

Health care in Scotland for UK passport holders living abroad

If you have a UK passport and you live abroad, this factsheet tells you how you can get health care from the NHS when you are in Scotland.

I have a UK passport. I used to live abroad, but I am moving to Scotland. Can I get health care from the NHS?

- If you have a UK passport and you move to Scotland to live permanently, you can get health care from the NHS.

What do I need to do?

- You need to contact a GP as soon as possible after you arrive in Scotland, and ask them to register you as an NHS patient.
- To find a GP, you can phone the NHS inform Helpline on 0800 22 44 88 or look on the internet (www.nhs24.com). Calls to the helpline are free.
- When you have found a GP surgery, contact them and make an appointment to register as an NHS patient.
- The GP will decide if you can register as an NHS patient and if you can get NHS treatment free.

What happens when I register as an NHS patient?

- When you register at the GP surgery, the staff will ask you for some personal information – for example, your name, address and date of birth.
- They will ask to see some documents to help them decide if you can register as an NHS patient. If you need hospital care, staff at the hospital will also ask to see those documents. For example, they may ask you to show:
 - your passport, and
 - documents showing that you intend to stay in the UK – for example, the lease or mortgage for your home in the UK, council tax documents, a TV licence, one-way travel tickets, or a bill for shipping goods to the UK.
- If you don't have the documents they ask for, NHS staff may not be able to treat you as an NHS patient. You may need to pay for any care you receive.
- If you receive health care from the NHS before you are registered as an NHS patient, you may be asked to pay for this. This might happen, for example, if you are waiting to get the documents you need for registering as an NHS patient. After you are registered, any money you have paid will be returned to you.

I am a former UK resident and I work abroad. Do the same rules apply to me?

- If you are a former UK resident and you work abroad, you may be able to get health care from the NHS when you are in Scotland.

- The factsheet ‘Health care for former UK residents now working abroad’ gives more information on this. The factsheet is available from anywhere you get NHS care. You can also phone the NHS inform Helpline on 0800 22 44 88 to get a copy, or look on the internet (www.hris.org.uk).

I am a UK pensioner and I live abroad. Do the same rules apply to me?

- If you are a UK pensioner and you live abroad some or most of the time, you may be able to get health care from the NHS when you are in Scotland.
- The factsheet ‘Health care for UK pensioners visiting Scotland’ gives more information on this. The factsheet is available from anywhere you get NHS care. You can also phone the NHS inform Helpline on 0800 22 44 88 to get a copy, or look on the internet (www.hris.org.uk).

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.

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 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/healthcosts).

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.

What happens if I am not registered as an NHS patient?

- If you are not registered as an NHS patient, you can still 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, and you are not registered as an NHS patient, you will have to pay for it. Staff at the GP surgery or hospital will be able to give you more information on this.

You can get medical insurance to help you with the costs of your care. To find out more about medical insurance, phone the Association of British Insurers on 020 7600 3333 or look on the internet (www.abi.org.uk) and follow the links to Private Medical Insurance in the Consumer Information section.

How can I find out more?

- Phone the NHS 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.

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 for UK pensioners visiting Scotland
- 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
- www.hris.org.uk
- the NHS inform 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).
- 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 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 to ask for this information in another language or format.

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