

Overseas Visitors

We have a legal obligation under the NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 2015 (as amended) to identify patients who are required to pay for NHS hospital services. Not everyone is entitled to free NHS hospital treatment.

Who is entitled to free NHS hospital treatment?

If you are ordinarily resident in the UK (see definition below), you are entitled to free NHS hospital treatment in England. Nationals of countries outside the European Economic Area (EEA) must have indefinite leave to remain in the UK and EU nationals, who were resident in the UK prior to 31 December 2020, need to have status under the EU settlement scheme to be ordinarily resident in the UK. We will ask our patients **to provide evidence of their lawful right to live in the UK and also evidence of continuation of UK residency (being present in the UK for a sufficient degree of continuity)**, in order for NHS hospital treatment to be free of charge.

Ordinarily resident means someone who is living lawfully in the UK and is settled in their day to day life for the time being and has an identifiable purpose (reason) for living here

A person is **not** ordinarily resident in the UK simply because he/she:

- Has British nationality or holds a British passport
- Has status under the EU settlement scheme or paid the immigration health surcharge
- Is registered with a GP
- Has an NHS number
- Owns property in the UK
- Has paid (or are currently paying) National Insurance contributions and taxes in the UK

If a person is found to **not be ordinarily resident**, circumstances of the individual will require investigation to determine if any of the exemptions in the above regulations applies. Please speak to the Overseas Visitor Team for more details (see reverse for contact information).

If you are identified as not entitled to free NHS hospital care, you become chargeable once you are admitted to the hospital (which can be to one of our assessment units, as well as to an acute ward). Charges also apply for outpatient appointments in most specialties e.g. referred from ED to fracture clinic. **If you are receiving immediately necessary or urgent care, then services will not be refused or delayed subject to you making payment (this can also apply to Maternity services – see section below for more details)**. The Trust will aim to inform you as soon as possible that you are required to pay for NHS hospital healthcare. This does not apply to NHS primary care services, such as visiting your GP.

Maternity Services

Some women may be asked to pay for their maternity care. All maternity services, such as scans, are so important to the mothers' health and that of her unborn baby that they will not be denied or delayed even if the mother does not have the funds to pay for treatment immediately. Charges will still be invoiced and expected to be paid at a later date. If this applies to you, you can contact the overseas team for more details (details on final page).

Free of charge services to overseas visitors

Accident and Emergency (A&E) services are not chargeable to patients. This includes all A&E services provided at an NHS hospital, e.g. those provided at an accident and emergency department, walk-in centre, minor injuries unit or urgent care centre.

This does not include those emergency services provided after the overseas visitor has been accepted as an inpatient, or at a follow-up outpatient appointment - for these, charges must be levied unless the overseas visitor is exempt from charge in their own right.

The Other services not chargeable are listed below:

- family planning services (does not include termination of pregnancy)
- diagnosis and treatment of specified infectious diseases (full list available on request)
- diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections
- treatment required for a physical or mental condition caused by torture; female genital mutilation; domestic violence; or - sexual violence (except where the overseas visitor has travelled to the UK for the purpose of seeking that treatment)

Charging for patients ordinarily resident in the European Economic Area (EEA)

Applies to: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus (Southern), Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.



Under the UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement (the SSC Protocol) where an EU Member State is responsible for the healthcare of an individual, the individual will be entitled to reciprocal healthcare cover in certain circumstances when visiting the UK.

A European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) from the EU Member State should be provided to demonstrate the entitlement.

This does not include visitors to the UK from Iceland, Liechtenstein or Switzerland, who should be charged for NHS healthcare, unless they have entitlements under the Withdrawal Agreement. The withdrawal agreement covers those EU nationals who were activating EU treaty rights in the UK before 31 December 2020 as a worker, self-employed person, student, self-sufficient person or job-seeker.

If you are a UK State Pensioner living in one of these countries and you have registered an S1 for residence there, you will be entitled to all types of NHS hospital treatment without charges when back in the UK as long as this was activated before 31 December 2020 by the member state.

Charging for patients ordinarily resident in - Reciprocal/Bilateral agreement countries

Anguilla, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, British Virgin Islands, Falkland Islands, Faroe Islands, Gibraltar, Isle of Man, Israel, Jersey, Kosovo, Montenegro, Montserrat, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, St Helena, Turks and Caicos Islands.

If you are resident and travelling from the one of these countries, you may be entitled to NHS hospital care free during your visit to the UK. There are a number of variations in the level of

free treatment afforded. More details at:

www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-reciprocal-healthcare-agreements-with-non-eu-countries

For what is covered, and patients can contact the overseas team (see contact information) as well. Generally, only immediate medical treatment is to be provided free of charge:

Charging for patients ordinarily resident in - Rest of the World countries where you require a VISA to enter the UK

When making a visa application, both Non EEA and EU nationals who want to come to the UK for six months or more, have to pay the **immigration healthcare surcharge (IHS)** as part of the visa process. Patients who paid the IHS and have a valid visa will be entitled to free NHS care for the length of the visa (excluding Fertility which is chargeable). This entitlement is from the date the visa is granted and **NOT** the date the IHS was paid to UK immigration.

For those people with visas issued for a period of six months or less, or with a maximum stay at any one time of 180 days or less - they should expect to be asked to pay for all the NHS hospital treatment received.

Patients from Rest of the World countries where you self-funded or hold insurance

If you are without an EHIC or exempt visa you would need to **self-pay** or have **medical insurance**. Examples of countries would be if you are resident and travelling from USA/Canada/Far East (all countries not in the EEA or not covered by reciprocal / bilateral agreement). The hospital does not liaise with medical insurance on patients' behalf, without a guarantee of payment from them.

Sources of information

- www.gov.uk/government/publications/overseas-nhs-visitors-implementing-the-charging-regulations
- www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-withdrawal-agreement-and-political-declaration

If you need some help from external organisations

Assistance with regards to debts and legal advice:

Money Helper - www.moneyhelper.org.uk and Step change - www.stepchange.org

Citizen's advice may also be able to assist - www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Important information

This patient information is not a full description of the NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 2015 (as amended). See sources of information for where to obtain more details.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – Tel: 0300 131 4731 (direct dial) or by email at: esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net

Hand hygiene

The trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.

Tel: 0300 131 4434 Email: esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask the Overseas Visitors Team

Reference

The following managers have been consulted and agreed this patient information:
Lauren Brosson - Contracts Manager, Matt Backler - Deputy Director of Finance, Daniel Stephens - Head of Income and Contracting

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