



Northern Care Alliance
NHS Group

Overseas Visitors and NHS Treatment

An information guide



Overseas Visitors and NHS Treatment

As a Trust we operate under the National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 2015 (Amended 2017 & 2020).

NHS hospital treatment is free to people who live in the United Kingdom (UK) as ordinary residents. If you do not lawfully live in the UK then generally you will have to pay for NHS hospital treatment you might need.

These charges will apply regardless of whether you are a British citizen or have lived or worked in the UK in the past.

If you have to pay for your treatment, you should ensure you have adequate health insurance or funding to cover the duration of your stay in the UK.

Introduction

The NHS in England is a residence-based system which is different from many other countries, which have insurance-based healthcare systems.

This means that all visitors to England may have to pay for NHS healthcare, depending on their individual circumstances.

If you are a national of a country outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland you will need to have “indefinite leave to remain in the UK” to be considered ordinarily resident.

Ordinarily resident in the UK

To determine whether a patient is entitled to free NHS healthcare, the patient must be living in the UK on a lawful and properly settled basis, for the time being, known as being ‘ordinarily resident’.

The Immigration Act 2014, changes the meaning of ‘ordinarily residence’ as it relates to Non-EEA nationals who are subject to immigration control who must also have indefinite leave to remain in the UK, in order to be classed as ordinarily resident, with effect from 6th April 2015.

Further, holding a British passport, being registered with a GP, having an NHS number, owning property in the UK or paying taxes in the UK does not mean you are ‘ordinarily resident’ in the UK.

Who is an Overseas Visitor?

An Overseas Visitor is someone who is ‘not ordinarily resident’ in the UK. This is regardless of whether they have lived or worked in the UK in the past.

How do I know if I have to pay?

All patients that come to this hospital are asked questions regarding residency at every visit; you may be asked to complete a pre-attendance form to bring to your appointment or complete during your appointment.

A member of the Overseas Visitors Team may then arrange to see patients who may not be ordinarily resident in the UK and conduct an interview to assess if they are eligible for free NHS treatment.

The Overseas Visitors Team will ask patients to provide evidence to show that they have the right to live in the UK and that they live here permanently.

The interview will establish whether patients are, in fact, ordinarily resident or, if not, whether they are exempt from charges or liable for charges.

It is a patient's responsibility to prove they are entitled to treatment without charge and provide documentary evidence to support a claim for free treatment. The information may be confirmed with the Home Office.

Documentary evidence includes:

- Passport, National Identity Card or Visa.
- European Health Insurance Card or Provisional Replacement Certificate.
- Council tax bill, Tenancy agreement or Utility bills.

If documentation is requested during an interview and not provided by the due date agreed at interview an invoice will be issued for treatment.

If the Overseas Visitors Team establishes a patient is not eligible for free NHS treatment, the patient will be advised and an invoice issued which will cover treatment already received.

We will also ask for payment in advance for non-urgent planned treatment before this is scheduled.

What do I have to pay for?

The full cost of assessment and treatment received, including emergency treatment (outside of Accident and Emergency Departments), given by staff at a hospital or by staff employed by a hospital.

Immediately necessary or urgent treatment

Treatment which is classed as immediately necessary by the treating clinician will not be delayed whilst establishing whether a patient is liable for the cost of their treatment.

Patients will still be charged for the cost of immediately necessary or urgent treatment.

All maternity services, including routine antenatal treatment fall within this category and are treated as being immediately necessary.

The decision on a patients need for non-urgent or elective treatment can only be made by a clinician and takes into account if it can safely wait until a patient returns home.

What don't I have to pay for?

Some NHS services are free at the point of use to everyone including:

- Accident and Emergency (A&E) services - this does not include emergency services provided elsewhere in the hospital if a patient is admitted as an inpatient or at a follow-up outpatient appointment;
- Family planning services (not including termination of pregnancy);
- Diagnosis and treatment of specified infectious diseases;
- Diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections;
- Treatment required as a consequence of torture, female genital mutilation, domestic violence or sexual violence provided you have not come to the UK for the sole purpose of seeking that treatment.

Who doesn't have to pay?

Those patients who are ordinarily resident in the UK will not have to pay for NHS treatment. In addition, there are other exemptions which provide entitlement to NHS healthcare on the same basis as an ordinarily resident patient.

Exemptions include but are not restricted to :

- Anyone who has paid, or who is exempt from paying, the Health Surcharge or for whom the charge is waived, reduced or partially refunded whilst their leave to remain is extant;
- UK state pensioners living in a EEA country with a S1 document registered in that country;
- Anyone receiving S4 or S95 Home office support including all failed asylum seekers who receive support from their Local Authority under part 1 of the Care Act 2014.

Exemptions from paying NHS treatment charges

Do you hold a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)?

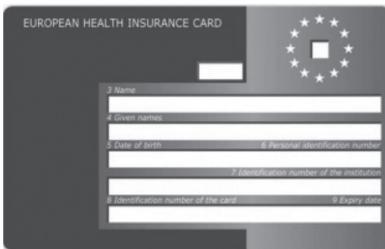
The EHIC card is issued free of charge by participating European Economic Area countries* and Switzerland. An EHIC allows anyone who is insured by or covered by a statutory social security scheme to receive medical treatment in another member state free or at a reduced cost**.

If treatment becomes necessary during a visit to the UK due to illness or an accident the EHIC scheme allows people to continue their stay in a country without having to return home for medical care.

