

# Benefits advice for people with HIV in Jersey

If you are a person living with HIV and you are considering moving to Jersey it is important to be aware that many benefits in Jersey are only available to individuals and families that satisfy conditions relating to residency in Jersey.

You should also know that Jersey has Social Security agreements with several countries. If you have recently arrived from any of these countries the payments you made there may be counted towards the contribution conditions for benefit in Jersey.

## General Advice

- **Get expert advice or do your research** before making or changing a claim
- **Find out other people with HIV's experiences**, particularly with assessments and about how to answer questions appropriately
- **Keep copies of all correspondence with the Social Security Department.** If you must do something over the phone rather than in writing, make notes of the call and the date. Records and letters seem to go missing very easily.
- **Open and answer all letters from the Social Security Department/JobCentre immediately**, or as soon as possible. A lot of people lose entitlement because they can't face dealing with the bureaucracy; there are people who can help you with this
- **Always appeal if a decision is unfair or based on wrong information.** Many people win a better decision on review or appeal because many initial decisions are poorly informed. Make sure you appeal within the deadline given. Again, expert help is available with this.
- If your **doctor** is likely to be asked to contribute a report on your health, it is a good idea to discuss this with them in advance, or at least let them know this may happen.
- You might also want to **keep a diary of how your health impacts on your daily life**, especially if you find the impact of HIV changes from day to day or week to week. This will help you respond to the questions asked in assessments.
- Always **check that any information you are using is up to date** as benefits are changing fast.

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## Sources of information and help

### Jersey

- Information about Income Support in Jersey is available at: [www.gov.je/Benefits/IncomeSupport/Pages/index.aspx](http://www.gov.je/Benefits/IncomeSupport/Pages/index.aspx)
- The local HIV organisation, **ACET Jersey**, has more detailed information on their website, [www.acet.je](http://www.acet.je), or you can call them on **01534 505957**. They have an HIV coordinator (07797810076) who can assist with queries relating to benefits and, where necessary, organise meetings with the appropriate staff at Social Security.

### UK-wide

*Please note that the benefits system in Jersey differs to that of the UK and not all of these sites may be relevant to you.*

- [www.directgov.uk](http://www.directgov.uk) is the Government site which explains benefits and entitlement and is a good place to start.
- [www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk) has a useful benefits entitlement checker online.
- [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk) is the national website for **Citizens Advice Bureaux**, who are often the best local source of information on benefits generally. However, in some areas of the country they may not be experienced with HIV.
- [www.disabilityalliance.org](http://www.disabilityalliance.org) is the main source of benefits information relating to disability.
- [www.tht.org.uk](http://www.tht.org.uk) has latest and upcoming developments on benefits and HIV flagged up, but for individual advice **THT** (Terrence Higgins Trust) encourage people to call THT Direct on **0808 802 1221** or email [info@tht.org.uk](mailto:info@tht.org.uk).
- [www.nat.org.uk](http://www.nat.org.uk) also has details of the latest developments in benefits as they relate to people with HIV.
- Always **check that any information you are using is up to date** as benefits are changing fast.

### Interactive online

- <http://benefits.tcell.org.uk/> has interactive message/discussion boards where people can compare their experiences and get advice from people who've been through the assessments and interviews themselves.
- [info@tht.org.uk](mailto:info@tht.org.uk) links in to the advisors on THT Direct and can answer queries online.
- [www.myhiv.org.uk](http://www.myhiv.org.uk) is a new website, designed by people with HIV and managed by THT, which has a lot of support information for people with HIV including discussion boards where you can share concerns and ask for advice from other people with HIV on any topic.