

## Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback. If you need advice or are concerned about any aspect of care or treatment please speak to a member of staff or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS):

**Freephone:** 0800 183 0204

**From abroad:** +44 115 924 9924 ext 85412 or 82301

**Deaf and hard of hearing:** text 07812 270003

**E-mail:** [pals@nuh.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@nuh.nhs.uk)

**Letter:** NUH NHS Trust, c/o PALS, Freepost NEA 14614, Nottingham NG7 1BR

[www.nuh.nhs.uk](http://www.nuh.nhs.uk)



You can also scan the QR code to leave patient, family or carer feedback. After scanning the QR code please go to 'How can I leave my feedback' and select the service that you have accessed and then follow the on screen prompts.

The Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.

# Are you visiting the United Kingdom?

**Did you know you may have to pay for  
hospital treatment while you are here?**

This document can be provided in different languages and formats. For more information please contact:

Telephone: 0115 924 9924 ext. 80339

Email: [overseas.visitors@nuh.nhs.uk](mailto:overseas.visitors@nuh.nhs.uk)

## Overseas visitors and NHS treatment

NHS hospital treatment is only funded for 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.

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 cost Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust approximately half a million pounds which has to be subsidized by the NHS.

**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. We are required by law to charge overseas visitors upfront for any treatment unless it is deemed urgent and necessary by your clinician.**

## Further information

This leaflet is a general guide and not a full statement of the current regulations. The Overseas visitor team are not able to answer queries regarding visa requirements, patients should seek appropriate advice from immigration advisors or CAB.

All information contained within it was correct at the time of going to print but may change. For further information see the NHS England website **NHS England – Information for Visitors to England** at:

[www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/uk-visitors/Pages/accessing-nhs-services](http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/uk-visitors/Pages/accessing-nhs-services)

Alternatively, ask a member of staff to contact the Overseas Visitors Team .

## The Trust's Overseas Visitors Team

The Overseas Visitors Team are available between the hours of 9am and 4pm Monday to Friday on the following numbers:

Nottingham University Hospitals QMC campus  
01159249924 ext 60339

Outside of these hours messages can be left on an answerphone and the Team can also be contacted by email:  
Email: [overseas.visitors@nuh.nhs.uk](mailto:overseas.visitors@nuh.nhs.uk)

## Obtaining free health care by deception

Access to free medical treatment is subject to strict qualifying conditions.

Providing false information or failing to disclose information in order to access free treatment which would otherwise be chargeable may constitute a criminal offence, resulting in a criminal conviction being imposed by the Courts.

Anyone suspected to have provided false information or to have withheld information in order to access free medical care will be referred to East Midlands NHS Counter Fraud Service for full investigation, and referral of the matter to prosecuting solicitors if evidence of fraud is found.

Charges for treatment falsely claimed will be made by the Trust. East Midlands NHS Counter Fraud Service may also share information with the UK Border Agency (UKBA) for the prevention or detection of criminal offences.

## Introduction

Access to 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.

**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.**

## Ordinarily resident in the UK

To determine whether a patient is entitled to funded 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 'ordinary 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.

## 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 funded 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 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 will be confirmed with the Home Office.

### **Documentary evidence includes:**

- Passport, National Identity Card or Visa or BRP
- European Health Insurance Card or Provisional Replacement Certificate, Council tax bill or tenancy agreement,
- Utility bills, electoral roll card or pay slip.

If during an interview the patient cannot provide documentation and the treatment has not been deemed urgent by a clinician then the patient will be assumed ineligible for funded care and an estimated cost of treatment will be given to the patient and asked to be paid before any appointment or treatment can be given.

## **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. 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 .

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.

The European Economic Area (EEA) includes 28 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, Sweden and the UK.

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 Health Surcharge status has been granted, the individual is able to access NHS treatment on the same basis as someone who is ordinarily resident for the duration of the visa. (does not include fertility treatment)

## **What do I have to pay for?**

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

Fertility treatment is chargeable for all couples who have been granted any type of visa other than "Settlement" or "ILR" or they are seeking Asylum. This is not depending on the payment of the Health Surcharge .

## **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
- 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 an activated 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.

Babies born to parents who have paid the IHS or have EUSS status are exempt from charges for the first 3 months during this time the parents have to register the baby for residency in the UK.

## 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.



*\*\* 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.*