

Disability Law Service
Fighting injustice for disabled people

Taking Your Benefits **Abroad**

General rules when travelling abroad

Different benefits have different rules – some benefits can be taken abroad to certain countries, while others cannot.

Whether or not you will be able to keep receiving your benefit when you go abroad will often depend on two factors:

1) **Temporary or Permanent absence:** The first is whether your absence is classed as temporary or permanent.

2) **Country of travel:** The second is your destination – as there are different rules for different countries.

If you do decide to travel abroad and wish to continue receiving your benefits, then it is very important you inform the **Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)** which oversees your benefit(s).

This is because:

- a) you can make sure there have been no recent policy or law changes; and
- b) that they are happy for you to receive your benefit abroad.

This can save unnecessary problems for yourself and you will be able to iron out any possible problems before you travel.

Who to contact if you are going abroad

Inform your Job Centre Plus or the office that pays your benefit. If the move is only temporary, tell them when you are coming back.

You must also inform HMRC if you are leaving the UK.

Claiming your benefits abroad

Claiming benefits in an EEA country or Switzerland

If you're living in or planning to go to an EEA country or Switzerland you may be able to get some UK benefits.

If you're going to (or are already living in) a European Economic Area (EEA) country or a country with a special agreement with the UK, you may be able to claim:

- UK-based benefits
- benefits provided by the country you're going to

You can also claim your State Pension abroad.

Other countries with UK benefits arrangements

You can claim certain benefits in these countries, but this will depend on the given country.

The countries listed have social security agreements with the UK:

- Barbados
- Bermuda
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Canada
- Channel Islands
- Gibraltar
- Israel
- Jamaica
- Kosovo
- Mauritius
- Montenegro
- New Zealand
- North Macedonia
- the Philippines
- Serbia
- Turkey
- USA

Benefits you can claim abroad

1. Universal Credit

If you go abroad, you can get Universal Credit for one month.

Eligibility requirements:

- You must be eligible for Universal Credit when going abroad
- You must remain eligible while abroad
- You must inform your work coach that you are going

You cannot get Universal Credit if you are already abroad and if you are moving abroad permanently

Please note that if a close relative dies while you are already abroad and it would not be reasonable to come back to the UK, you can get Universal Credit for another month.

If you go abroad for medical treatment, you can get Universal Credit for up to 6 months.

Eligibility requirements

- You go abroad for medical treatment
- You go abroad for a period of recovery that's been approved by a medical professional (also known as 'approved convalescence')
- Your partner or child is going abroad for medical treatment or 'approved convalescence' and you're going with them

Different rules for claiming Universal Credit while abroad

Civil servant, diplomat and member of armed forces

You may be able to make a claim or keep getting Universal Credit while you're abroad if:

- you're abroad due to work duties, for example posted abroad in the armed forces
- the UK was your main home immediately before you were sent abroad (you were 'habitually resident' in the UK)

You need to tell your work coach before you go abroad. They'll tell you which things from your 'claimant commitment' you need to keep doing while you're abroad.

Mariner and continental shelf worker

If you're entitled to Universal Credit when you go abroad, you can continue to get it for up to 6 months.

2. Jobseeker's Allowance

There are 2 types of Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA); New Style JSA and Income-based JSA. Please note that you cannot get income-based JSA abroad.

European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland

You may receive New Style JSA for up to 3 months.

Eligibility requirements:

- You are entitled to it on the day you go abroad
- You register as a job seeker at least 4 weeks before you leave
- You are looking for work in the UK up to the day you leave
- You are going abroad to look for work
- You register at the equivalent of a Job centre in the country you're going to
- You follow the other country's rules on registering and looking for work
- You are covered by the Withdrawal Agreement

Country not in the EEA

If you have paid enough National Insurance contributions in the UK, you may get unemployment benefits in the following countries:

- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Channel Islands
- Kosovo
- Macedonia
- Montenegro
- New Zealand
- Serbia

Please note that the specific eligibility and conditions will depend on the country.

For help and advice on claiming JSA abroad, please contact the **International Pension Centre**:

International Pension Centre

Telephone: +44 (0) 191 206 9390

British Sign Language (BSL) [video relay service](#)

Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 3.30pm

3. Maternity and childcare benefits

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)

If you work for a UK employer in the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland, you may get SMP as long as you're eligible for it.

If you are moving, or thinking of moving, to an EU, EEA country or Switzerland the rules for paying some UK benefits in the EU, EEA or Switzerland changed from 1 January 2021. But you should still get Statutory Maternity Pay in these countries.

If you work in a different country, you can still get SMP as long as your employer pays UK National Insurance contributions for you.

Talk to your employer about claiming SMP.

Maternity Allowance

If you cannot get SMP, you might be eligible for [Maternity Allowance](#).

If you're eligible, you may get Maternity Allowance in an EEA country or Switzerland.

You may also be able to claim it in:

- Barbados
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Channel Islands
- Gibraltar
- Israel
- Kosovo
- Macedonia
- Montenegro
- Serbia
- Turkey

Ask your **local Job Centre Plus** for more information.

