



## Healthcare Entitlement for European Economic Area (EEA) Visitors



## Hospital entitlement under EC Regulations for European Economic Area (EEA) Visitors

This leaflet has been compiled for all citizens of EEA Member States\* and Switzerland who seek hospital treatment from the UK National Health Service. For the purposes of this pamphlet, Swiss citizens will be treated the same as EEA citizens.

- **If you are not resident in the UK, you should show a valid European Health Insurance Card**
- **This covers all clinically necessary treatment during your visit but not treatment that could wait until your return home**
- **If you do not have a valid EHIC you can apply for a Provisional Replacement Certificate from your home country's healthcare system who will fax a copy to the hospital**
- **If you cannot provide either a valid EHIC or PRC to the hospital you may have to pay for the treatment**
- **You should contact your home healthcare system when you return home and they might refund some of your costs**

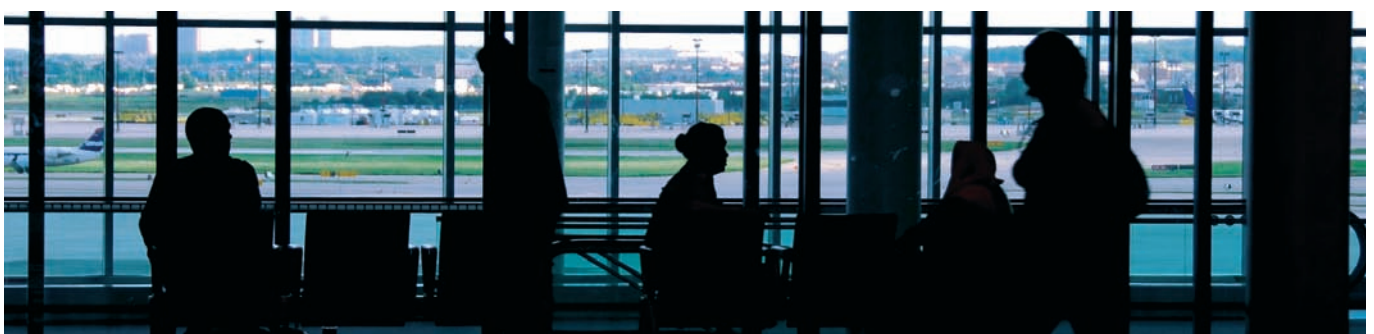
### Accessing Free State Healthcare

The National Health Service provides free hospital treatment to people who lawfully live in the United Kingdom. People who do not normally live in this country are not automatically entitled to use the NHS free of charge.

All EEA citizens, including UK citizens, need to provide satisfactory documentary evidence of entitlement in order to receive free hospital treatment, otherwise they will be charged for their treatment.

### Residential Qualification

EEA citizens who 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 with satisfactory documentary evidence. Until such time as a Trust is satisfied of this, they will charge for healthcare.



## EEA Visitors under EC Regulations

EEA visitors can access reduced cost or, sometimes, free healthcare for necessary medical treatment during their visit if they can show a valid European Healthcare Insurance Card (EHIC). Since April 2008, the UK has required evidence of a valid EHIC for access to free NHS healthcare under EC regulations.

## What Treatment Is Covered by an EHIC?

'All necessary treatment' is covered. This means treatment which, in the opinion of a NHS medical professional, is clinically necessary. In other words, treatment which the patient cannot wait for until their return to their home country. This includes treatment for pre-existing conditions.

## If you want to come to the UK for planned treatment under EC Regulations

Free planned treatment in the UK for a permanent resident of another EEA member state needs to be arranged through your home healthcare system prior to travelling to the UK. Your home healthcare system will need to arrange for you to have a valid E112 form to receive the agreed free planned treatment at a specified UK hospital. NHS Trusts will not provide free planned treatment until they are provided with a copy of this form.

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

If you are eligible for an EHIC but have lost or forgotten to bring it with you to the NHS Trust, you should 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 NHS Trust where you require treatment. It is your responsibility to make these arrangements not the NHS Trust. On receipt of a valid PRC you will be eligible for the same reduced cost or free medical treatment as you would using an EHIC.

## If you do not have a valid EHIC or cannot obtain a PRC

If you cannot show a valid EHIC or PRC you may be charged for all secondary care during your hospital visit (but see 'Other entitlement', below). This excludes care provided in the Accident & Emergency Department if required. Almost all other care including emergency treatment is chargeable. Most EEA permanent residents will be able to obtain a refund for all or part of their treatment when they return home, from their healthcare insurance provider, however the Hospital Trust will require payment from any patient who cannot produce an EHIC or PRC, or who cannot prove entitlement under UK domestic Regulations at the time of their treatment.

## EEA Member States\*

**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**  
**Slovakia**  
**Slovenia**  
**Spain**  
**Sweden**

Switzerland enjoys the same rights and requirements for free Healthcare access as EEA Member States.

## Other entitlement to Healthcare for EEA Nationals



In addition to the permanent residence exemption from NHS charges, there are also other exemptions under UK domestic Regulations. NHS Trusts will have to be provided with the relevant documentary evidence to validate these exemptions, which include:

### Employment

You need to be engaged in employment with an employer who has his principle place of business in the UK or is registered in the UK as a branch of an overseas employer. It is not sufficient to have the right to work here, you must show evidence of actually working.

If you are self employed you must show that the UK is your principle place of business.

### Full time study

To be entitled to free hospital treatment you need to be able to show that you are pursuing a full time course of study of not less than six months duration, or, if less, a full time course which is funded either wholly or substantially by the UK government.

Furthermore, visitors who can show to the Trust's satisfaction that they are EEA nationals resident in EEA member states may receive some treatment free of charge, but less than if they had an EHIC/PRC.

## For Further Information

Please contact the [Overseas Visitors Manager](#).

### 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](http://www.dh.gov.uk/overseasvisitors).