

BRITISH CONSULAR NETWORK IN SPAIN

PARTNERS' NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2012

Healthcare Reform: Changing with the Times

A new healthcare law has been introduced changing the Spanish healthcare system away from being strictly contributions-based. What does this mean exactly, and how will it affect you?

People who were registered as Spanish residents prior to 24th April 2012 and do not have entitlement to state healthcare paid for by the UK, (e.g. as a UK state pensioner) may now find they can register for the national health service in Spain as residents. If you think this may apply to you, then speak with your local INSS office to check your entitlement. Your local office can be found at www.segsocial.es. If you have not yet applied for your *residencia* in Spain, you may find that more rigorous conditions are now applied at the time of making your application, such as providing proof of entitlement to healthcare in Spain. If you are in receipt of a UK state pension your S1 form issued from the International Pension Centre should be sufficient to fulfil this requirement. UK state pensioners should contact the International Pension Centre on 0044-191-218-7777 to request an S1.

Those who do not have access to Spanish state-run healthcare by any other means should shortly be able to pay into a nation-wide Convenio Especial (Special Agreement). Contact your local health authority for further information, including how to register. Further information on access to healthcare in Spain can be found at <http://ukinspain.fco.gov.uk/healthcare>



Returning to the sun? Let the UK authorities know.

With two heat waves hitting Spain this summer it's no wonder that many expat residents choose to return to the UK during July & August to escape the high temperatures. However, as the summer now draws to a close, many are beginning to return to Spain to enjoy the milder temperatures and whilst some may be intending to spend the entire winter here and others just a few weeks or months, it is important that if you receive a UK benefit and are going abroad, **even for just a short time**, you notify the office who pays your benefit before you go. In fact, any change in your circumstances, such as moving in with a partner or starting work, should be



reported immediately to the relevant authority. Spending time out of the UK, whether it be for a holiday or to live, doesn't necessarily mean your benefits will be affected but not notifying your local benefit office of time spent abroad is considered to be an offence and could lead to prosecution, imprisonment and even the confiscation of your home and possessions. More information on UK benefits in general and on which ones can and cannot be received whilst living in Spain can be found on www.direct.gov.uk. If you know of someone committing UK benefit fraud whilst living in Spain, you can call the free and confidential Benefit Fraud Hotline in Spain on **900 554 440** or fill in the online form available at www.dwp.gov.uk/benefit-thieves-spain and help UK investigators close the net on benefit thieves.



The British Consular Network, Spain

FCO Minister for Consular Affairs Mark Simmonds MP visits Alicante

Last month (Wed 19 September), newly appointed FCO Minister Mark Simmonds MP visited the province of Alicante to learn more about the issues faced by thousands of British nationals living in and visiting the region. The Minister was accompanied by British Consul Paul Rodwell. The Minister visited Foncalent Prison where he was met by the prison director and a representative of the Samaritans, who carry out regular visits to English speaking inmates. Mr Simmonds then travelled to Torrevieja where he met Age Concern volunteers and visited Villajoyosa Hospital where he spent time with hospital staff and volunteers. In the afternoon, Mr Simmonds met with the Mayor of Benidorm, Agustin Navarro, before visiting some of the town's most popular areas.



Mr Simmonds commented: *"Today's visit to Alicante gave me a fascinating insight into the experiences of British nationals living and visiting Alicante. I met some remarkable people fully committed to their communities who raised with me some of the issues that are a matter of concern to many British residents in Spain. I also saw how the British consulate in Alicante, one of the one of the busiest in the world, works to support British nationals."*

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

ACASA - The National Casework Service of Age Concern España



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Why do you ask so many questions?

'Why do you ask so many questions?' is often asked of our volunteer Caseworkers when they visit clients who are seeking financial assistance from a UK charity to help them over a rough patch in their lives.

The answer might seem simple but unless the Caseworker can 'paint' a complete picture of a person's life for the ACASA Almonisation Officer, the chances are that the client will not receive the maximum benefit from resources, which are available to him or her both from the UK and Spain.

There are more than 180,000 charities registered in the UK. This might be a large number for readers to absorb and admittedly the aims of many charities do not fit the bill, but the Almonisation Officer works with the information provided to fit a client to a charity or charities. There are, for example, charities for those born in a specific town, those of a particular faith, those with a military background, etc. In addition, most professions or trades have their own charity or guild, some large companies have a charitable fund for ex-employees, as do schools or seats of learning. The possibilities are many so please be tolerant when we ask so many questions and be appreciative of the Almonisation Officer who has spent many years developing her skills in this area.

In addition to the Almonisation Officer's skills, the President of ACASA meets on an annual basis with a number of the charities, which make regular grants to British expatriates living in Spain. These meetings which started in 1995, are aimed at an exchange of ideas and give the President an opportunity to explain in detail the difficulties faced by the expatriate community in Spain particularly in these difficult economic times.

By the time this newsletter is circulated, the meeting for 2012 will have taken place and significant matters, which affect every one of us in the British expatriate community, will be reported in the next newsletter.

ACASA has two client bases – people over the age of 50, and those of any age who serve or used to serve in the British Armed Forces, and their families, as ACASA does the work of SSAFA Forces Help in Spain. Contact 902 00 38 38 or info@ageconcern-espana.org for further information.



Official Partners of ACASA



The Royal British Legion 'Shoulder to Shoulder with all who serve'

Poppy Appeal 2012

The time is almost upon us for the launch of the 2012 Poppy Appeal. The Poppy is the symbol of Remembrance and of the Poppy Appeal and in late October Poppy Collectors will appear so, everyone who wishes to, may make a donation and wear their Poppy for Remembrance.

Our welfare work is a life line for thousands of serving and ex-Service people and we can only do this with help from people like you, who donate. Please make a donation to the Poppy Appeal this year – no gift is too small to make a difference.

Once again many beneficiaries living in Spain have received assistance over the past 12 months and the following comments from one such beneficiary demonstrate the difference your kind donations can make. ***"I can't thank you and the caseworker enough for the hard work on our behalf. I never in a million years thought we would be awarded the stair lift, it's like a dreamFor someone to care this much to make such a difference to our lives is unbelievable.....We will never be able to repay TRBL but we will always be eternally grateful for your help"***

Launching the 2012 Poppy Appeal

District North-Spain

The launch of the 2012 poppy appeal in District North-Spain took place on 10th October in Orihuela Costa. Local dignitaries and press were invited and the Standards were paraded accompanied by the Torreveja Pipes and Drums. Last year the District Poppy Appeal raised a staggering **134,131€** - an increase of more than 25%. Can we do it again this year? We think we can.

A Lunch to Launch: District South-Spain

A lunch to launch the 2012 poppy appeal in District South-Spain was held at the Tamisa Golf Hotel on Sunday 14th October at 1.30 pm.

Welfare enquiries, please contact Donna Wilson – Country Welfare Officer Tel: +34 902 109 356, Email: dmwilson@britishlegion.org.uk

For further information regarding the Poppy Appeal 2012 in Spain and details of Remembrance services please visit the following websites:

www.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/spain-north or
www.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/spain-south

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