



華人資料及諮詢中心

Chinese Information and Advice Centre

Charity No. 慈善機構註冊號碼: 800646

Social Enterprise 社會企業

Spring Edition 2017

Immigration

Immigration.....p1

- Minimum Income Rule for non-European spouses
- Previous Breach of Immigration Rules may lead to refusal of re-entry
- New requirement for criminal record certificate for leave to enter application
- Home Office Walk-in Surgery

Women's Support / Benefitsp2

- NEW National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage rates effective April 2017
- More funded apprenticeships offered
- Childcare Contributions for Working Parents
- Pension Rate Increases

Social Welfare.....p3

- Budgeting Loan from local government
- What is Discretionary Housing Payments

CIAC & Community.....p4

- CIAC Emotional Wellbeing Project has been completed in March 2017
- New Vacancies
- CIAC Woman Volunteer of the Year Award 2017

Editorial team

Jaime Law
Jeffery Yip
Amanda Low
Yu-Shan Chang

CIAC contact

Basement
2 Gerrard Place
London
W1D 5PB

T - 0300 201 1868

E - info@ciac.co.uk

W - www.ciac.co.uk

Minimum Income Rule for non-European spouses

The UK Supreme court has just ruled the £18,600 minimum income rule implemented by the government to be lawful. This means that British citizens must have a minimum income of £18,600 before they can bring non-European spouses into Britain. The threshold rises to £22,400 if there is one or more non-European-born child in the family.

They commented that perhaps alternative funding arrangements and assets in addition to the British spouse's income should be allowed to ensure that the interests and welfare of families with children are better considered.

Source:

<https://www.theguardian.com/law/2017/feb/22/supreme-court-backs-minimum-income-rule-for-non-european-spouses>

New requirement for criminal record certificate for leave to enter application

With effective 6 April 2017, certain Tier 1 and Tier 2 Migrant visa applicants and their dependants, where they are 18 years of age or older, they must provide a copy of criminal record certificate from the relevant authority in any country in which they have been resident for 12 months or more (whether continuously or in total) in the past 10 years, while aged 18 or over. Or by way of an explanation that it is not reasonably practicable for the applicant to obtain a certificate from the relevant authority. If the applicant has failed to provide such certificate or an explanation upon application, the applicant may be requested by the Home Office to provide so within 28 calendar days.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/600363/58896_HC_1078_web_statement_of_changes.pdf

Previous Breach of Immigration Rules may lead to refusal of re-entry

The new Immigration Rules effective in April 2017 states that an application will be refused if the applicant has previously overstayed, except an overstay of 30 days or less, where the overstaying began on or after 6 April 2017 (90 days if it was before 6 April 2017); and the applicant left the UK voluntarily, not at the expense of the Secretary of State.

Home Office Walk-in Surgery



Every first Tuesday of the month from 2pm to 3pm at the CIAC office, friendly officers from the Home Office host a Walk-in Surgery to meet the local community and provide information regarding immigration applications and voluntary return. The

Home Office assures there will be no immigration enforcement during the surgery



Text CIAC18 £5 to 70070

"Organisation" category Winner of the Westminster Volunteer Awards 2011 by Volunteer Centre Westminster



Organisation Award Winner 2011



Text CIAC18 £5 to 70070 ncv

Women's Support / Social Benefits

NEW National Minimum Wage (NMW) and National Living Wage rates effective April 2017

The Government has changed their practice to adjust the National Minimum Wage and National Living wage rates effective from April rather than October of each year.

	25 and over	21 - 24	18 - 20	Under 18	Apprentice
Oct 2016 (current)	£7.20	£6.95	£5.55	£4.00	£3.40
April 2017	£7.50	£7.05	£5.60	£4.05	£3.50

One must be at least of school leaving age to get the National Minimum Wage which will apply for those aged 24 and under. Those who are aged 25 and over can get the National Living Wage. A person's school leaving age will depend on where they live. In England for example, this will generally be from 16 to 18 if the person remains in full-time education, starts an apprenticeship or traineeship, or spends 20 hours or more pre week working or volunteering while in part-time education or training after finishing form school.

