

The Housing Benefit Temporary absence rules changed from 28th July 2016

The Council Tax Support Temporary absence rules for Pensioners are changing from 1st April 2017

In **Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support for Pensioners**, the period you can be away from home before your Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support is terminated has changed.

Please note the rules for the Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme are different for Working Age recipients:

Absence from Home (note exceptions below)

In Great Britain = 13 weeks

Outside Great Britain = 4 weeks (+ 4 weeks see below)

CTS working age: 13 weeks regardless

Extension to the 4 weeks restriction

HB and CTS pensioners only

The 4 weeks may be extended for a further 4 weeks if we consider it unreasonable to expect you to return within 4 weeks because your absence is in connection with the death of a partner, child or young person for whom you or your partner are responsible, you or your partner's close relative, or a close relative of a child or young person for whom you or your partner are responsible.

Working away from home

If you are absent from Great Britain as a member of the armed forces posted overseas, a mariner or an oil or gas worker on the continental shelf the time limit is 26 weeks (***CTS: no provision for Working age recipients***).

During your absence the 3 qualifying conditions must be fulfilled:

1. You intend to return to the property; and
2. The dwelling has not been let/sublet; and
3. The period of absence is unlikely to exceed the time limit

All 3 conditions must be satisfied. There is no discretion, so if it is clear at the outset that absence is likely to exceed the time limit then benefit is not payable.

Trialling Residential Accommodation

Residential accommodation is in Great Britain. = 13 Weeks (**CTS Working Age: 13 weeks**)

This only applies to claimants trialling residential accommodation in Great Britain

Resident in a hospital or similar institution as a patient

If in Great Britain = 52 weeks/ Outside Great Britain = 26 weeks

(CTS Working Age: 52 weeks regardless)

Claimant, partner or dependant child undergoing medical treatment or medically approved convalescence, in accommodation other than residential accommodation

In Great Britain = 52 weeks / Outside Great Britain = 26 weeks

(CTS Working Age: 52 weeks regardless)

A person receiving medically approved care provided in accommodation other than residential accommodation

In Great Britain = 52 weeks / Outside Great Britain = 26 weeks

(CTS Working Age: 52 weeks regardless)

Undertaking medically approved care of a person

In Great Britain = 52 weeks / Outside Great Britain = 4 weeks

(CTS Working Age: 52 weeks regardless)

Undertaking the care of a child whose parent or guardian is temporarily absent from the dwelling normally occupied by that parent or guardian for the purpose of receiving medically approved care or medical treatment

In Great Britain = 52 weeks / Outside Great Britain = 4 weeks

(CTS Working Age: 52 weeks regardless)

A person who is receiving care provided in residential accommodation (other than trial periods)

In Great Britain = 52 weeks / Outside Great Britain = 4 weeks

(CTS Working Age: 52 weeks regardless)

Following a training course provided wholly or partly by or on behalf of a government department or the Secretary of State

In Great Britain = 52 weeks / Outside Great Britain = 4 weeks

(CTS Working Age: 52 weeks regardless)

A Student, single or lone parent student liable to make payments in respect of either (but not both) their term time or the dwelling they occupy when not attending their course will be treated as occupying as their home the dwelling in respect of which they are liable to make payments or Payment on two homes for a couple where one partner is a student and it is unavoidable that the partners should occupy two separate dwellings)

In Great Britain = 52 weeks / Outside Great Britain = 4 weeks

(CTS Working Age: 52 weeks regardless)

A person who has left the dwelling they occupy as their home through fear of violence, in the dwelling, or by a person who was formerly a member of the family of the person, and to whom payment on two homes does not apply

In Great Britain = 52 weeks / Outside Great Britain = 26 weeks

(CTS Working Age: 52 weeks regardless)