

Health care

in Scotland for UK passport holders returning after living abroad

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

I have a UK passport, I 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.scot).
- 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, the GP will make the arrangements and staff at the hospital will also ask to see some 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, a letter from your overseas healthcare provider or a bill for goods being returned 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.

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 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.nhsinform.scot).

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.nhsinform.scot).

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 inform 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 dental treatment or eye care.
- 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.gov.scot).

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 (family planning)
- treatment for some infectious diseases and sexually transmitted infections in the best interests of public health.

- 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 search for 'private medical insurance'.

Regardless of the healthcare that you can get on the NHS you should have medical insurance that covers the cost of a return journey to your home country. In the unfortunate event of serious illness or accident 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 and Switzerland and neither the Scottish Government nor NHS Scotland will pay for a journey home with medical cover.

How can I find out more?

For information about health conditions and services, phone the NHS inform Helpline on 0800 22 44 88 (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88; the helpline also provides an interpreting service). The helpline is open every day 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 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 from:

- anywhere you get NHS care
- www.nhsinform.scot
- the NHS inform Helpline on 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.scot).
- **Visit the NHS 24 website** at www.nhs24.scot 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 111** or look on the internet (www.nhs24.scot) 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 this information is correct. However, the information is for guidance only so you should not rely on it as a full statement of the law. If you are thinking about taking legal action, you should contact a solicitor, a citizens advice bureau, or other advice agency.

Check www.nhsinform.scot for versions of this information in other languages or formats.

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