

Absences

A single absence from the UK of more than 6 months but not more than 12 months.

A single absence or absences of more than 6 months but not more than 12 months in total in any 5-year continuous qualifying period will interrupt that continuous qualifying period unless there was an important reason for the absence:

- a single period of absence of more than 6 months but which does not exceed 12 months is permitted, where this is for an important reason, such as pregnancy, childbirth, serious illness, study, vocational training or an overseas posting;
- compulsory military service of any length;
- time you spent abroad as a Crown servant, or as the family member of a Crown servant;
- time you spent abroad in the armed forces, or as the family member of someone in the armed forces.

Evidence to support an absence as a result of pregnancy, childbirth or serious illness might take the form of a letter or other records from a qualified medical professional.

Absences are calculated over a 12-month period starting from the first month you were absent. If you are unsure about the count, ask for advice.

You're only permitted a single absence exceeding 6 months (but not exceeding 12 months) for an important reason in your 5-year continuous qualifying period. More than one such absence, or an absence from the UK of more than 12 months will always interrupt your continuous qualifying period regardless of the reason for it.