

# Health care in Scotland for holidaymakers from overseas

- In Scotland, most health care is provided by the National Health Service (NHS).
- If you are coming to Scotland on holiday or to visit friends or relatives, you may have to pay for any health care you need while you are here and should get travel insurance with medical cover before your trip.
- This factsheet tells you about the health care you may be able to get free from the NHS if you become ill or have an accident.

## Can I get free NHS care while I am on holiday in Scotland?

- Yes, some health care services are free for everyone. These include:
  - emergency care in a hospital (in the accident and emergency department or in the casualty department)
  - emergency care at a GP surgery (in Scotland, family doctors are called General Practitioners or GPs)
  - emergency transport in an ambulance
  - sexual health services
  - treatment for some infectious diseases and sexually transmitted infections.
- If you need other health care, NHS staff will ask you to show them some documents to help them decide if you can be treated as an NHS patient.

# **I live in the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland. Can I get free NHS care when I visit Scotland?**

- Yes. If you normally live in the EEA or Switzerland, you will not have to pay for treatment that is necessary while you are here.
  - This includes treatment for an illness or condition you had before coming to Scotland, as well as treatment you need if you become ill while you are here.
- You must get a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) in your own country before your trip.
- You will need to show your EHIC card to NHS staff.
- If you don't have an EHIC card, NHS staff may not be able to treat you as an NHS patient. You may need to pay for any care you receive.

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.

## **I don't live in the EEA or Switzerland. Can I get NHS care when I visit Scotland?**

- You may be able to. The UK has special arrangements with some countries outside the EEA.
- If you come from one of those countries you will be able to get some free health care from the NHS while you are here.
- You should ask the health service in your own country about this.

## **You will get some free NHS care if you live in one of the following countries:**

Anguilla, Australia, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Falkland Islands, Isle of Man, Montserrat, St Helena, or the Turks and Caicos Islands.

## **What happens if I need treatment?**

- NHS staff will need to see some documents to make sure you can get NHS care.
- NHS staff may need to see documents that show where you live, for example your driving licence or other documents to prove you are registered for work or health care in your own country.

If you don't have the documents they ask for, NHS staff will not be able to treat you as an NHS patient. You may need to pay for any care you receive.

## **You will get some free NHS care if you are a national of, and you live in one of the following countries:**

New Zealand, the Russian Federation, a former Soviet Union State (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine) or former Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro; Bosnia, Macedonia and Croatia).

### **What happens if I need treatment?**

- NHS staff will need to see some documents to make sure that you can get NHS care.
- You may need to show:
  - your passport or national identity card, and
  - documents showing where you live, for example, your driving licence or other documents to prove you are registered for work or health care in your own country.

If you don't have the documents they ask for, NHS staff will not be able to treat you as an NHS patient. You may need to pay for any care you receive.

If you don't normally live in a country listed in this document, you will need to pay for all of your health care (other than the health care services that are free to everyone).

### **Is all health care free for NHS patients?**

- No. If you are treated as an NHS patient, a lot of your health care is free. But, like UK citizens who normally live in Scotland, you will need to pay for some things – for example, medicines and dental treatment.

## **Will I need to pay if I need transport with medical support to get home?**

- Yes. If you become ill or have an accident and need transport with medical support to go back to your home country, you will have to pay for this.
- The costs of transport with medical support are not covered by the EHIC, or by any special health arrangements that Scotland has with some countries outside the EEA.
- You should get travel insurance with medical cover before your trip.

## **What can I do if I run out of my medicines while I am in Scotland?**

### **Visit a local GP**

- You can contact a GP in the area where you are staying, and ask to make an appointment.
- To find a local GP, phone the NHS helpline on 0800 22 44 88 or look on the internet ([www.nhs24.com](http://www.nhs24.com)).
  - Staff will ask to see some documents to help them decide if you can get NHS care. You may be asked to show your EHIC card, your passport, or a document showing where you live. If staff decide you can get NHS care, you will be registered with the GP as a temporary resident.
  - If staff register you as a temporary resident, you will not need to pay to see the GP. The GP will ask you about your medicines and give you an NHS prescription. This is a document that you can take to any pharmacy. The pharmacist will give you the

medicines listed on the prescription. You will not need to pay more than £4 for each medicine.

- If staff decide not to register you as a temporary resident, you may need to pay to see the GP. The GP may give you a private prescription and you may need to pay the full price for each medicine on the prescription.

## **Go to a pharmacy**

- You can go to a pharmacy in the area where you are staying, and ask the pharmacist for a small supply of the medicines you need.
  - If the pharmacist agrees to do this, you will need to pay the full price for the medicines.
- To find a local pharmacy, phone the NHS helpline on 0800 22 44 88 or look on the internet ([www.nhs24.com](http://www.nhs24.com)).
- Your medicines may not be available in the UK.

## **How can I find out more?**

- Visit the NHS 24 website at [www.nhs24.com](http://www.nhs24.com) for health information and advice.
- Phone the NHS helpline on 0800 22 44 88 (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88) for information about health conditions and services. The helpline is open 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 in Scotland for former UK residents now working abroad
- Health care for UK pensioners visiting Scotland.

**You can get these factsheets in another language or format from:**

- anywhere you get NHS care
- the NHS helpline on 0800 22 44 88 (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88)
- [www.hris.org.uk](http://www.hris.org.uk)
- [www.nhs24.com](http://www.nhs24.com)

## **Feeling unwell?**

- Go to a pharmacy and ask for advice. To find your nearest pharmacy, phone the NHS helpline on 0800 22 44 88 or look on the internet ([www.nhs24.com](http://www.nhs24.com)).
- Visit the NHS 24 website at [www.nhs24.com](http://www.nhs24.com) for health information and advice.
- Phone NHS 24 on 08454 24 24 24 (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 that the information in this factsheet is correct. However, the factsheet is for guidance only so you should not rely on it as a complete statement of the law. If you are thinking about taking legal action, you should contact a solicitor, a citizens advice bureau or any other advice agency.

**Email [ask@hris.org.uk](mailto:ask@hris.org.uk) to ask for this information in another language or format.**

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