

ADVICE ON ENTITLEMENT TO FREE HEALTH CARE TREATMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

If you are in any doubt about your entitlement please contact your relevant health care provider



This leaflet is a general guide and is not a full statement of the current regulations, applicable to Northern Ireland.

Please ask your health care provider for further information.





Entitlement to receive free health care treatment in Northern Ireland

Who is entitled to free treatment?

Health Services are primarily for the benefit of people who live in Northern Ireland (NI) and who are deemed to be '*ordinarily resident*'.

Some visitors may be able to receive a limited amount of free treatment, therefore it is always best to ask before you receive the treatment, where possible.

What does the term '*ordinarily resident*' mean?

In order to be considered '*ordinarily resident*' in Northern Ireland, you must be living here lawfully and on a settled basis. Being born in NI or holding a UK passport and living elsewhere, paying UK taxes or receiving a UK pension **does not** mean you are automatically entitled.

What will happen if I receive free treatment when I am not entitled?

HSC Trusts have a duty to check evidence of a patient's entitlement and as a consequence you may receive a letter asking you to complete a questionnaire or be asked by a member of staff to provide proof of your circumstances, so if you think you qualify for free treatment, please ensure that you have documentary evidence available if required, as until you can satisfy your health care provider of your entitlement, they will charge for your health care.

Family Members of Cross Border Workers

I am a family member of a Cross Border Worker, am I entitled to access treatment free of charge in Northern Ireland?

Cross Border Worker family members are not entitled to the full range of HSC services free of charge and should ask their health care provider for advice, where possible, before they receive treatment.



Health and Care Number

I have a Health and Care Number does this entitle me to access treatment free of charge?

No, a Health and Care Number is a unique identifier which assists with the provision of services. Being issued with a Health and Care Number is not an indication that you are entitled to free HSC services.



WORKING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

People who work in NI but do not live here

I work in Northern Ireland and pay my taxes here, but do not live here. Am I entitled to access free health services?

If you travel from another EEA Member State to Northern Ireland to work on a regular basis and are registered with HMRC as a worker, you are considered to be a 'cross border' or 'frontier' worker and you are entitled to access health services in Northern Ireland on the same basis as a person who is 'ordinarily resident' here.

What do I need to do?

You must register with a General Practitioner (GP) in Northern Ireland by completing a Cross Border Worker Form, which is available from a GP Practice or by telephoning the Family Practitioner Services, Business Services Organisation on 0300 555 0113

Once you are registered as a Cross Border/Frontier Worker the Business Services Organisation will review your status on a regular basis and you will be required to produce documentary proof of your employment in Northern Ireland.



VISITORS TO NORTHERN IRELAND

Visitors from EEA Member States *

I am visiting Northern Ireland from a EEA Member State. Am I entitled to free treatment?

As a visitor from an EEA Member State you must pay for your treatment unless:

- you provide a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). An EHIC only covers treatment which is considered 'immediately necessary' during your visit and cannot wait until you return home. You will be considered chargeable for your treatment if you cannot provide your EHIC or you receive treatment which could have waited until you returned home,

or

- you fall under an exemption as set out in the Provision of Health Services to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. In order to benefit under this category, you will be required to provide satisfactory evidence of your entitlement to your health care provider.

*and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland



Visitors from non EEA Countries

I am visiting Northern Ireland from a Non-EEA Member State. Am I entitled to free treatment?

If you are a visitor from a Non-EEA Member State, you must pay for your treatment, unless:

- you qualify under a Bi-lateral Agreement between your home country of residence and the UK

or

- you fall under an exemption as set out in the Provision of Health Services to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

In order to qualify for free treatment under one of these categories, you will be required to provide satisfactory evidence of your entitlement to your health care provider.

All treatment provided in an Emergency or Casualty Department will be provided free of charge, however, if you are admitted as an inpatient or referred as an outpatient from the Emergency Department charges may be raised for your on-going treatment. You should always check, if possible, if you will be charged before you receive any treatment.

Bi-lateral Agreements



The following countries have a Bilateral Agreement with the UK*. The level of treatment covered and the qualifying rules vary between each country, therefore you should seek advice where possible, prior to receiving any treatment in Northern Ireland. Bilateral Agreements do not provide cover where you have travelled to the UK to obtain health care.

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| ♦ Anguilla | ♦ Georgia | ♦ Russia |
| ♦ Armenia | ♦ Gibraltar | ♦ Serbia |
| ♦ Australia | ♦ Isle of Man | ♦ St. Helena |
| ♦ Azerbaijan | ♦ Jersey | ♦ Tajikistan |
| ♦ Barbados | ♦ Kazakhstan | ♦ Turkmenistan |
| ♦ Belarus | ♦ Kyrgyzstan | ♦ Turks and Caicos Islands |
| ♦ Bosnia and Herzegovina | ♦ Macedonia | ♦ Ukraine |
| ♦ British Virgin Islands | ♦ Moldova | ♦ Uzbekistan |
| ♦ Falkland Islands | ♦ Montserrat | |
| | ♦ New Zealand | |

Some of the Bilateral Agreements provide cover for both nationals and residents of their country, it is best to seek advice on whether you are entitled under a Bilateral Agreement before you receive any treatment in NI.