

# 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 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).
- **If you work outside the EEA or Switzerland**, 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.

### 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

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

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## **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 medicines and 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 phone the NHS Helpline on 0800 22 44 88 and ask for a copy, or look on the internet ([www.scotland.gov.uk/healthcosts](http://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 under 16, or under 19 and in full-time education.

## How can I find out more?

- **Phone the NHS Helpline** on 0800 22 44 88 (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88) for information on health conditions and services. You can only call the Helpline from the UK.
- **Contact your local citizens advice bureau** for free confidential and independent advice on a wide range of issues, including NHS services and your rights. To find your nearest branch, look in your phone book or on Citizens Advice Scotland's website ([www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk)).
- **When you are outside the UK, call the Scottish Government Health Directorates** on + 44 131 244 2378 for information on your rights to NHS care in Scotland.

## 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.

## 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)

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.

# 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)). Phone calls to the NHS Helpline are free.
- **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.**



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