

# Going abroad

and social security benefits



**A basic guide to  
benefits if you are  
going abroad permanently  
or for a temporary stay**

# Going abroad and social security benefits

If you are getting a social security benefit and are going abroad, you need to know how this will affect you. This leaflet tells you how benefits are affected, whether you are going abroad for a temporary stay or permanently.

With many benefits it will make a difference whether your stay abroad is temporary or permanent. Some benefits can continue while you are abroad, some can continue for a certain period as long as your stay abroad is temporary, and some will stop straight away.

The **most important** thing is to let your social security office know that you are going abroad. We will tell you if this affects your benefits.

If you are a serving member of HM Armed Forces abroad, the rules for some benefits are different. If you want more information, get leaflet **GL26** *Service families*.

If you have a question which is not answered in the leaflet, or if you just want more advice, please contact your social security office or Jobcentre Plus office. See *Where to get help and advice* on page 15 of this leaflet for details.

## Other formats

This leaflet is also available in large print, braille, on audio cassette and in the following languages:

- Arabic
- Bengali
- Chinese
- Gujarati
- Punjabi
- Somali
- Urdu
- Vietnamese.

You can also get these from your social security office.

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The law relating to Child Benefit changed from April 2003.

For further details write to Child Benefit Office, PO Box 1, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE88 1AA. Telephone **0845 302 1444**. Textphone **0845 302 1474**.

## Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit

Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Working Tax Credit (WTC) were introduced in April 2003. CTC is for families with children and is payable regardless of whether the adult(s) in the family are in work. WTC supports working people on low and middle incomes with extra amounts for people with disabilities. Tax credits are administered by and claimed from the Inland Revenue.

To find out more, see the tax credits website at [www.taxcredits.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/Home.aspx](http://www.taxcredits.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/Home.aspx) or contact the helpline on **0845 300 3900** (open 7 days a week 8am-8pm).

# Definitions

**Great Britain (GB)** means England, Scotland and Wales.

**United Kingdom (UK)** means GB and Northern Ireland.

The **European Economic Area (EEA)** is made up of all **European Union (EU)** countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, the Republic of Ireland, Spain, Sweden and the UK, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Switzerland is not a member of the EEA, but as a result of an agreement with the EU that came into force on 1 June 2002, the EC rules on social security will also apply to Switzerland. Gibraltar is treated as a separate state for social security purposes.

## Benefits you may be able to get in other countries

This leaflet gives the general rules for people going abroad. If you are going to another country in the European Economic Area (EEA), Switzerland or a country which has a special arrangement with the UK, you might be able to get a benefit which you would not normally get abroad. Or you might be able to get a benefit which that country provides. For most benefits provided by other countries, under these special arrangements, you will have to have paid National Insurance (NI) contributions in the UK.

If you are going to another country in the EEA, or to one of the countries listed on this page, get the leaflet for the country you are going to.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Leaflet</b>
Countries in the European Community, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland	<b>SA29</b>
Barbados	<b>SA43</b>
Bermuda	<b>SA23</b>
Canada	<b>SA20</b>
Cyprus	<b>SA12</b>
Israel	<b>SA14</b>
Jamaica	<b>SA27</b>
Jersey and Guernsey	<b>SA4</b>
Malta	<b>SA11</b>
Mauritius	<b>SA38</b>
New Zealand	<b>SA8</b>
Philippines	<b>SA42</b>
Switzerland	<b>SA6</b>
Turkey	<b>SA22</b>
USA	<b>SA33</b>
Yugoslavia*	<b>SA17</b>

\*applies to the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

From 1 June 2003, non EEA or Swiss nationals who move from one EU State to another have new rights. The rules for each benefit are different. You will need to have been legally resident in the UK. If you want to know more about the provisions for non EEA or Swiss nationals, write to:

Department for Work and Pensions  
The Pension Service  
International Pension Centre  
Tyneview Park  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne  
NE98 1BA

or telephone **0191 213 5000**.

