

Information for overseas visitors - hospital treatment and paying for care

This information is for overseas visitors coming to St George's Hospital or one of our other sites. It explains who has the right to have free hospital treatment under the National Health Service (NHS). It also tells you when you need to pay for hospital treatment or other care. If you have any further queries, please contact our overseas visitors team on 020 8725 4693 or 020 8725 3439. This leaflet is a general guide only and is not a full summary of current regulations.

What is the NHS?

The NHS is a state-funded organisation which provides free hospital treatment to people who are legally living in the UK on a permanent basis.

Am I entitled to free hospital treatment?

If you are not ordinarily resident in the UK, you may have to pay for your hospital treatment, even if you have a British passport or have paid National Insurance contributions and taxes in the UK in the past.

I am just visiting the UK. Do I definitely have to pay for treatment if I become unwell?

No, you are entitled to free healthcare if:

- You normally live in a country with a bilateral healthcare agreement with the UK.
- You normally live in a country that is a member of the European Economic Area healthcare arrangement and you have a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). This card covers emergency treatment only (not pre-planned). You need to bring this card with you to hospital and it must be in your name and within the expiry date.
- You are a refugee or an asylum seeker whose formal application to the UK Border Agency is being considered. A refugee is someone who has been granted asylum in this country. If you are a refugee or an asylum seeker you will still have to pay for all prescribed medications.

You may be entitled to free healthcare if:

- you have come to study or take up employment in the UK. You need to show evidence that you are working for a UK-based employer, such as a payslip. Your 'right to work' does not count as evidence in this case. If you are studying full-time you need to show evidence that you are attending a full-time course lasting not less than six months.

How can I prove that I am entitled to free hospital treatment?

You will need to bring evidence with you to show you are legally living within the UK or are a visitor in one of the categories above.

All patients admitted to our hospitals must provide correct information when registering their details, and must be prepared to provide evidence of living in the UK on a settled basis, whatever their nationality and living status.

To help us check if you are entitled to free healthcare, you will need to bring two separate documents to your appointment – one to prove your identity and one to prove your address. See below for which documents you can bring.

If you are a **maternity patient**, you also need to complete a pregnancy referral form before your first appointment. You can fill this in online on our website or you can print it out to fill in. If you print it, please bring the completed form with you to your appointment.

What types of document can I show?

The following documents can be used as proof of identity:



1. Current signed passport
2. Residence permit issued by UK Border Agency
3. Valid UK photo-card driving licence
4. EU or Swiss national identity photo-card
5. Valid armed forces or police photographic identity card
6. Photographic disabled blue badge
7. Citizen card.

The following documents can be used as proof of address. They must contain your current address and be dated within the last six months:



1. Recent original utility bill such as gas, electric, water, landline (mobile not acceptable)
2. Council tax bill for the current year
3. Bank, building society or credit union statement or passbook
4. Recent original mortgage statement from a recognised lender
5. Current council or housing association rent book or tenancy agreement
6. Notification letter from the Department for Work and Pensions confirming your right to benefits or a state pension.

If I am not eligible for free treatment, what will I have to pay for?

You will be charged for any treatment given to you by any member of staff in any of our services, in hospital or in the community.

In some cases, you may be asked to pay a deposit or the full amount before your treatment.

There are exceptions under certain circumstances which we will discuss with you if they apply.

How will I know if I have to pay?

Our overseas visitors team can give you more information if you are not sure whether you are entitled to free hospital treatment.

The overseas visitors team can also advise you about which documents are OK to use when you are asked for evidence of entitlement.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about paying for hospital treatment and care as an overseas visitor, please contact the overseas visitors team on 020 8725 3439 or 020 8725 4693 or email: overseaspatients@stgeorges.nhs.uk (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

If you need an interpreter please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) using the details below.

Additional information

NHS national guidance

You can find out more from the following website if you are visiting or moving to England: www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/uk-visitors/Pages/access-services-in-England.aspx

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer). **Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

