NHS inform
Health information you can trust

Health care

in Scotland for former UK residents now working abroad

If you are a former UK resident and you work abroad, this factsheet tells you how you can get health care from the NHS when you are in Scotland.

Can I get health care from the NHS when I visit Scotland?

- **If you work anywhere outside the UK** you can get health care from the NHS in Scotland if you **lived in the UK legally for more than 10 years before moving abroad, and:**
  - you have worked abroad for **less than five years**, or
  - you have worked abroad for **five years or more, and:**
    - you have come back to the UK for a visit at least once every two years, or
    - your contract of employment allows you to visit the UK at least once every two years, or
    - your employer will pay for the cost of your return to the UK at the end of your contract.
- **If you work in the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland**, you can get health care from the NHS in Scotland if:
  - you have a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) issued in the country where you work, or
  - you pay UK National Insurance contributions (your employer will be able to tell you about this).

EEA countries

- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- The Netherlands
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- United Kingdom

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The UK has special health care arrangements with some countries outside the EEA. If you live in one of those countries, you can get some health care from the NHS when you are visiting Scotland. For more information, call the NHS inform Helpline on 0800 22 44 88 or ask staff at a GP surgery or hospital.

What happens if I need health care when I visit Scotland?

- Everyone can get some health care from the NHS.

Services that are free for everyone include:

- emergency care in a hospital (in the accident and emergency department, casualty department or minor injury unit)
- emergency care at a GP surgery
- emergency transport in an ambulance
- sexual health services
- treatment for some infectious diseases and sexually transmitted infections.

- If you need any other health care, NHS staff at the GP surgery, clinic or hospital will ask to see some documents. This is to help them decide if you are allowed to get health care as an NHS patient.

  They may ask you to show:

  - your passport
  - your EHIC card
  - documents showing that you lived in the UK for 10 years (for example, evidence of employment in the UK, schools attended in the UK, previous UK addresses), or
  - your employment contract.
- If you don't have the documents they ask for, NHS staff may not be able to treat you as an NHS patient, and you may need to pay for any care you receive.

Is all health care free for NHS patients?

- No. If you're treated as an NHS patient, a lot of your health care is free. But you will need to pay for some things – for example, some dental treatment.
- The leaflet 'A quick guide to help with health costs' tells you if you can get free treatment or help with the costs. It is available from citizens advice bureaux and Jobcentre Plus offices. You can also find it on the internet (www.scotland.gov.uk).

Can my family get health care from the NHS?

If you can get NHS care, your husband, wife or civil partner, and any of your children who are in Scotland with you, can get health care from the NHS too. The children must be under 16, or under 19 and in full-time education.

How can I find out more?

- **For information about health conditions and services, phone the NHS inform Helpline on 0800 22 44 88** (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88; the helpline can provide an interpreting service).The helpline is open every day between 8am and 10pm. You can only call the helpline from the UK.

Other factsheets in this series

- Health care for people coming to Scotland to work
- Health care for people coming to Scotland to study
- Health care for asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland
- Health care in Scotland for UK passport holders living abroad
- Health care for UK pensioners visiting Scotland
- Health care in Scotland for holidaymakers from overseas.

You can get these factsheets from:

- anywhere you get NHS care
- www.nhsinform.co.uk
- www.hris.org.uk
- the NHS inform Helpline on 0800 22 44 88.

Feeling unwell?

- **Go to a pharmacy** and ask for advice. To find your nearest pharmacy, phone the NHS inform Helpline on 0800 22 44 88 or look on the internet (www.nhs24.com).
- **Visit the NHS 24 website** at www.nhs24.com for health information and advice.
- **Contact the GP surgery** where you are registered. If you need an interpreter, ask the GP surgery to arrange this for you.
- **Phone NHS 24 on 08454 24 24 24** or look on the internet (www.nhs24.com) if the GP surgery where you are registered is closed, or if you are not yet registered as an NHS patient. NHS 24 can provide an interpreting service.

In an emergency (if your condition is very serious), phone 999 and ask for an ambulance.

We have tried our best to make sure the information in this leaflet is correct. However, the leaflet is for guidance only so you should not rely on it as a full statement of the law. If you are thinking about taking legal action, you should contact a solicitor, a citizens advice bureau, the Patient Advice & Support Service or other advice agency.

Email ask@hris.org.uk to ask for this information in another language or format.

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