



## 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:

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

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



**European visitors to show EHIC  
to access free NHS hospital treatment**



## Under EC Regulations European Visitors should produce an EHC to access free healthcare that is clinically necessary

This leaflet has been compiled for permanent residents of European Economic Area Member States and Switzerland visiting the UK who require medically necessary hospital treatment during that visit.

- **Visitors from EEA member states\* should show a valid European Health Insurance Card to access free healthcare**
- **This entitles them to reduced cost, or free treatment for conditions that need to be treated during the visit which cannot wait for treatment until return home**
- **Planned treatment needs to be arranged separately through your home country's healthcare system**
- **If you do not have an EHC with you then apply through your home country's healthcare system immediately for a Provisional Replacement Certificate**
- **If you cannot show either an EHC or PRC you may be liable to pay for treatment although you might get a refund from your home country's healthcare system on your return**

### EHC Requirement under EC Regulations

Like all other EEA Member States, the UK now requires evidence of a valid EHC for access to reduced cost or, sometimes free, state healthcare, which becomes necessary during a visit. This is in line with EC regulations.

The National Health Service primarily provides healthcare for people who live in the United Kingdom. So please make sure you have a valid EHC card ready to show admission staff.



## What treatment is covered?

Treatment covered by an EHIC is that which is seen to be clinically necessary in the opinion of a doctor or dentist employed by the trust. The card also covers pre-existing conditions including routine monitoring of conditions such as diabetes. Although also covered by the card, anyone requiring dialysis or oxygen therapy must make arrangements prior to departure from their home member state.

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

If you want to come to the UK for free planned treatment your EHIC will not cover you. Free planned elective treatment in the UK for EEA citizens 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. If you seek planned treatment and you do not have an E112 you may be charged.

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

If you have 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 home healthcare system 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 had your EHIC with you.

## 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. However, under UK domestic Regulations, if you are a student or working here you may qualify for free treatment. If you are lawfully resident in the EEA you may qualify for some treatment free of charge but less than if you show an EHIC.

Certain services are exempt from charges, including 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.

## For Further Information

Please contact the Overseas Visitors Manager.

## EEA Member States and Switzerland\*

Eligible residents of EEA member states are able to apply for an EHIC. 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**  
**Slovakia**  
**Slovenia**  
**Spain**  
**Sweden**

Eligible residents in Switzerland are also able to apply for an EHIC from the authorities there.



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## 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**

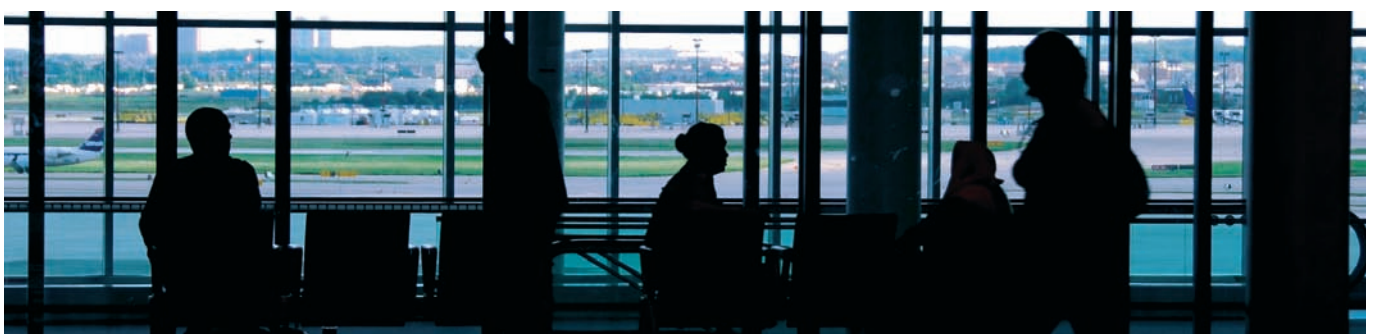
### Accessing Free State Healthcare

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](#).

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## Healthcare Entitlement for Non-EEA Nationals



## NHS Hospital Entitlement for Non-EEA Nationals

This leaflet has been compiled to explain the entitlement requirements for free NHS hospital treatment for Non-EEA nationals.

