

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 Helpline on 0800 22 44 88 or look on the internet (www.nhs24.com). Calls to the NHS Helpline are free.
- When you have found a GP surgery, contact them and make an appointment to register as an NHS patient.

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 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 Helpline on 0800 22 44 88 to get a copy, or look on the internet (www.hris.org.uk).

I have a UK passport. I have a home in Scotland and a home abroad. Do the same rules apply to me?

- You can get health care from the NHS when in Scotland if:
 - you spend **at least nine months** of the year in the UK, and
 - you have been in the UK for **at least six months** before making a claim.

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 European Economic Area (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.

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 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). Calls to the NHS Helpline are free.

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 about other members of my family?**
 - **If you live in Scotland, other members of your family who are not from the EEA** can get health care from the NHS if they have been allowed to join you in Scotland. They will need to show a document proving that the UK Government has allowed them to do this – for example, an EEA family permit. For more information on EEA family permits, go to the UK Government website for visa services at www.ukvisas.gov.uk or contact the nearest UK Visa Application Centre.
 - **Members of your family who are not from the EEA may also be able to get health care from the NHS in Scotland in their own right** – for example, if they have been allowed to come here to work or to study.
 - **Members of your family who are from the EEA** can get health care from the NHS. They should register with a GP.

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 or in the casualty department)
 - 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, 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 the health insurance section in the Information Zone.

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



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