# Your UK benefits when you go abroad

## State Pension

## Bereavement Allowance

## Widowed Parent's Allowance

The Widow's Benefit scheme only applies to women bereaved before 9 April 2001. For all other cases, the Bereavement scheme began on 9 April 2001. For information on the Widow's Benefit scheme please contact your social security office or Jobcentre Plus office.

- You can continue to get your State Pension, Bereavement Allowance or Widowed Parent's Allowance anywhere in the world.
- If you get Widowed Parent's Allowance and go abroad permanently, you may only get benefit for your child or children if you are in an EEA country, or certain other countries which have a special agreement with the UK.
- If you go abroad permanently, you may only get yearly increases in your benefit if you are in an EEA country or some of the other countries which have a special agreement with the UK. You can get more information about this from the leaflets listed in **Benefits you may be able to get in other countries** on page 5 of this leaflet.

## How you get these benefits

### If you are going abroad for 3 months or less:

- If you have your benefit paid into an account, this can continue.
- If you have an order book, you will be able to cash the orders when you return to the UK.

### If you are going abroad for 6 months or less:

- If you have your benefit paid into an account, this can continue. You can then arrange to transfer the money abroad.
- If you have an order book, cash the orders up to the day you leave the UK and return the book to your social security office or Jobcentre Plus office. You can ask us to pay the money into an account, or we will pay your benefit as a lump sum when you return to the UK.

### If you are going abroad for between 6 and 12 months:

- If you have your benefit paid into an account, this can continue. You can then arrange to transfer the money abroad.
- If you prefer we can pay your benefit as a lump sum when you return to the UK.

### If you are going abroad for more than 12 months or permanently:

- We can pay your benefit straight into your overseas account in some countries.

- If this is not possible, we can pay your benefit into a UK account or we can send a cheque (in sterling) at the end of every 4 or 13 weeks. We can send this straight to you, your overseas bank or someone else outside the UK chosen by you.
- If you are away for less than 2 years we can pay your benefit as a lump sum when you return to the UK.
- If your benefit is £5.00 a week or less and is paid once a year, we will continue to pay it in this way while you are abroad.
- Your first payment after you leave the UK may be delayed, but we will make every effort to keep any delay as short as possible.

## Winter Fuel Payments

- Winter Fuel Payments and the new 80+ Annual Payment can in certain circumstances be paid to people living in the EEA, Switzerland or Gibraltar. To qualify you must have been entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment whilst normally living in the UK before moving to another EEA country, Switzerland or Gibraltar.
- To get a Winter Fuel Payment you must be aged 60 or over during the relevant qualifying week for the winter you are claiming for. There are also some exceptions. The qualifying week is the week beginning with the third Monday in September.

- If you are aged 80 or over during the qualifying week and you are entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment, you will also be entitled to the 80+ Annual Payment.
- If you go abroad permanently to a country outside the EEA, Switzerland, or Gibraltar, you can only receive a Winter Fuel Payment for any winter if you were normally living in Great Britain or Northern Ireland during the relevant qualifying week for that winter.
- If you have access to the internet, you can visit our website at **[www.thepensionerservice.gov.uk/winterfuel](http://www.thepensionerservice.gov.uk/winterfuel)** or for further information contact the Winter Fuel Payment Centre, Southgate House, Cardiff Central, Royal Mail, Cardiff CF91 1ZH, telephone 029 2042 8635 (8.30am–4.30pm Monday to Friday) **or** 44 29 2042 8635 when dialling from abroad.

## Bereavement Payment

The Widow's Benefit scheme ceased on 8 April 2001 and the Bereavement scheme began on 9 April 2001 for all new claims.

- If you are entitled to a Bereavement Payment, you can get it anywhere in the world.
- If your husband or wife died while you were both abroad, you can only get a Bereavement Payment if:
  - you qualify for Bereavement Allowance or Widowed Parent's Allowance **or**
  - you return to Great Britain (GB) permanently within 4 weeks of your husband's or wife's death.

## How you get this benefit

Bereavement Payment is a lump sum one-off payment. You can ask us to pay it into a bank or building society account or send it to your address in the UK. If you prefer, you can ask us to send it to someone else for you.

