



Accessing Healthcare in England

If you are registered with a general practitioner in Scotland then you are entitled to free NHS care arranged by NHS Scotland. Generally that care will be provided as close to home as possible and within your own NHS Board area but care may be provided elsewhere in NHS Scotland if that is clinically necessary. NHS England runs a different financial system involving internal charging between “providers” (NHS Trusts) and “commissioners” (NHS Primary Care Trusts) for health care services. Residents of Scotland who are registered with a GP in Scotland will always be entitled to emergency care anywhere in the UK but are not automatically entitled to access elective (planned) NHS care in England as NHS providers will expect to invoice NHS Scotland for providing that service. Before providing elective services to patients registered within NHS Scotland, a provider Trust is therefore required to obtain advance financial consent from the relevant NHS Scotland Board.

Where a patient wishes to access routine healthcare in England for social reasons such as studying or working in England or staying with relatives for a period longer than a normal holiday then we would strongly recommend that the patient registers with a local general practitioner in England which will entitle them to access their routine NHS care including community services from NHS England.

Where it is necessary for clinical reasons to refer a patient to a specialist service in England because that service is not available in NHS Scotland then this is usually funded through national agreements managed by NHS National Services Division in Edinburgh. In order to access funding for such referrals it is necessary for the patients referring doctor to make an advance funding application through the relevant Unplanned Activity (UNPACS) process described above. Advance consent should always be sought even if the referral is to a UK specialist service commissioned on a UK basis through the National Specialist Commissioning Team. This is necessary in order to avoid delays and challenges to the processing of invoices which will be received for such referrals. For Acute Services requests the application must come from an NHS Scotland employed consultant and be forwarded to the local NHS Board UNPACS team. For NHS Forth Valley this is the Consultant in Public Health (Acute Services). For primary care doctors it is usually best to refer the patient to an appropriate specialist consultant within NHS Scotland who will be able to arrange referral to England if clinically necessary. Advice can also be sought from the Primary Care UNPACS and Complex Care team in the CHP.

Accessing Healthcare Abroad

Whatever your reasons for going abroad, you may be entitled to medical care at reduced cost or sometimes free. Your entitlement will vary based on whether you're going to an European Economic Area country (EEA) or elsewhere in the world. The best source of initial advice is the www.nhs.uk website which has a detailed section on healthcare abroad.

You are also advised to consider appropriate travel insurance which may provide better cover for illness or injury and include arrangements to return you to the UK if necessary.

The Free EHIC (European Health Insurance Card)

The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) replaced the old E111 in 2006.

Your EHIC lets you get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes for free. It will cover you for treatment that is needed to allow you to continue your stay until your planned return. It also covers you for treatment of pre-existing medical conditions and for routine maternity care, as long as you're not [going abroad to give birth](#). The EHIC is valid in all European Economic Area (EEA) countries, including Switzerland. For more information look at the Free EHIC section on the www.nhs.uk website.

You can [apply for a free EHIC](#) online.

The EHIC is entirely free of charge. Be careful as there are several other unofficial websites which will charge you if you apply through them.

If you're having difficulties with the online application form, you want to update your personal details or replace a lost or stolen card, call the automated EHIC application service on 0845 606 2030.

Accessing Healthcare in other countries of the European Economic Area by the S2 (E112) Route.

If an NHS consultant recommends that you need to go abroad to access the necessary care for your condition then you may have to follow the S2 route. The S2 (or E112) route entitles you to state-funded treatment in another European Economic Area (EEA) country or Switzerland. Treatment will be provided under the same conditions of care and payment as for residents of that country. This could mean you have to pay a percentage of the costs personally.

For example, in some countries, patients cover 25% of the costs of their state-provided treatment, known as a "co-payment charge". The state covers the other 75%. If you received treatment under this healthcare system, you would be expected to pay the same co-payment charge as a patient from that country.

In some countries, as in the UK, care is completely free. This means the S2 (or E112) will cover 100% of the costs of your care, so you would not be required to pay any treatment costs upfront.

With this system, the NHS pays the same contribution as the country in which treatment is taking place. For example, for an operation that costs £8,000 of which you're expected to pay a standard patient co-payment charge of 25%, you will pay £2,000. The NHS will pay the remaining £6,000 to the institution treating you. However, you may be able to claim back some or all of the co-payment when you return to the UK.

How to apply

You will need to contact the [Consultant in Public Health \(Acute Services\)](#) and ask for a written agreement. The commissioner will decide whether to refer you to another member state for treatment. In making this decision, your local commissioner will need to be satisfied that:

- **A UK NHS consultant has recommended in writing that you be treated in the other EEA country, and that a full clinical assessment has been carried out to demonstrate that the treatment will meet your specific needs.**
- **The costs of sending you abroad for treatment are justified. The health commissioner is responsible for spending money efficiently and fairly, in the interest of all the patients they look after.**
- **The treatment is available under the other country's state health scheme.**
- **You're entitled to treatment under the NHS.**

If your commissioner recommends that you can go abroad for treatment, the appropriate paperwork should be passed to the Overseas Healthcare Team in Newcastle. They will issue the S2 (or E112) form. You will need to take this form with you to the other member state where you go for treatment. For more information, call the Overseas Healthcare Team on 0191 218 1999.

[Accessing Healthcare in other countries of the European Economic Area by the Article 56 Route \(EU Directive on cross-border care\).](#)

Article 56 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union sets out circumstances in which patients may have a right to choose to travel to other countries in the European Economic Area (EEA) for treatment. Article 56 does not apply between countries within the UK as the UK as a whole is considered to be the Member State. These regulations usually apply if you wish to travel abroad to receive care which is normally available to you from the NHS in the UK. If the care you are seeking is not available in the UK then you should apply through the S2 Route described above. The application of these regulations to Scotland are set out in guidance from The Scottish Government describe circumstances in which NHS Scotland patients may be entitled to apply for re-imbursment of costs incurred abroad. In many cases it is necessary to have advance consent from the relevant NHS Board before traveling for treatment or the charges will not be reimbursed.

How to apply

Before traveling abroad please read the advice on the www.nhs.uk website and apply for the Free EHIC card. Please DO NOT travel abroad to access healthcare services without first contacting your NHS Board to explain your intentions. There are certain circumstances in which you may be able to reclaim some or all of your healthcare costs abroad but in many circumstances you will only be able to reclaim

these costs if you have advance financial authority from the NHS Board where you usually live and depending upon the circumstances you may have to pay for some or all of the costs yourself.

Contact us.

As the whole of the UK is the member state of the European Union most of the regulations are negotiated and updated by the Department of Health and the best source of internet advice including travel advice is the Healthcare Abroad section of the www.nhs.uk website or the UK Department of Health www.doh.gov.uk

Before traveling abroad to access health care please seek advice and advance consent from the appropriate NHS Board. If you pay for healthcare abroad without advance consent in writing from the NHS Board it may not be possible to reclaim these costs at a later date.

If you live within the NHS Forth Valley area the contact point for advice and advance consent is the Consultant in Public Health (Acute Services). Please e-mail your request to graham.foster@nhs.net.