<https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

More funded apprenticeships offered

There will be an apprenticeship levy imposed on big companies from April 2017, in an effort to channel more money to finance three million apprenticeships. It is set to raise about £3 billion annually by 2020. This move targets both new and existing apprenticeships, including on-the-job learning. The intention of such a legislation is to facilitate over-16s to attain skills that match up to national standards of quality.

The levy requires all employers operating in the UK with an annual pay bill over £3 million each year or whom are connected to other companies or charities for Employment Allowance which in total have an annual pay bill of more than £3 million, to invest in apprenticeships by paying an Apprenticeship Levy each month from 6 April 2017.

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work>

Childcare Contributions for Working Parents

There have been several changes to legislation that will affect parents with children aged three to four. As of September 2017, 15 more hours of free childcare will be guaranteed on part from the government for parents who work more than 16 hours per week while earning below £100,000 each year, by way of a contribution to the cost of nursery or child minder places. These additional hours will be added to the 15 free, childcare hours a week that applies under the current rules which don't require parents to work up to 16 hours per week. Both child's parents or carers will have to be working to qualify for these benefits.

Additionally, Tax Free Childcare will replace the Employer Supported Childcare Scheme, which is also known as Childcare Voucher Scheme. This scheme will apply to parents earning less than £150,000 annually and do not otherwise receive childcare aid via tax credits.

Further, for families who give babies birth on or after 6th April 2017, they will not be able to claim child tax credits for the third child and subsequent children. Although parents may be able to claim some free childcare for two-year old children if they are already receiving any of the following benefits including Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Asylum Support, Child Tax Credit and/or Working Tax Credit and have an annual income under £16,190, the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit and Universal Credit

Source: <http://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/teesside-news/working-parents-set-benefit-hundreds-12484182>

Pension Rate Increases

There have been several adjustments to the old and new state pension rates that will take effect from April 2017. The old state pension will go up to £122.30 from £119.30 for its weekly payments to pensioners, while weekly payment rates for the new flat rate pension will go up from £155.65 to £159.55.

The above state pension flat rate increments only apply to basic pension, and not the additional state pension, such as the State Earnings-Related Pension Scheme (SERPS). It is important to check to see which pension increment rates are applicable, and one should get in contact to clarify with their scheme administrators if need be. Other changes apply separately if one has a defined benefit pension or has bought an annuity with the proceeds of a pension.

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2016/nov/29/state-pension-to-rise-by-25-in-april-2017>

Social Welfare

Budgeting Loans from local government

If you're in need of a loan, you can apply for a Budgeting Loan if eligible before going to a doorstep lender who charges high interest.

What is a Budgeting Loan?

A Budgeting Loan can be used for a wide range of expenses.

Such as:

- Travelling expenses
- Clothing or footwear
- Maternity or funeral expenses
- Furniture or household equipment
- Things to help you look for, or start work
- Improving, maintaining or securing your home
- Repaying hire purchase or other you might have
- Advance rent or removal expenses for a new home

Who qualifies for a Budgeting Loan?

If you're not yet getting Universal Credit you can apply for a Budgeting Loan.

You must:

- Be currently receiving either Pension Credit, Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Have been claiming for at least 26 weeks, either consecutively or with a break of no more than 28 days

You must not have:

- Existing Social Fund loans
- Savings over £1,000 (or £2,000 if you're over 61)

If you think you might qualify for a Budgeting Loan, you'll need to complete an application form which you can get from your local Jobcentre Plus (or Jobs and Benefits Offices in Northern Ireland).

Source:

<https://www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/articles/budgeting-loans-from-the-social-fund>



Join CIAC to promote environmental friendly workspace by putting the old batteries in the recycling bin outside our office.

What is Discretionary Housing Payments

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) can provide extra money when your council decides that you need extra help to meet your housing costs.

Depending on your circumstances you maybe eligible for a DHP. The council will decide whether to give you a DHP, how much and for how long.

If you are currently claiming Housing Benefit or Universal Credit with housing costs towards rental liability, and you have difficulty meeting housing costs because of the changes in welfare reforms such as benefit cap, bedroom tax and changes to housing allowance rates.

