

Pension, Benefit and Healthcare Team



WHAT IS BENEFIT THEFT?

The vast majority of people who claim UK benefits are honest, law-abiding citizens. But there are those who try to cheat the system.

People who are in receipt of UK benefits have a responsibility to keep the authorities informed of **any** change in their circumstances, as this can affect their claim and the amount they receive. If a person knowingly or deliberately withholds information about a change in their circumstances, such as moving in with a partner, starting work, or moving abroad, they are committing benefit theft.

The Department for Work and Pensions estimates that between April 2010 and March 2011, benefit cheats stole £79 million from UK taxpayers by not informing the authorities that they were going abroad. Spain is one of the countries where most benefit fraud is committed.

But benefit cheats are being caught and the consequences are serious. They include being asked to repay the benefit money, having the benefit stopped, a criminal record and possibly even a prison sentence.

KNOW THE FACTS

There are certain "non-exportable" benefits that you cannot receive if you do not normally live in the UK. These benefits are usually means-tested and include:

- Pension Credit
- Council Tax Benefit
- Income Support
- Housing Benefit
- Means-tested Incapacity Benefit/Employment Support Allowance

If you are in receipt of any of these benefits but now live or spend prolonged periods of time in Spain, contact the authority that pays your benefit to check that your claim is correct.

More information can be found at www.direct.gov.uk

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

At a time when it is more important than ever that the correct money goes to the correct people, the general public can help stop the benefit cheats.

The Department for Work and Pensions has set up a free and confidential hotline which you can call to give information about anyone that you suspect of committing UK benefit fraud.

The hotline number in Spain is **900 554 440**.

You can also report suspected benefit fraud online by visiting our website of the month

<https://secure.dwp.gov.uk/benefitfraud/>

TARGETING BENEFIT THIEVES

National Benefit Fraud Hotline 0800 854 440 – or 0800 678 3722 for Welsh speakers – Textphone users call 0800 328 0512

Cymraeg

Benefit thieves going abroad

It's not if we catch you, it's when

There is no hiding place for anyone who thinks they can get away with stealing benefits while they are abroad.

If you go abroad

Remember – if you claim benefits and go abroad, for any amount of time, you must



British Consular
network,
Spain

The British Consular Network, Spain

NOTARIAL WORK BY APPOINTMENT

Notarial work in Alicante is changing! If you are thinking about getting married in Spain, importing your vehicle or need any other official certificate from the British Consulate in Alicante, please be aware that as from 1st December 2011 this Consulate will be implementing an appointment system.

The appointment system will mean that you can avoid queuing and will ensure that the Consulate can deliver the service in a more customer-friendly and efficient manner.

Anyone who is planning to go to the Consulate in Alicante for a notarial appointment should, from December 1st onwards, contact us on 902 109 356 (alternative number 913 342 194). An on-line appointment system will be introduced shortly.

PLEASE NOTE: Other Consulates may already operate or soon move to an appointment system for notarial work. Before going to any Consulate, check the latest information on www.ukinspain.fco.gov.uk or call us on the above number.



The Royal British Legion (TRBL)

'Shoulder to shoulder with all who Serve'



THE 2011 POPPY APPEAL

The 2011 Poppy Appeal needs to raise £40 million - £4 million more than last year's record amount of £36 million.

Many of you give generously to the Poppy Appeal each year – these are a few examples of where the money raised goes:

- The Legion has committed £50 million over 10 years to pay for the creation and operation of The Royal British Battle Back Centre and to fund operating costs of the Personnel Recovery Centres.
- The Legion spends £1.4 million a week delivering welfare support to serving and ex –Service people young and old and their families.
- The Legion's Campaigns have resulted in more than £40 million extra being paid to those injured in service.
- Over 11,000 Legion beneficiaries in temporary crisis received £6.1 million—worth of groceries, clothing, and furniture and property repairs.
- Over 400 Service leavers received loans, grants and mentoring to start their own business
- This year, the Legion awarded £5.6 million in grants, including £2.6 million for a 10-bed *Poppy Wing* for seriously injured service people.
- Nearly a quarter of those helped by the Legion are less than 44 years of age and half are below retirement age.

The Legion also has many beneficiaries residing in Spain, who have received welfare assistance through the money raised by the Poppy Appeal.

A Gala Dinner in District Spain South to commemorate the Legion's 90th Anniversary and to launch their Poppy Appeal
Photo L-R: Eddie Hefferman, Overseas Trustee, David Harpin, Poppy Appeal Officer, Steve Jones, British Consul, Chris Simpkins, Director General of the Legion & Chris Wright, Chairman of District South



CONTACT US!

For all welfare enquiries, please contact Donna Wilson at dmwilson@britishlegion.org.uk.

ACASA - Age Concern Acción Social y Asistencial



ACASA'S ANNUAL MEETING WITH UK CHARITIES

On 12 October 2011, ACASA hosted a meeting in London of representatives of the UK Charities with which we work. Judy Arnold-Boakes, ACASA President, chaired the meeting as she has done for 16 years, albeit previously as Age Concern España.

The members of ACASA's Executive Committee were there as was its Country Manager, Kim Stollard, and its Almonisation Officer, Pat Neal. Attendees included representatives of UK military and non-military charities, all of which have existing and potential clients living in Spain. The meeting was extremely useful with those present discussing issues affecting their clients in Spain and how they can assist in resolving their problems. Judy also took advantage of being in London to visit several charities at their offices for discussions.

ACASA's relationships with the UK Charities is vital to our work and, after the 16 years of annual meetings, those relationships are built on mutual trust and respect such that the UK Charities accept ACASA as an 'honest broker' between them and their clients in Spain.

Members of the ACASA Executive Committee (from L-R) Judy Arnold-Boakes, President; Angela Keay, Secretary; Oscar Franklin, International Programme Manager for Age UK and Sarah-Jane Morris, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Consular Network Manager for Southern Europe, and ACASA Treasurer. Liz Prosser, Branch Director, SSAFA Forces Help, is also an ACASA Executive Committee member, but was not able to be present in Madrid.



CONTACT US!

Call 902 00 38 38 between 10am and 2pm, Monday to Friday, email info@ageconcern-espana.org

No Newsletter Next Month!

The Partners' Newsletter will be taking a break next month but will return in January 2012. The New Year will also see the newsletter published on a quarterly, rather than monthly, basis.

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