## Maternity Allowance

## Incapacity Benefit

## Severe Disablement Allowance

- If you are going abroad permanently you cannot usually get Maternity Allowance, Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance. However, if you go to an EEA country or certain other countries this may not be the case. For EEA countries get SA29 and for other countries see the list on page 5.
- If your stay abroad is temporary, you can get Maternity Allowance, Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance paid abroad for the first 26 weeks as long as:
  - you have gone abroad only for treatment of an illness or disability which began before you went abroad (pregnancy itself is not counted as an illness), or
  - you were incapable of work for at least 6 months before you left the UK, and have been continuously incapable of work since then.

- You may be able to get Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance paid abroad for more than 26 weeks if your stay abroad is temporary and you get Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance, see page 9.
- If you are going to another EEA country, get leaflet **SA29** *Your social security insurance, benefits and health care rights in the European Community, and in Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland*.
- If you are going to a country outside the EEA, you may be able to get a special leaflet for that country. See the list on page 5.

## How you get these benefits

- If you have your benefit paid into an account, this can continue.
- If you usually collect your benefit at a post office, you can ask us to pay the money into an account, you can ask us to pay your benefit to someone else for you while you are abroad, or we will pay your benefit as a lump sum when you return to the UK.
- If this is not possible, we can send a cheque (in sterling) to an address abroad at the end of every 4 weeks.

## Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)

- If you work for a UK employer in the EEA you will usually be able to get SMP as long as you qualify under the general rules. If you want information on the

general rules, get leaflet **BC2** *Expecting a baby?* from your Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus or social security office.

- If you work outside the EEA you may be able to get SMP if your employer pays NI contributions for you.

### How you get this benefit

Your employer will arrange to pay your SMP.

### Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

- If you work for a UK employer in the EEA, you will usually be able to get SSP as long as you qualify under the general rules. If you want information on the general rules, get leaflet **SD2** *Sick and unable to work?* from your social security office or Jobcentre or Jobcentre Plus office.
- If you work outside the EEA you may be able to get SSP if your employer pays NI contributions for you.

### How you get this benefit

Your employer will arrange to pay your SSP.

### Disability Living Allowance

### Attendance Allowance

- If you are going abroad permanently you cannot usually get Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance.

- If you started to get Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance before 1 June 1992, you may be able to carry on getting it if you live in the EEA.
- If your stay abroad is temporary, you can usually continue getting Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance for 26 weeks.
- You may be able to continue getting Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance for longer if you are going abroad only for medical treatment for your illness or disability. Your stay must still be temporary.

### How you get these benefits

- If you have your benefit paid into an account, this can continue. Otherwise, we will save your benefit and pay it to you when you return to the UK.

### Industrial Injuries

### Disablement Benefit

- You can continue to get Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit anywhere in the world.
- If you get Constant Attendance Allowance, you can continue to get it for 6 months if your stay abroad is temporary. This can be longer in special circumstances. For more information contact the International Pension Centre. ▶ address see page 14.

## How you get this benefit

- We will pay your benefit at the end of every 4 weeks or every 13 weeks.
- We can pay your benefit straight into an overseas account in some countries.
- If this is not possible, we can send you a cheque (in sterling) or we can pay your benefit to someone else for you while you are abroad.

## Reduced Earnings Allowance

- If you are going abroad permanently to a country outside the EEA, you cannot get Reduced Earnings Allowance.
- If your stay abroad is temporary, you can usually get Reduced Earnings Allowance for the first 3 months. This can be longer in special circumstances. For more information contact the International Pension Centre.  
▶ address see page 14.
- If you are going to another EEA country, get leaflet **SA29** *Your social security insurance, benefits and health care rights in the European Community, and in Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.*

## How you get this benefit

The arrangements are the same as for Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit.

## Carer's Allowance

- If you are going abroad permanently you cannot get Carer's Allowance.

- If your stay abroad is temporary, you can usually continue getting Carer's Allowance for 4 weeks.
- You may be able to continue getting Carer's Allowance for longer if you are going abroad only to help the person you care for, and the person can still be paid Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance. Your stay must still be temporary.
- You may also be able to continue getting Carer's Allowance if the person you care for is getting Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance paid during a permanent stay in an EEA country.  
▶ see page 9

## How you get this benefit

- If you have your benefit paid into an account, this can continue. Otherwise, we will save your benefit and pay it to you when you return to the UK.