Child-related benefits

You may also get the following in an EEA country or Switzerland if you're eligible:

- Child Benefit
- Tax credits
- Guardian's Allowance (you can claim this if you're getting Child Benefit for a child whose parents have both died)

4. Illness and injury benefits

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

You can get SSP if you're eligible for it and either of the following apply:

- You work for a UK employer in the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland
- You work outside the EEA and your employer pays National Insurance contributions for you

Contact your employer to claim SSP.

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

You can get ESA for up to 4 weeks if you go abroad. Talk to your local Jobcentre Plus before you go.

Going abroad for **more than 4 weeks, but less than 1 year**

Tell your local Jobcentre Plus if you're going abroad for more than 4 weeks.

You can carry on getting contribution-based ESA for up to 26 weeks if you're going abroad for medical treatment for yourself or your child.

It does not matter which country you go to.

Going abroad for **more than 1 year**

You may get contribution-based ESA in the EEA or Switzerland if you:

- are eligible for ESA
- have paid enough National Insurance contributions
- are covered by the Withdrawal Agreement

For help and advice on claiming ESA abroad, please contact **the International Pension Centre**:

International Pension Centre

Telephone: +44 (0) 191 206 9390

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Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB)

If you're getting Industrial Injuries Benefit for work-related accidents and illnesses, you can still get this abroad.

Contact the office dealing with your benefit if you're still in the UK, or the International Pension Centre if you're living abroad.

International Pension Centre

Telephone: +44 (0) 191 206 9390

British Sign Language (BSL) [video relay service](#)

Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 3.30pm

5. Benefits for carers and people with disabilities

Your ability to claim will depend on:

- The benefit you are claiming
- Where you are going and for how long

Going abroad: temporarily

Inform the office paying your benefit if you are planning to go for more than 4 weeks.

You can claim the benefits listed below if you will be abroad for up to 13 weeks (or 26 weeks if you are travelling for medical treatment):

- Attendance Allowance

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for adults
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Please note that you can continue to claim Carer's Allowance if you take up to 4 weeks holiday out of a 26-week period.

Contact the relevant exportability team for your benefit if you are going abroad and if you want to make a claim or change any personal details.

Attendance Allowance Exportability Team

Mail Handling Site A
Wolverhampton
WV98 2AD
United Kingdom

Disability Living Allowance Exportability Team

Room C212 Pension, Disability and Carers Service
Warbreck House
Warbreck Hill Road
Blackpool
FY2 0YE
United Kingdom

Personal Independence Payment 7 Exportability Team

Mail Handling Site B
Wolverhampton
WV99 1AE
United Kingdom

Carers Allowance Exportability Team.

Mail Handling Site A
Wolverhampton
WV98 2AE
United Kingdom

You can also contact the **Disability Benefits Exportability Team** about Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Attendance Allowance and Personal Independence Payment (PIP) by filling out the email form here: <https://www2.dwp.gov.uk/tps-directgov/en/contact-tps/pip-aa.asp>

Going abroad: permanently to an EEA country or Switzerland

The UK has left the EU. The EU Withdrawal Agreement sets out the terms of the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

You or a family member may be able to claim benefits if:

- You work in the UK or pay National Insurance in the UK because of work
- You have paid enough National Insurance to qualify for contribution-based benefits
- You are getting State Pension, Industrial Injuries Benefit, contribution-based ESA or bereavement benefits
- You are covered by the Withdrawal Agreement

If you're eligible then you may be able to claim:

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for adults care component
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP) daily living part
- Attendance Allowance or Carer's Allowance

Please note you cannot claim DLA for adults mobility component and PIP mobility component abroad.

You already live in an EEA country or Switzerland

You do not need to have claimed in the UK before you moved. You must satisfy the following criteria:

- You must be habitually resident in the EEA country or Switzerland
- You must have a genuine link with the UK social security system, for example you've lived or worked in the UK
- You must be covered by the Withdrawal Agreement

If you are a UK national and were living in an EU country by 31 December 2020, you are covered by the EU Withdrawal Agreement. You may be able to make new claims for some UK benefits, if you meet all the other eligibility requirements.

If you have a disability

If you are eligible, you can claim the daily living part of either:

- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Adult Disability Payment, if you have a 'genuine and sufficient link' to Scotland

If you currently claim PIP or Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for adults and want to claim Adult Disability Payment instead, contact the **Disability Service Centre**.

If you currently claim Adult Disability Payment and want to claim PIP, contact **Social Security Scotland**. You can also contact the office if you're not sure whether you have a 'genuine and sufficient link' to Scotland.

If you have a disabled child under 16

If your child is eligible, you can claim the care component part of either:

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children
- Child Disability Payment, if you have a 'genuine and sufficient link' to Scotland

If you currently claim DLA for children and want to claim Child Disability Payment instead, contact the Disability Service Centre.

If you currently claim Child Disability Payment and want to claim DLA for children, contact Social Security Scotland. You can also contact the office if you're not sure whether you have a 'genuine and sufficient link' to Scotland.