



Entitlement to NHS Hospital Treatment for Non-Resident UK Citizens



Entitlement to Free NHS Hospital Treatment by Non-Resident UK Citizens

This leaflet has been compiled to explain the entitlement requirements for free NHS hospital treatment in the UK for Non-Resident UK Citizens.

- **The NHS does not normally provide free hospital treatment for people who do not reside in the UK even if they are UK nationals**
- **If you have lived outside the UK for more than 3 months (6 months for some pensioners) in the last year you can be charged**
- **You will be exempt from charges if you can produce evidence that you have been working abroad for less than 5 years and have lived in the UK continuously for at least 10 years at some point**
- **If you are residing in another European Economic Area member state you should show your European Health Insurance Card from that country or apply for a Provisional Replacement Certificate where possible**
- **If you have come to the UK from a non-EEA country that the UK has no bilateral agreement with you will be expected to pay for treatment unless another exemption applies to you**

Accessing Free State Healthcare

The National Health Service only provides free hospital treatment for people who lawfully live on a settled basis in the United Kingdom. People who do not normally live on a settled basis in this country are not automatically entitled to NHS hospital treatment free of charge – regardless of their nationality or whether they hold a British Passport or have lived and paid National Insurance contributions and taxes in this country in the past.

Residential Qualification

UK/EEA citizens that are permanent UK residents are fully entitled to free hospital treatment, however they need to satisfy the Trust that they are permanent, lawful UK residents and provide satisfactory documentary evidence. Until such time as a Trust is satisfied of this, they will charge for healthcare.



Entitlement to Free NHS Hospital Treatment

As entitlement to NHS hospital treatment is primarily based on UK residency, if you have been living outside the UK for more than 3 months in the last year, or 6 months if you are a pensioner living in another EEA member state, you may be charged for your healthcare unless:

- You can provide evidence that you have returned to the UK with right of abode to resume permanent residence;
- You can provide evidence you have been working abroad for less than 5 years and have lived in the UK legally for ten continuous years at some point;
- You can provide evidence you work in another EEA member state or Switzerland and pay compulsory (not voluntary) National Insurance in the UK;
- You can provide evidence you receive a UK war disablement pension or war widow's pension;
- You can provide evidence you work for specific UK Government organisations abroad but were recruited in the UK, ie members of UK forces serving abroad, UK civil servants working abroad, or if you work for the British Council or Commonwealth Grave Commission abroad, or if your posting is financed by the UK Government in agreement with another government or public body;
- You can provide evidence you are a missionary overseas working for a UK based organisation.

UK State Pensioners

UK state pensioners who have lived in the UK for ten continuous years at some point in the past are entitled to 'treatment the need for which arises during a visit to the UK' free of charge.

Some UK state pensioners living part time in the EEA are fully entitled to free hospital treatment during the period they live here. They must prove they live in the UK for at least six months each year and in another EEA member state for the remainder of the year and not be registered as resident in that other member state.

EEA Member States and Switzerland

Permanent residents of EEA member states are eligible to apply for EHICs. EEA member states are:

Austria
Belgium
Bulgaria
Cyprus (southern)
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Liechtenstein
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Slovak Republic
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden

If you are visiting the UK from a non-EEA country that the UK has no bilateral agreement with you'll be expected to pay for most treatment unless another exemptions applies.

UK ex-pats of other EEA member states, Switzerland or another bilateral arrangement country

If you have lived in the UK for ten continuous years at some point but are now living in an EEA member state or another country with which the UK has a bilateral healthcare agreement, then, under UK law, you are entitled free of charge to treatment the need for which arises here. This includes treatment needed where the diagnosis of a condition is made when first symptoms arise during a visit to the UK. It also applies where, in the opinion of a doctor or dentist employed by the trust, treatment is needed quickly to prevent a pre-existing condition increasing in severity. It does include the routine treatment of pre-existing conditions, nor planned treatment.

However, if you are now living in an EEA member state and pay into a state healthcare scheme then you are entitled to apply to that member state for an EHIC. Under EC law, this entitles you free of charge to 'all medically necessary treatment' here, which provides a greater coverage than that mentioned above since it includes routine treatment for chronic conditions such as diabetes. You should therefore use your EHIC or a PRC to access free treatment during your visit. Using an EHIC also allows the UK to reclaim the cost of your treatment from the country you are now residing in. If you require planned treatment you should contact the domestic healthcare provider in your EEA member state of residency. If they agree to pay for treatment, they will provide you with an E112 form. If you do not have an E112 you will have to pay for the treatment received unless one of the other exemptions mentioned above apply.

Providing Evidence of Entitlement

NHS Hospital Trusts have a duty to check evidence of entitlement so if you think you qualify under one of the exemptions specified above please ensure that you have documentary evidence available if required.

If you are in any doubt about your entitlement, please ask to talk to the Trust's Overseas Visitors Manager.

If you have permanent residential status in an EEA member state or Switzerland but do not have an EHIC

If you are eligible for an EHIC but have lost or forgotten to bring it with you to hospital, you can apply for a Provisional Replacement Certificate immediately. You will need to contact your domestic healthcare insurance provider and ask them to fax a PRC to the hospital where you require treatment. It is your responsibility to make these arrangements not the hospital trust. On receipt of a valid PRC you will receive exactly the same eligibility for reduced cost or free treatment as if you possessed an EHIC.

For Further Information

Please contact the Overseas Visitors Manager.

Countries with Bilateral Agreements with the UK

The following countries have Bilateral Agreements with the UK. If you have permanent residential status in any of these countries please talk to the Hospital Trust's Overseas Visitors Manager to see if you are entitled to free Healthcare:

Anguilla	Kyrgyzstan*
Armenia*	Macedonia*
Australia	Moldova*
Azerbaijan*	Montenegro*
Barbados	Montserrat
Belarus*	New Zealand*
Bosnia*	Russia*
British Virgin Islands	Serbia*
Croatia*	St. Helena
Falkland Islands	Tajikistan*
Georgia*	Turkmenistan*
Gibraltar*	Turks and Caicos Islands
Isle of Man**	Ukraine*
Kazakhstan*	Uzbekistan*

* have agreements covering their nationals and UK nationals only. The others cover all residents, irrespective of nationality.

UK citizens now living in a country with which the UK has no healthcare agreement are entitled to free medical treatment in the Accident & Emergency department of an NHS hospital. Any treatment provided in any other part of a hospital will be charged.

** please note the Isle of Man Bilateral Agreement is due to end on the 1st April 2010.



Disclaimer

This leaflet is a general guide and is not a full statement of the current regulations. Please ask at the hospital providing treatment for further information or see the Department of Health website at www.dh.gov.uk/overseasvisitors.