## Child Benefit and Guardian's Allowance

### If you or your child leave the UK permanently:

- Your Child Benefit and Guardian's Allowance will stop from the date of your departure.
- You must let the Child Benefit Office know straight away and return your order book if you have one.
- If your child is staying in the UK and will be living with someone else, that person should claim the Child Benefit.

### **If you go abroad temporarily:**

- that is for 52 weeks or less, Child Benefit can be paid for up to eight weeks; or
- remain abroad because you are, or a member of your family is, receiving treatment for an illness or disability, or a member of your family has died, Child Benefit can be paid for up to 12 weeks.

### **If your child goes abroad temporarily:**

- Child Benefit can be paid for up to 12 weeks.
- It can be paid for more than 12 weeks if the only reason the child is abroad is to:
  - receive full-time education in Switzerland or an EEA country **or**
  - take part in an educational exchange or foreign visit with written approval of the school or college they normally attend **or**
  - receive medical treatment for an illness which began before the child left the UK.

### **If the child is born outside the United Kingdom:**

- If a woman has a baby whilst she is temporarily abroad, Child Benefit may be payable up to the 12th week following the date the woman is first absent from the UK.
- If you wish to claim while you are still abroad, write to the Child Benefit Office.

### **How you get these benefits:**

- If you qualify for Child Benefit whilst you are outside the UK and your benefit is paid into an account, it will continue. We cannot pay Child Benefit into an account abroad.

- If you have an order book and your temporary absence is for less than eight weeks, you can cash the orders when you return to the UK.
- If your absence is for more than eight weeks but less than 53 weeks, you can ask for the payment to be made straight into your bank or building society account in the UK.

For further details, write to Child Benefit Office, PO Box 1, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE88 1AA, telephone 0845 302 1444, textphone 0845 302 1474.

## **Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance**

- You cannot usually get contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance outside the EEA.
- You may be able to get contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance in the EEA for up to 3 months if you:
  - are entitled to contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance on the day you go abroad
  - have registered as a jobseeker for at least 4 weeks before you leave. This can be less in special circumstances
  - are available for work and actively seeking work in Great Britain up to the day you leave
  - are going abroad to look for work
  - register for work at the equivalent of a Jobcentre in the country you are going to within 7 days of last claiming Jobseeker's Allowance in the UK. If you do not, you may lose benefit
  - follow the other country's system for claiming benefit, and

- follow the other country's benefit rules, such as being available for and actively seeking work, that would have applied if you had stayed in the UK.
- The rules are different if you get a training allowance. For more information contact your Jobcentre or Jobcentre Plus office.
- Ask at your Jobcentre for leaflet **JSA122** or at your Jobcentre Plus office for leaflet **PFLJSA122** *Jobseeker's Allowance: People going abroad or coming from abroad.*

### How you get this benefit

Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance is paid by the equivalent of the Jobcentre in the EEA country you are living in. There may be a delay in paying you.

### Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance

- If you are going abroad permanently you cannot get income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance can only be paid in special circumstances while you are abroad for a temporary stay. For more information contact your social security office or Jobcentre Plus office.

### Income Support

- If you are going abroad permanently you cannot get Income Support.

- If your stay abroad is temporary, you may be able to get Income Support for the first 4 weeks you are abroad. You can only do this if you are unlikely to be abroad for more than 52 weeks, would still qualify for Income Support if you had stayed in the UK, and one of the following applies to you:
  - you are a lone parent, a carer or are pregnant
  - you are incapable of work because of sickness or disability and you have gone abroad only for treatment for that sickness or disability
  - on the day absence began, you have been incapable of work for 365 days (or 196 days in the case of terminal illness).
  - you get a pensioner or disability premium for a partner who is going abroad with you.
- You may be able to get Income Support for the first 8 weeks if:
  - you, or you and a member of your family, are going abroad only to help a dependant who is going abroad for medical treatment from a qualified person, **and**
  - you are unlikely to be abroad for more than 52 weeks, **and**
  - you would still qualify for Income Support if you had stayed in the UK.

