

Housing Benefit – temporary absence from home

It is a condition of receiving Housing Benefit that you are living in the property for which you are claiming benefit. There are certain exceptions to this rule which means that some people can continue to claim Housing Benefit during periods of absence from the property.

General Rules:

- The person must have an intention to return and occupy the dwelling as their home
- The property must not be let or sub-let whilst the person is away
- The person must return with the time limits stated in the table below

Circumstances of absence	Within Great Britain	Outside of Great Britain
A person detained on remand pending trial or sentence upon conviction or as a condition of bail to reside in a dwelling other than their home	52 weeks	4 weeks
A person in a hospital or similar institution as a patient	52 weeks	26 weeks
A person, their partner or dependent child undergoing medical treatment, medically approved convalescence in accommodation other than residential accommodation	52 weeks	26 weeks
A training course	52 weeks	4 weeks
A person who is absent and undertaking medically approved care of a person residing in GB or elsewhere	52 weeks	4 weeks
A person who is caring for child whose parent or guardian is temporarily absent from the home of that parent or guardian and receiving medically approved care or medical treatment	52 weeks	4 weeks
A person who is receiving medically approved care provided in accommodation other than residential accommodation	52 weeks	26 weeks
An eligible student	52 weeks	4 weeks
A person who is receiving care in residential accommodation and is not staying on a trial basis to ascertain if the accommodation suits their needs	52 weeks	4 weeks
A person who has left their home through fear of violence	52 weeks	26 weeks
A person who enters residential accommodation on a trial basis to ascertain if it meets their needs	52 weeks	4 weeks

A person who is absent from GB in connection with the death of their partner or a child for whom he or his partner is responsible, the persons close relative, a close relative of the persons partner or a close relative of a child or young person for whom the person or persons partner is responsible	13 weeks	4weeks plus additional 4 weeks if the Decision Maker considers it unreasonable for the claimant to return home within the first 4 weeks
A member of Her Majesty's forces posted overseas	13 weeks	26 weeks
A mariner	13 weeks	26 weeks
Continental shelf worker	13 weeks	26 weeks
Any other temporary absence e.g. holiday	13 weeks	4 weeks

During the absence

If anything changes during the absence you need to let us know immediately if:

- the person decides not to return to the property
- the reason for absence changes
- the absence is likely to be for longer than expected