

International Citizens Service – benefits advice

If you are considering International Citizen Service and currently receiving benefits

This advice applies to applicants who are currently receiving one or more of the following benefits: Jobseeker's Allowance; Income Support; Housing Benefit; Council Tax Benefit; Employment and Support Allowance; Disability Living Allowance. If you have further questions please raise them with your Jobcentre or local authority.

Jobseeker's Allowance and Income Support

If you are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance **you will not be eligible to claim for the period when you are overseas**. This benefit is usually only payable while people are in Great Britain. Before you go you must let your Jobcentre Plus office know that you are going abroad and give them your departure date.

If you are claiming Income Support, you may continue to receive payment for the first 4 weeks of a temporary absence so long as you continue to satisfy the other conditions of entitlement for that benefit. You must let your Jobcentre Plus office know that you are going abroad and give your departure and return dates.

Jobcentre Plus offers a facility for those people who stop claiming benefits for less than 26 weeks. As long as their personal circumstances have not changed when they reclaim they will go through a shorter claim process.

During the required periods of training and local activities in the UK before your departure and after your return to the UK, you may continue to claim Jobseeker's Allowance but your entitlement will depend on your availability to look for and take up work.

If you normally claim Income Support the periods of training before departure and after your return to the UK whilst you are taking part in local action activities in the UK should not affect your benefit.

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit can continue to be paid when you are temporarily away from home, provided that your absence is unlikely to exceed 13 weeks and you intend to return to live at the same address.

If you are receiving Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit, **you should notify your local authority** that you are about to undertake a period of volunteering away from home that will last for no longer than 12 weeks. You should ask the volunteer organisation arranging your placement to provide you with a letter for your local authority that confirms this, and includes the dates of your departure and return. The letter should also state that you will

not be receiving any income (other than a small amount of pocket money not exceeding £20 a week) during your overseas placement.

If you do not tell your local authority about your volunteering placement, your local authority may stop paying your Housing and Council Tax Benefit, This is especially likely if you also receive Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support or Employment and Support Allowance, because Jobcentre Plus notify local authorities when payments of these benefits have ended.

Employment and Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance

If you are claiming Employment and Support Allowance you may continue to receive payment for the first 4 weeks of a temporary absence, so long as you continue to satisfy the other conditions of entitlement for that benefit.

DLA would normally be stopped once the recipient has been away from the UK for more than 4 weeks.