

Pension, Benefit and Healthcare Team



DWP



ACCEPTANCE OF THE EHIC

As we have highlighted previously, the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) is designed to cover a person for necessary treatment in a public hospital whilst they are on a temporary stay in another country.

Unfortunately, there have been cases in Spain in which a customer has been asked to pay a deposit and/or sign a payment agreement at a public hospital despite producing a valid EHIC. In these cases the hospital wished to charge the cost of treatment back to the customer's travel insurance, rather than accepting the EHIC.

While taking out travel insurance is important, private medical insurance should not take precedence over the EHIC, providing the card is valid and being used in the correct way. If you, or someone you know, has had their EHIC refused at a public Spanish hospital, it may be possible to apply for a refund of any costs incurred via the Overseas Healthcare Team who can be contacted on 0044 191 218 1999.

ASK THE TEAM!

The longest serving member of the team, Martyn works alongside Laura as one half of PBHT Alicante. Here he reminds us what the Pension, Benefit and Healthcare Team can and cannot do to help customers in Spain:

How can the PBHT assist British ex-pats living in Spain?

The team primarily provides up to date, general information on customers' social security rights and responsibilities in Spain. Another important part of our role is liaising between the UK and Spanish authorities in complex cases.

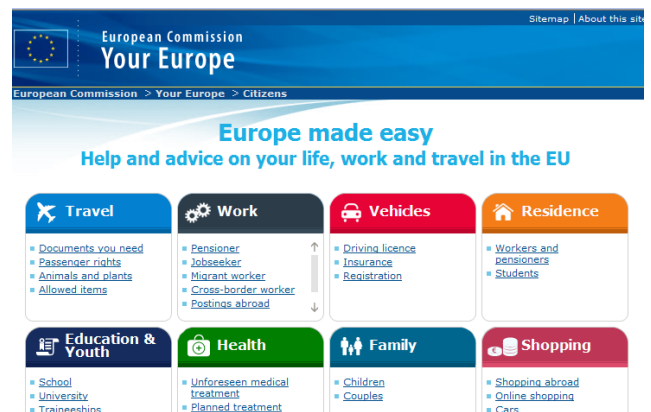
What can't the team help with?

We cannot process individual claims or provide pension forecasts – in these cases customers should contact the relevant UK authority. Unfortunately, we are also unable to answer questions on tax. It is such a specialist area so we advise customers to seek advice from the experts.

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/index_en.htm

Our website of the month for September really has something for everyone. The Your Europe section of the European Commission (EC) website is specifically for those who are working, living and travelling within the EU. For example, if you want to know more about social security and tax matters as a worker in another EU country, or are looking for a job abroad, see the 'Work' section. Or perhaps you want to know more about accessing healthcare whilst living or travelling in Europe? There's a great healthcare section too! And while you're on the internet, why not also browse the rest of the EC website – the amount of useful information, including specific information for Spain, may surprise you!



British Consular
network,
Spain

The British Consular Network, Spain

KEEPING AN EYE ON YOUR PASSPORT

Do you know where your passport is right now? For the majority, the answer is probably yes. But if the question was 'Do you know when your passport expires?' the positive responses would probably drop rapidly.

'Being aware of when your passport expires is becoming increasingly important', says Andy Hamilton, Head of the Regional Passport Centre in Madrid. 'If you don't have a valid passport, and need to travel urgently, you'll have to pay for an emergency passport, which is an expense most of us could do without. We understand that it's not always easy or convenient to send your passport in to be renewed at the exact point it expires, which is why customers can send in their renewal application any time in the 9 months before without losing any validity'.

'Over the next couple of years, customers will see some changes to the current passport service. We're working toward a single system where all customers can apply directly to the UK, something our customers tell us they want. During this period of transition, keeping an eye on when your passport expires will be really important to ensure you're not unduly inconvenienced'. More information on the upcoming changes can be found on our website, <http://ukinspain.fco.gov.uk>.

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'



Derek on his mobility scooter

DEREK'S STORY

Derek moved to Spain, as a widower, 12 years ago in good health. Unfortunately, due to a chronic medical condition, Derek's mobility gradually deteriorated to the point where he could no longer drive and depended on a zimmer frame to move around his home.

Having been an independent and sociable gentleman all his life, it was frustrating for Derek to find himself house bound and dependent on friends for his shopping and transport.

A concerned individual suggested Derek could approach the Legion for assistance as he had completed National Service.

Once contact had been made, one of our trained Legion caseworkers visited Derek in his home to complete an application form and produce a report, which was passed to the Country Welfare Officer for consideration. A Técnico Ortopédico then visited Derek in his home to make an assessment of his needs and to recommend a suitable model of Mobility Scooter for him.

As Derek fulfilled all the requirements to qualify for assistance and clearly had a need, the Legion was delighted to award Derek the grant he required. Furthermore, through the process of almonisation, a contribution towards the overall cost was provided by The Kings Royal Hussars Regimental Trust. Derek served with the 11 Hussars, Royal Armoured Corps and was very moved by the fact that his former Regiment was willing to help and remember him in this way.

Since receiving his mobility scooter, Derek feels that he has indeed regained his independence. His social life has also improved as the marvellous Legion caseworker assigned to his case has made arrangements for Derek to attend regular meetings of his local branch of TRBL.

Thank you to all who donate to The Royal British Legion, making it possible for us to assist those who are serving and have served.

ACASA - Age Concern Acción Social y Asistencial



THE CASEWORK PROCESS: ALMONISATION

To describe a little more about the casework process at ACASA, Patricia Neal, Almonisation Officer, has provided a description of what 'almonisation' (the sourcing of funds from charities which is then given to clients as a grant) involves.

"It is difficult to know whether almonisation falls into the category of a science or an art! However, without a doubt, its success or failure in obtaining the best results for a client depends on the amount of information provided by the client and the information written down by the caseworker in his/her report.

ACASA works closely with local Social Services, etc., and the first stage of almonisation is to request, if appropriate, whatever is available from that source. ACASA also has a wealth of knowledge and contacts built up over the years which enables me in most cases to identify the correct charity or charities for a client.



Patricia Neal – Almonisation Officer, ACASA

An application is submitted for consideration and we hope for a favourable response. Most charities are extremely busy in this present economic climate and it sometimes takes a while before a reply is received.

If a grant is made, many charities ask ACASA to administer this on their behalf. This is usually done by electronic transfer to the clients account. However, if the client has asked for assistance in, for example, purchasing spectacles, dental treatment or a fridge, arrangements are made with the provider direct and the item is purchased by ACASA on behalf of the charity.

Sadly there are times when, try as I might, it is impossible to match a client's employment history to a charity and there is nothing that can be done to help through charitable sources. This is when it is so important that a British citizen is legally resident and has registered with his/her local town hall, i.e. on the Padrón. This will ensure that he/she is eligible for whatever help is available from the local Social Services."

Working in Partnership

The Pension, Benefit and Healthcare Team and the British Consulate in Alicante are holding a **Consulate in the Community** event on **September 8th 2011**. More details and booking information: <http://ukinspain.fco.gov.uk>.

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