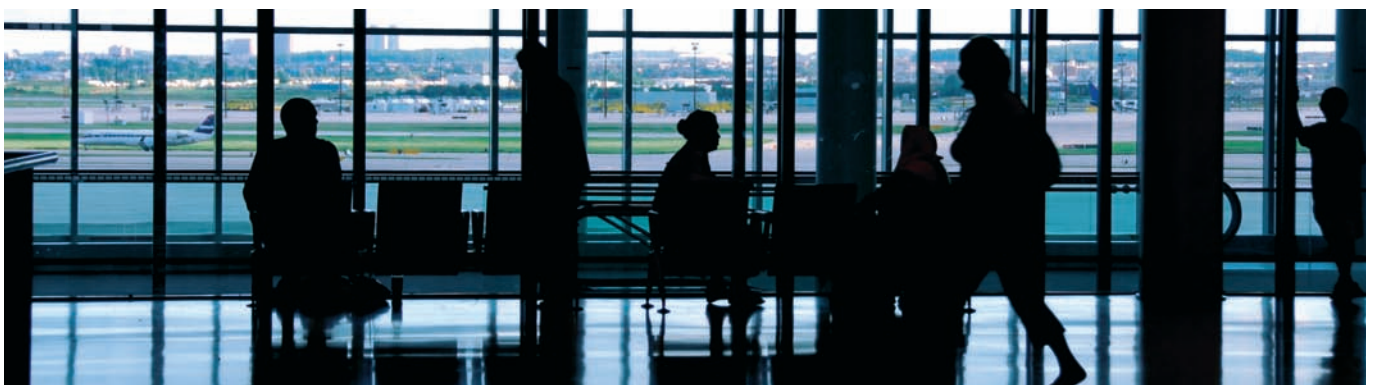
- **The NHS provides free hospital treatment to people who are and have the right to be permanent UK residents**
- **Evidence of residence and the right to live lawfully in the UK is required to access free hospital treatment**
- **Non-EEA visitors must pay for hospital treatment unless their home country has a bilateral healthcare agreement with the UK or an exemption applies**
- **If you are employed or studying in the UK you might be entitled to free hospital treatment**
- **Refugees and those asylum seekers whose formal applications to the Home Office are still being considered are entitled to free hospital treatment**

### Entitlement to Free Hospital Treatment

The National Health Service (NHS) only provides free hospital treatment for people who live lawfully in the United Kingdom. People who do not normally live in this country are not automatically entitled to use the NHS 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. All patients admitted to hospital, whatever nationality and residency, are subject to scrutiny and need to provide correct information and evidence of entitlement if requested.

### Permanent Residents in the UK

If you are a Non-EEA National with the legal right to have residency in the UK and are living in the UK on a settled basis then you should be prepared to provide evidence of this in order to receive free treatment. When the Hospital Trust is satisfied with the evidence free healthcare entitlement will be confirmed. Similarly, UK/EEA Nationals can be required to show evidence that they are living in the UK on a settled basis.



## Other Areas of Entitlement to free Hospital Treatment

There are exemption from charge categories in addition to the permanent residence entitlement. However, as for permanent residence, the Hospital Trust needs to be satisfied with your entitlement, including sight of relevant documentary evidence. Exemptions 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. Please note that if you are spending a few hours a week learning English you are classed as a visitor and may be charged for healthcare.

### Refugees and asylum seekers

Asylum seekers who have made formal applications with the Home Office which have not yet been determined are exempt from charges. A refugee is someone who has been granted asylum in this country.

## Nationals and Residents Visiting from Countries with Bilateral Agreements with the UK

If you are a resident of a country with a bilateral healthcare agreement with the UK, you might be entitled to free healthcare the need for which arises during your visit here. The countries with bilateral agreements are:

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

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

If you are from one of these countries and think you might qualify for free hospital treatment please contact the Hospital Trust Overseas Visitors Manager.

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

## If you are not sure if you are entitled to free hospital treatment

Please ask to talk to the Overseas Visitors Manager if you are unsure whether you are entitled to free hospital treatment. All patients admitted to hospital are required to provide evidence of entitlement and the Overseas Visitors Manager can advise you of what documentation is acceptable.



## For Further Information

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

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