

# Health care for UK pensioners visiting Scotland

- If you live abroad and you receive a UK state pension or a UK war pension, this factsheet tells you how you can get NHS care while you are in Scotland.

## **I receive a UK state pension and I live abroad. Can I get health care from the NHS when I visit Scotland?**

- You can get health care from the NHS when you visit Scotland if:
  - you spend at least six months of the year in the UK and the rest of the time in the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland, or
  - you spend at least nine months of the year in the UK and the rest of the time in another country.

## **I receive a UK state pension but I live abroad all or most of the time. Will I be able to get health care from the NHS when I visit Scotland?**

- If you need treatment for an illness or condition that develops while you are visiting Scotland, you will be able to get this from the NHS if:

- you lived in the UK for more than 10 years before moving abroad, or
- you worked for more than 10 years as a Crown servant before moving abroad (for example, you were an employee of HM Forces, a civil servant, or a diplomat), or
- you have a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC).

If you have an EHIC card, you will also be able to get NHS treatment while in Scotland for a condition or illness that you had before coming to Scotland.

If you don't have a card, you may be able to get treatment for an illness or condition that you had before you came to Scotland, if it gets worse after you arrive. But it's up to the doctor providing treatment to decide whether to treat you as an NHS patient.

- 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.

Countries in the European Economic Area (EEA): 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.

## What happens if I need treatment?

- Some services are free, whether or not you are registered as an NHS patient.

### **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 other treatment, staff at the GP surgery or hospital will ask to see some documents to help them decide if you are allowed to get health care as an NHS patient. For example, they may ask you to show:
    - your UK pension book
    - a letter from the Department for Work and Pensions saying that you receive a UK state pension, or
    - your EHIC card (if you have one).
  - If you don't have these documents, you may need to pay for any treatment you receive.

## 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 aged under 16, or under 19 and in full-time education.

# **I receive a war pension. Do the same rules apply to me?**

- If you receive a UK War Disablement Pension, or a War Widow's or Widower's Pension, you can get health care from the NHS whenever you visit Scotland.
- Your husband, wife, civil partner, and children (if they are under 16, or under 19 and in full-time education) can also get NHS care while they are in Scotland with you.
- If you need treatment from the NHS while you are in Scotland, you will need to prove that you receive a war pension. For example, staff at the GP surgery or hospital will ask you to show:
  - your war pension book, or
  - a letter from the Ministry of Defence or Department for Work and Pensions saying you receive a UK war pension.
- If you don't have these documents, you may need to pay for any treatment you receive.

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

- Phone the NHS inform Helpline on 0800 22 44 88 (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88) for information about health conditions and services. You can only call the helpline from the UK.
- Contact The Pension Service on 0845 60 60 265 or textphone 0845 60 60 285. You can also look on the internet ([www.thepensionservice.gov.uk](http://www.thepensionservice.gov.uk)). The Pension Service phone lines are open from 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday.

## **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 former UK residents now working abroad
- Health care in Scotland for UK passport holders living abroad
- Health care in Scotland for holidaymakers from overseas.

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

- anywhere you get NHS care
- [www.nhsinform.co.uk](http://www.nhsinform.co.uk)
- [www.hris.org.uk](http://www.hris.org.uk)
- the NHS helpline on 0800 22 44 88 (textphone 18001 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](http://www.nhs24.com)).
- Visit the NHS 24 website at [www.nhs24.com](http://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](http://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 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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