

Patient Information

Guide to health services in East Sussex

This welcome pack gives information about accessing healthcare services in this area. Also included is a translation card (if required) and contact details of services close to where you are staying.

You are entitled to free health care

- Asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants can use the National Health Service (NHS) without a charge, including during the asylum and appeal process.
- Using health services does not affect your asylum application in any way.
- All medical care is confidential and does not affect the judgement on your claim for asylum. Your information will not be passed on without your permission.
- You need to fill in an HC2 form, provided by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) or available at pharmacies, to receive free medicines, dental treatment, eye tests and some glasses.

Difficulty understanding English?

- Interpreters can be arranged for appointments. When you book an appointment tell the receptionist which language you speak and they will book an interpreter who will either attend in person or via phone. A translation card is available to show the receptionist.
- It is important that you are understood so that an accurate diagnosis can be made.

The Specialist Homeless Team

A Specialist Health Team provides support to clients within the area.

They can give advice and direct you to specialist support services including:

- Specialist migrant services
- Mental health services
- Homeless services

For any enquiries please contact the team on – Tel: (01424) 427066.

Health Services

Below is information about the health services available to you.

NHS Direct

NHS Direct is a 24 hour telephone or internet service giving healthcare advice.

- If someone is unwell or you need advice about a health problem, contact NHS Direct on **0845 4647**.
- You can speak to a qualified nurse.
- The service is free and confidential.
- NHS Direct has interpreters available if English is not your first language.

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Finding a doctor

- General Practitioners (GPs) are doctors who provide healthcare in the community. The service is free and they can refer you to more specialist services.
- You and your family should register with a GP near where you are staying in case you become ill or need medication.
- When you register you will be asked for proof of address and other personal information, but you will not need to show official documents such as your passport.
- You will receive a 'new patient check', usually done by a nurse. You will be asked questions about your past health problems and immunisations.
- You can choose to register with a GP who is the same sex as you if you wish. In hospital it may not be possible to be treated by a doctor of the same sex.
- You will usually need to make an appointment which can be done in person or by telephone. You can ask to see a male or female doctor or nurse, although this may not always be possible.
- You may have to wait a few days for a non urgent appointment. If you want to see the doctor urgently, tell the receptionist when you make the appointment, and you will be seen that day if appropriate. A doctor may visit you at home if they think you are too ill to come to the surgery.

Please see separate list for local doctors.

Finding a dentist

Asylum seekers are entitled to free dental care, but you need to find an NHS dentist who provides NHS care. For free treatment you will need a HC2 certificate which is valid for six months.

Dental check-ups and treatment are also free for:

- All children under 16 years of age
- Young people under 19 of age in full time education
- Pregnant women or mothers with babies under one year old
- People receiving income support
- People with an exemption certificate

Charges are made for NHS dental treatment for everyone else. Before you have any treatment from a dentist you should ask what is planned and what the cost will be.

Please see separate sheet for details of local dentists.

Eyesight

If you need your eyes testing and need new glasses, make an appointment to see an optician. They have shops in most town centres. The HC2 form covers the cost of an eye test and some glasses (the optician will advise which types of glasses are free).

Local pharmacists and out-of-hours pharmacists

See attached list for details.

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Sexual health services

Family planning services are free. These can be accessed through a GP or local Sexual Health Clinic.

Health in mind

If you are experiencing emotional or psychological difficulties, you should contact your GP who will be able to put you in touch with one of the Health Workers or you can call Health In Mind direct on – Tel: 0300 0030 130.

Emergency numbers and procedure

This information sheet tells you what to do in an emergency.

Police, Fire, Ambulance

If you find yourself in a serious, dangerous or life threatening situation, call 999 or 112 and ask for the police.

In a medical emergency call 999 or 112 and ask for an ambulance. Emergency situations include:

- unconsciousness
- a suspected stroke/sudden weakness in arm and/or leg/loss of speech
- heavy blood loss
- suspected broken bones
- a deep wound such as a stab wound
- a suspected heart attack
- difficulty in breathing
- severe burns, and
- a severe allergic reaction

If a pregnant woman goes into labour and no other transport is available, call 999 or 112 and ask for an ambulance.

All 999 and 112 calls are free in the UK.

Call 0845 607 0999 for a non-emergency crime or if you wish to remain anonymous, call Crimestoppers on – Tel: 0800 555 111.

Hate crime/incident

Hate crime/incidents include any crime or crime related incident suffered by an individual or group by virtue of their race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or disability.

Crimes/incidents may include written, physical, verbal assaults, damage to property, threats, harassment or intimidation.

Either the victim, a witness or a third party can report a hate crime.

Call Victim Support on – Tel: 0845 3899 528

Monday to Friday – 8.00am to 8.00pm.

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Woman children support services

Information about health services for women and children.

Pregnancy

Care during pregnancy is provided by a community midwife and this service is free.

Your GP or your health professional will refer you to midwifery services.

You should access health care by 12 weeks in pregnancy, so your care can be monitored and planned with you.

When your baby is born

Health visitors are experienced nurses who provide support from late in pregnancy until your child starts school. They can give support in a range of issues including:

- Developmental and growth concerns
- Feeding and weaning advice
- Behavioural issues

They can visit you at home or you can attend a baby health clinic or Children's Centre (see below).

Local children's centres - (see attached list)

These are free venues that provide a range of groups and activities to support children 0-5 years and their families.

These include:

- Home safety advice
- Parenting support services
- Infant and toddler groups
- Play and music sessions

Education

Every child in the UK aged 5 to 16 must receive an education. This is provided free of charge and there are a number of different schools that your child can attend. Parents must ensure that their children go to school. Boys and girls receive the same education. The school year starts in September.

Children home alone

It is an offence to leave a child alone if it puts them at risk. Parents can be prosecuted if they leave a child unsupervised 'in a manner likely to cause unnecessary suffering or injury to health'.

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) advises that:

- Children under the age of about 12 are rarely mature enough to be left alone for a long period of time.

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- Children under the age of 16 should not be left alone overnight.
- Babies, toddlers and very young children should never be left alone.

Contact details for local services

Contact your local health visitor for details of local services and amenities.

Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) – details below.

Other formats

This information is available in alternative formats such as large print or electronically on request. Interpreters can also be booked. Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) offices, found in the main reception areas:

Conquest Hospital

Email: palsh@esht.nhs.uk - Telephone: **01424 758090**

Eastbourne District General Hospital

Email: palse@esht.nhs.uk - Telephone: **01323 435886**

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

Reference

Written by: Janice Hayes

The directorate group that have agreed this patient information leaflet:
BME/homeless team

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Responsible clinician/author: Janice Hayes