise) who has served at least seven days in the Forces of an Allied nation and received seven days' pay from that nation or a resistance organisation of an Allied Nation during hostilities in which the United Kingdom Armed Forces were engaged.
- Any man who served in the Home Guard for at least six months, or in a Bomb and Mine Disposal Unit for at least three months, or was awarded the Defence Medal in respect of service in the Home Guard or in a Bomb and Mine Disposal Unit.

Dependants can include children, spouses and partners (including widows or widowers) or other dependants.

Carers are those who have an ongoing caring responsibility for a beneficiary.

For all welfare enquiries relating to serving/ex-service people and their dependants, please contact Donna Wilson at dmwilson@britishlegion.org.uk.

ACASA - Age Concern Acción Social y Asistencial



ARMED FORCES SERVICE DAY



SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association) Forces Help works with ACASA and exists to ensure that the

Armed Forces community in Spain, both serving and veteran and their families, has a source of assistance when needed.

As many of you may know, **Armed Forces Day** took place on Saturday, 25 June 2011. Armed Forces Day reminds us of the sacrifices, both big and small, serving members and their families are making now, and which veterans and their loved ones made in the past, and the physical and mental scars which many of them will bear for the rest of their lives.

Armed Forces Day reminds us not to forget that in Spain, in addition to current servicemen and their families, there are many veterans among our friends and neighbours – heroes whose circumstances could mean that they need extra help.

If you, or anyone you know, need assistance, then through the partnership with ACASA, SSAFA can offer those veterans among us, those heroes, the means to apply for financial assistance.



Later this year, ACASA will be holding SSAFA Big Brew Ups all over Spain to raise some vital funds for the service community. First and foremost, it's about getting together for a good old-fashioned cuppa. But there are loads of other ideas to build your event around, from a 'Big Breakfast' at work, to a 'G&T' party with your friends.

If you would like more information about how you can organise a Big Brew Up, contact Sarah Rogers at CCM@ageconcern-espana.org

Working in Partnership

A vulnerable ex-serviceman, who had been living on the streets of Barcelona for a number of months, recently contacted TRBL for assistance to return to the UK. The Country Welfare Officer for the Legion and British Consulate in Barcelona worked together to establish the needs of the customer. The Consular officer was able to provide information on local services for the homeless and facilitate communication between TRBL and the customer, while the Legion has covered the travel costs. The customer is due to return to the UK in the coming days.

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For more information on Living in Spain, see <http://ukinspain.fco.gov.uk>