### How you get this benefit

You will usually get the money when you return, unless you arrange for the payment to be sent to someone who has stayed in Great Britain (GB), usually your partner. We will not send payments of Income Support to you while you are abroad.

## Pension Credit

- If you are going abroad permanently you cannot get Pension Credit.
- If your stay abroad is temporary, and you would still qualify for Pension Credit if you had stayed in Great Britain, you can continue to get Pension Credit for the first 4 weeks you are abroad. You can only do this if you are unlikely to be abroad for more than 52 weeks.
- If you are going abroad for NHS-funded medical treatment you can continue to get Pension Credit for the duration of your treatment.
- If you are going abroad to accompany a child who is going abroad for medical treatment from a qualified person, you may be able to keep Pension Credit for up to 8 weeks if the child normally lives with you. (A child is someone for whom Child Benefit could be paid.) You can only do this if you are unlikely to be abroad for more than 52 weeks and you would still qualify for Pension Credit if you had stayed in Great Britain.

## How you get this benefit

If you have your Pension Credit paid into an account, this can continue. If not, you will usually get the money when you return, unless you arrange for payment to be sent to someone who has stayed in Great Britain, usually your partner. We cannot send payments to you while you are abroad.

## Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

- If you go for a temporary stay abroad, you may be able to continue to get Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit for a maximum of 13 weeks.
- You can only do this if all of the following apply to you:
  - you intend to come back and live in the same home
  - you will not be away for more than 13 weeks
  - the part of the home where you usually live is not let or sub-let to anyone else while you are away.
- If you are going to be away from home for more than 2 or 3 weeks, always let your local council Housing Benefit section know.
- In certain circumstances you may be able to continue getting Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit for up to 52 weeks while you are abroad. For example, this could be if you are going abroad to receive approved medical care. Check with your local council Housing Benefit section.
- Your Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit can only continue while you are abroad if you still qualify under the general rules.

## What to do

Let us know as soon as you can that you are going abroad. You can usually do this by contacting your social security office or Jobcentre Plus office.

Remember, if going abroad will affect your benefit, you must let us know that you are going abroad.

If you need any information when you are abroad, contact:

International Pension Centre  
Department for Work and Pensions  
Tyneview Park  
Benton  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne  
NE98 1BA.

UK phone **0191 213 5000**

UK fax **0191 218 3836**

Outside UK dial international code, then  
phone **44 191 213 5000**  
fax **44 191 218 3836**.

## Where to get help and advice

To get more information or other leaflets get in touch with your social security office or Jobcentre Plus office. For your nearest social security office or Jobcentre Plus office look for the **Jobcentre Plus, social security or Jobcentre** display advert in the business numbers section of the phone book.

You can get more information from the DWP website. The address is: **[www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)**

To contact us by email see the *Contact Us* section of the website.

### **Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit**

Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Working Tax Credit (WTC) were introduced in April 2003. CTC is for families with children and is payable regardless of whether the adult(s) in the family are in work. WTC supports working people on low and middle incomes with extra amounts for people with disabilities. Tax credits are administered by and claimed from the Inland Revenue.

To find out more, see the tax credits website at **[www.taxcredits.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/Home.aspx](http://www.taxcredits.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/Home.aspx)** or contact the helpline on **0845 300 3900** (open 7 days a week 8am-8pm).

You can get information about benefits from other leaflets:

**SD1 Sick or disabled.** A basic guide to benefits and tax credits for people of any age with a physical or mental illness or disability – and people who look after them

**RM1 Retirement.** A basic guide to benefits for people who are retiring or have retired

**WK1 Financial help if you work or are looking for work.** A basic guide to benefits and back to work schemes if you are working, looking for work or starting a job – including voluntary work

**GL23 Social security benefit rates.**

Remember that this leaflet is a general guide to benefits and is not a full and authoritative statement of the law. We have made every effort to ensure that the information in this leaflet is correct at the date shown on the cover. However, changes in the law may make the leaflet become gradually less accurate.

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