

# Overseas Visitors - Guidance for Staff

An information guide



# Overseas Visitors – Guidance for Staff

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 the 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.

Every year Overseas Visitors who evade NHS charges or do not pay invoices for hospital charges following NHS treatment loses the UK National Economy millions of pounds and each financial year costs the Northern Care Alliance (NCA) NHS Group approximately half a million pounds which has to be subsidised by the NHS.

## Introduction

NHS hospital treatment is only free to people classed as 'ordinarily resident' in the UK. Being ordinarily resident is not dependent on nationality, payment of UK taxes, National Insurance contributions, being registered with a GP, having an NHS Number or owning property in the UK.

To be considered ordinarily resident, patients must be living in the UK on a lawful and properly settled basis.

## The Northern Care Alliance NHS Group Legal Obligations

There is an updated piece of legislation: The Charging Regulations 2015 (amended 2017 & 2020) which explains that The NCA has a legal obligation to identify potential Overseas Visitors and assess if they are eligible for free NHS treatment.

However, if a patient requires treatment that is urgent or immediately necessary, **they must always receive this treatment.**

## Frontline Staff

To assess whether a patient is eligible for free NHS treatment *every* patient must be asked the following baseline question:

**'What countries have you lived in, other than the UK, in the last 12 months?'**

If a patient states they have lived anywhere other than the UK a referral must be made to your Overseas Visitors Team. Please be proactive in helping us to identify patients who should be referred into your Overseas Visitors Team.

A member of the Overseas Visitors Team will then arrange to see patients who may not be ordinarily resident in the UK and 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.

**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 hospital decides 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 may also ask for payment in advance for any future planned elective treatment before this is scheduled.

## **NHS Services Free to all Patients**

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.

## **What do Patients 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.

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

The decision on a patient's 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.

Patients will still be charged for the cost of immediately necessary or urgent 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 European Economic Area country with a S1 document registered in that country;
- Anyone receiving S4 or S95 Home Office support including all failed asylum seekers who receive S21 support from their Local Authority.

## Is the patient visiting from a European Economic Area Country and do they hold a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)?

If the patient is visiting from one of the countries in the European Economic Area listed below they may hold an EHIC card as shown in the following example:



***Patients should be asked to show their EHIC cards to hospital staff at every visit and staff are asked to contact their Overseas Visitors team with the details.***

An EHIC card 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 intention of the EHIC scheme is to allow 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.

**The European Economic Area includes the following 27 European Union (EU) countries:**

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 in addition to Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

### **How to Contact your Overseas Visitor Team**

#### **Internal phone numbers:**

The Royal Oldham Hospital, Fairfield General Hospital and Rochdale Infirmary - 71752

**Bleep:** The Royal Oldham Hospital 7820

**Generic email:** [Overseas.visitors@pat.nhs.uk](mailto:Overseas.visitors@pat.nhs.uk)

**Out of Hours:** Please leave a voicemail or complete the Overseas Visitor out of hours proforma available in your department.

## **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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