How can a payment be used?

You may be given a DHP to cover housing costs, such as:

- a rent shortfall, for example, as a result of welfare reforms – for further information visit – www.gov.uk/housing-benefit
- rent deposits or rent in advance if you need to move home

How do I make a claim?

This will depend on your council. You can find their contact details on letters from them.

Source:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/542080/housing-benefit-factsheet-3-discretionary-housing-payments.rtf



Recycling for Good Causes

We have teamed up with Recycling for Good Causes to raise fund through recycling. We will get back 75% of the proceeds once the recycled goods are sold on. You can donate a wide range of items in our Recycling Project sacks located at our office:

- **Jewellery & Watches** (in any material even if damaged or broken)
- **Currency** – Any coins or banknotes, UK & foreign (even if out of circulation)
- **Mobile Phones**
- **Cameras** (old film, digital and video)
- **Stamps** (Loose, single, albums, first day covers, presentation packs, collections, postcard collections)
- **Gadgets** (Sat-Navs, Ipods, MP3 players, games consoles, games & accessories, Laptops & Tablet Computers)
- Please do **NOT** include any **INK** or **TONER CARTRIDGES**

CIAC / Community

CIAC Emotional Wellbeing Project has completed in March 2017

The emotional wellbeing service had been launched in three Central London boroughs under NHS funding. It is a 1 to 1, free and informal confidential counselling service for black and minority ethnic people including Chinese who live in Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham. These people may be experiencing emotional difficulties but are not specialist health service users.

Under project, CIAC dedicated trained staff and volunteers used a person-centred and non-judgemental approach that may or may not be goal oriented to help over 30 clients between October 2016 and March 2017.

The clients were effectively supported during a period of difficulty. In some cases they were referred to and helped to access appropriate services, including mental health services, in a timely manner.

This project has benefited those who felt depressed or low, socially isolated with little or no support from family or friends, or who experience relationship problems.

New Vacancies

CIAC is currently recruiting the following positions:-

Honorary Treasurer

If you are a qualified accountant familiar with the charity SORP, able to manage financial systems and take a lead role in financial decision making and more importantly have a passion to serve the community, this is a very good opportunity to get involved. This is an unpaid role. All reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

Woman's support worker (Part Time)

We are recruiting a part time woman's support worker in light of the new round of funding from the London Councils. The role will include undertaking casework covering the full range of welfare benefits and women Supports. Training will be provided.

Administrator and fundraising worker (Part Time)

The role will include supporting the office and the delivery of fundraising and community events, reporting to sponsors and funders, handling telephone enquiries, maintaining an efficient and effective office and book-keeping work. Training will be provided.

For more details please visit our website. If you are interested in the above position, please send your CV together with a cover letter to info@ciac.co.uk for attention of the Centre Manager.

CIAC WOMAN VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD 2017

Nominations are now open to honor an outstanding woman whose volunteer work and effort has positive impact on the Chinese community.

This is your chance to nominate someone you know, who we would like to share their remarkable story and thank them for their contribution.



Last year's winner was Ms Kam Lan To. At the age of 82, Kam Lan works as volunteer in Camden Chinese Community for 25 years. She continued volunteering at the Centre everyday. Her services cannot be stopped by the unpredictable weather or minor health issues. She serves lunch, sets tables at the elderly centre, sources for free cooking ingredients and supports many different fund raising activities for the Centre. Her spirit motivates everyone at the Centre.

The significance of setting up this award is to allow the community to appreciate the efforts of these behind-the-scenes heroines, and also to encourage more people to participate in volunteer services and bring a positive impact to the community.

Nomination criteria:

- Nominees must have legal right of abode in the UK.
- A woman who has positively contributed to the Chinese community through unpaid voluntary work.
- Have been involved in a volunteer capacity for a minimum of 6 months.
- Open to females only, aged 18 and above.

Nominations are now open and the closing deadline is 5pm **Friday 7th July 2017**

For more information please visit our website www.ciac.co.uk