It does not cover people who have visited a country for the purpose of obtaining medical care or treatment that can be delayed until the individual returns to his or her home country.

Patients are asked to show their EHIC cards to hospital staff at every visit and provide their overseas address.

Example EHIC



***if an EU citizen is not paying into their healthcare system and is therefore not entitled to healthcare in their home country EHIC cards are not issued.*

A Provisional Replacement Certificate (PRC) can be issued by a European Economic Area member state if an EHIC card is lost or stolen. The PRC will provide the same cover as an EHIC card until the patient returns home and the Trusts Overseas Visitors team will assist patients in applying for a PRC.

*European Economic Area

The European Economic Area includes 27 European Union (EU) countries and also Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

The EU countries are:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden.

Switzerland is neither an EU nor EEA member but is part of the single market - this means Swiss nationals have the same rights to live and work in the UK as other EEA nationals.

Health Surcharge

Some Nationals from a non-EEA country will have paid a health surcharge as part of the visa application process when applying to enter/remain in the UK for more than 6 months.

Once the visa application is granted, the individual is able to access NHS treatment, except assisted conception services, on the same basis as someone who is ordinarily resident for the duration of the visa.

Patients are asked to let hospital staff know if they have paid the health surcharge, are exempt from paying the surcharge or payment of the surcharge has been waived and the hospital will confirm this information.

Reciprocal Healthcare Agreements

The UK has bilateral healthcare agreements with some countries outside of the European Economic Area for example Australia and New Zealand; some patients will be exempt from paying charges.

The Trust Overseas Visitors Team will interview patients from these countries to establish if they are exempt from charges according to the current regulations provided by the Department of Health.

What happens if I am legally liable for NHS hospital charges but I decide not to pay or I do not have the resources to pay?

You will receive an invoice for the cost of the NHS hospital treatment you have received. Any outstanding debt will be referred to a debt collection agency.

If you do not pay the invoice and leave the UK without paying you need to be aware that any future re-entry to the UK may be refused by Home Office Immigration Officials whilst the NHS charges remain unpaid.

What are the consequences of withholding information (or providing false information)?

In the event there is a suspicion that you are normally resident in an overseas country and you withhold or provide false residence information to hospital staff the matter may be referred to the Lead Local Counter Fraud Specialist which may result in anti-fraud enquiries leading to financial recovery and/or prosecution.

The Trusts Overseas Visitors Team

The Overseas Visitors Team are available between the hours of 9:00am and 4:00pm Monday to Friday.

Royal Oldham Hospital, Fairfield General Hospital and Rochdale Infirmary - **Please telephone: 0161 656 1752**

Outside of these hours messages can be left on an answerphone and the Team can also be contacted by email:

Email: overseas.visitors@pat.nhs.uk

How we use your information

To understand how we use your information the Trust has information available in the 'How we use your Information' leaflet which can be found on the Trust internet site and can also be provided by the Overseas Visitors Team if requested.

The NHS is not required to obtain consent from a patient before sharing non-clinical data with the Home Office and the Department of Health's Overseas Visitors Team to confirm information related to confirming Overseas Visitors status.

We will indicate to you when we will liaise with other governmental bodies to confirm non-clinical information.

Not happy with the service you have received?

If you are not happy with any aspect of the service provided by the Overseas Visitors Team please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on **0161 604 5897** to discuss your concerns further.

PALS are available between the hours of 09:30am and 16:30pm, Monday to Friday or can be contacted by email: **pals@pat.nhs.uk**.

Alternatively, please refer to the Trust's website **www.pat.nhs.uk** for details of the Complaints Team who also can be contacted at the following email address: **complaints.office.trust@pat.nhs.uk**.

If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

اگر انگریزی آپ کی پہلی زبان نہیں ہے اور آپ کو مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو ، براہ کرم ترجمانی اور ترجمہ خدمت سے رابطہ کریں

Dacă engleza nu este prima ta limbă și ai nevoie de ajutor, te rugăm să contactezi Serviciul de interpretare și traducere

ইংরাজী যদি আপনার প্রথম ভাষা না হয় এবং আপনার সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হয় তবে অনুগ্রহ করে দোভাষী এবং অনুবাদ পরিষেবাটিতে যোগাযোগ করুন

إذا لم تكن الإنجليزية هي لغتك الأولى وتحتاج إلى مساعدة ، فيرجى الاتصال بخدمة الترجمة الشفوية والتحريرية

☎ : 0161 627 8770

@ : interpretation@pat.nhs.uk

To improve our care environment for Patients, Visitors and Staff, **Northern Care Alliance NHS Group** is Smoke Free including buildings, grounds & car parks.

For advice on stopping smoking contact the Specialist Stop Smoking Service on 01706 517 522

For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897

For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service

The Northern Care Alliance NHS Group (NCA) is one of the largest NHS organisations in the country, employing 17,000 staff and providing a range of hospital and community healthcare services to around 1 million people across Salford, Oldham, Bury, Rochdale and surrounding areas. Our Care Organisations are responsible for providing our services, delivering safe, high quality and reliable care to the local communities they serve.

The NCA brings together Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust and the hospitals and community services of The Royal Oldham Hospital, Fairfield General Hospital in Bury, and Rochdale Infirmary (currently part of The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust).



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Date of publication: January 2006

Date of review: June 2021

Date of next review: June 2023

Ref: PI(G)216

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