

Overseas Patient Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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. 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 this country in the past.

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

In order to receive free hospital treatment, you will need to provide evidence that you are legally living within the UK. All patients admitted to this hospital, whatever their nationality and living status, may be required to provide correct information when registering their details. If you are living in the UK on a settled basis then you should be prepared to provide evidence. Examples of acceptable documents can be found below.

What happens if I need to attend the accident and emergency department?

You will not be charged for treatment you receive in A&E. However, if you are admitted or transferred to another ward, you may have to pay.

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

There are a number of circumstances under which you could be entitled to free healthcare:

- If you are visiting the UK and you normally live in a country that has a bilateral healthcare agreement with the UK, you might be entitled to free healthcare if you become unwell during your visit to the UK.
- If you are visiting the UK and you normally live in a country that is a member of the European Economic Area healthcare arrangement, you will be entitled to free healthcare, provided that you have a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). This card does not entitle you to pre-planned treatment – only emergency treatment.
- If you have come from abroad to take up employment or studies in the UK, you might be entitled to free hospital treatment. However, it will not be enough to show your 'right to work'. You need to be able to show evidence that you are actually working for a UK-based employer. If you are in full-time study, you need to be able to show that you are attending a full-time course of not less than six months duration.
- If you are a refugee or an asylum seeker whose formal application to the UK Border Agency is still being considered, you will not have to pay hospital charges. 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.

The doctor told me that I would not have to pay?

The only person who can formally advise whether you are eligible for NHS treatment is a UCLH Overseas Officer. If a doctor or nurse tells you that you do not have to pay, they may

be referring to the treatment you receive in the Emergency Department (sometimes also known as Accident & Emergency or Casualty Department) only.

How will I know if I have to pay?

The Overseas Visitors Team (contact details below) can provide you with more detailed information if you are unsure whether you are entitled to free hospital treatment. – Please contact the Overseas Visitors office on 020 7 288 3820 or email wh-tr.OverseasVisitors@nhs.net who will be happy to help you

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, both in the hospital or in the community. Exceptions may apply under certain circumstances, but we will discuss this with you if it applies to you.

I can't afford it. What should I do?

If a patient states that they cannot afford to pay for their treatment, the Finance Department may be able to offer arrangements for the patient to pay in instalments in some circumstances. Charges will not be waived. Patients will be given details of how to contact the Finance Department when they receive an invoice

Acceptable documents

The following documents can be used as proof of identity:

- Current signed passport
- Residence permit issued by UK Border Agency
- EU or Swiss National Identity Photo-card
- Valid armed forces or police photographic Identity Card
- Valid UK photo-card driving licence
- Photographic disabled blue badge
- Citizen card or national identity card
- Council issued bus pass (e.g. Freedom Pass) for senior citizens only

The following documents can be used as proof of address:

- Recent original utility bill (gas, electricity, water, land line phone bill) (mobile not accepted)
- Local Authority council tax bill for the current year
- Bank, building society or credit union statement of passbook
- Original mortgage statement from recognised lender issued within the last year
- Current council/housing association rent book/card or tenancy agreement

- HMRC self-assessment letter or tax demand dated within the current financial year
- Recent payslip / P45 / P60
- Notification letter from Department for Work and Pensions confirming your right to benefit or state pension
- Solicitor letter within the last three months confirming recent house purchase/land registry confirmation of address
- Recent letter from School/University/Place of employment

Should a patient be identified as chargeable (not eligible for free NHS treatment), we will communicate this to the patient and advise them of the anticipated cost. Our Overseas Visitors Office will work with patients to discuss payment arrangements however care will not be delayed or withheld.

Emergency Department attendances and urgent care will be provided as normal. No patient visiting UCLH will have urgent care delayed.

Further information:

<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/uk-visitors/Pages/accessing-nhs-services.aspx>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overseas-nhs-visitors-implementing-the-charging-regulations>

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