

Further information

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Alternatively, visit the Know Who Turn To section of the NHS Western Isles website for further information at www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/index.asp where there is also a short film to view regarding how to use the health service in Scotland.

Health Rights Information Scotland (HRIS)

HRIS offers clear, accurate and up to date information about health rights. This includes information about what you can expect from the NHS, accessing your health records, and being involved in decisions about your health care. Information is available in audio, BSL, easy to read, large print and in alternative languages.

Visit: www.hris.org.uk/patient-information

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Bòrd SSN nan Eilean Siar
NHS Western Isles

How to register with your local General Practitioner (GP)



Useful information for patients and their carers
about how to register with a local GP.

Alternative Formats

Statement of availability of document in alternative formats

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If you wish to have sections of this document reproduced in another format or language, please contact the above address.

Polish:

Na życzenie fragmenty tej informacji mogą być powielone w innym formacie lub języku, proszę o kontakt na dane podane powyżej

Chinese Cantonese:

如果您希望將此資訊的某些部分以另一種格式或語言複製，請使用以上的聯繫資訊。

Portuguese:

Se desejar receber partes da presente informação reproduzidas noutra formato ou idioma, utilize os detalhes de contacto supramencionados

Latvian:

Ja Jūs vēlaties saņemt šīs informācijas daļas, reproducētas citā formātā vai valodā, Lūdzu, lietojiet augstāk minēto kontaktinformāciju

GP Practices & Surgeries in the Western Isles

ISLE OF LEWIS

- **Westside Medical Practice** **01851 850282**
Borve Surgery, Borve 01851 850282
Carloway Surgery, Carloway 01851 643333
- **The Group Practice** **01851 703145**
Group Practice, Stornoway 01851 703145
Habost Surgery, Ness 01851 810689
- **Broadbay Medical Practice, Stornoway** **01851 703588**
- **Langabhat Medical Practice** **01851 860222**
Uig and Bernera Surgery, Uig 01851 672283
Pairc Surgery, Gravir 01851 880272
North Lochs Surgery, Lochs 01851 860222

ISLE OF HARRIS

- **North Harris Medical Practice, Tarbert** **01859 502421**
- **South Harris Medical Practice, Leverburgh** **01859 520278**

UISTS & BENBECULA

- **North Uist Medical Practice, Lochmaddy** **01876 500333**
- **Benbecula Medical Practice, Griminish** **01870 602215**
- **South Uist Medical Practice, Daliburgh** **01878 700302**

ISLE OF BARRA

- **Barra Medical Practice, Castlebay** **01871 810282**

NHS health care, until they have been resident in the UK for one year.

WHAT IF I HAVE NO PROOF OF ENTITLEMENT TO FREE NHS HEALTH CARE?

If you cannot prove your entitlement to free NHS health care for non emergency treatment, then you cannot receive free NHS non-emergency treatment.

In this situation, you can either: ask a GP to consider accepting you and your family as temporary residents, as described at the Examples of exceptions and special cases section above, or ask a GP to accept you and your family as private patients. If the GP accepts you and your family as private patients, you will be required to pay for any treatment received. The GP will also give you an estimate of cost before each treatment commences. The standard of care you will receive will be exactly the same standard as that provide to NHS patients.

If the GP refers you or your family for further treatment, this will also be chargeable.

What if I need emergency health care?

Everyone has an entitlement to free emergency health care, whether this is provided at an Accident and Emergency department or by a GP, regardless of their status. If you or your family have a serious accident or a medical emergency, contact the ambulance service by dialling 999. If you do not speak English, ask an English speaking friend or relative to telephone on your behalf.

Lithuanian:

Jei jūs norėtumėte, jog ši informacija būtų pateikta kitu formatu ar kita kalba, prašome susisiekti viršuje pateiktais kontaktais

Russian:

Если Вы хотите получить какую-либо из этой информации в другом формате или на другом языке, пожалуйста, воспользуйтесь вышеуказанными контактными данными

Gàidhlig:

Ma thogras sibh earrainean dhe'n sgrìobhainn seo a bhith air a mhac-shamhlachadh ann an cruth neo cànan eile, cuiribh fios, ma 'se bhur toil e, do'n seòladh gu h-àrd.

Czech:

Pokud chcete některé z informací reprodukovat v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se na nás na níže uvedeném kontaktu

Bengali:

"আপনি যদি এই তথ্যটির কিছু কিছু অংশ অন্যান্য হরফে/আকারে বা ভাষায় পেতে চান, অনুগ্রহ করে ওপরে দেওয়া যোগাযোগের বিস্তারিত তথ্য ব্যবহার করুন"

Introduction

This booklet answers the following questions:

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OTHER MAIN EXCEPTIONS AND SPECIAL CASE EXEMPTIONS ARE:

- Emergency treatment in an A&E department or provided by a general practitioner.
- Family Planning Services.
- Treatment for certain infectious diseases, (including sexually transmitted diseases).
- Involuntary psychiatric treatment.
- HIV/AIDS.
- Treatment provided as a result of a Court Order.
- Anyone who has been in the UK legally and lawfully for more than one year.
- If the primary purpose of being in the UK is for employment and they are currently employed.
- A student who is pursuing a full time course of study, their dependents are also exempt from charges.
- Accredited diplomatic staff.
- Off shore employees working in UK territorial waters, or in the UK sector of the North Sea.
- Crew members employed on UK registered vessels.

AU PAIRS

In terms of NHS regulations, au pairs are defined as: "...persons who come to the UK to learn the English language and to live for up to 2 years as a member of an English speaking family. Au pairs are unmarried, aged between 17 and 27, without any dependents in terms of these arrangements..."

If an au pair comes from an EEA country or a country with a reciprocal health care agreement, they enjoy the same rights to free NHS health care as any other national of that country.

If an au pair comes from a non-EEA country or a country that does not have a reciprocal agreement, they have no entitlement to free

Residents Permit and those with “Indefinite Leave To Remain” are entitled to free NHS health care.

EXAMPLES OF EXCEPTIONS AND SPECIAL CASES

There are many exceptions to the regulations governing free access to NHS health care. Here are a few examples of the main exceptions and special cases, which allow anyone, regardless of status, to have free access to NHS health care services. This list is not exhaustive, almost every rule or guidance on this topic is extremely long and full of further exemptions and special cases. If you require more information, please ask the GP receptionist or practice manager.

TEMPORARY RESIDENTS FROM NON-EEA COUNTRIES AND COUNTRIES THAT DO NOT HAVE RECIPROCAL HEALTH CARE AGREEMENTS

A temporary resident is someone who has been in an area served by a Practice, for more than 24 hours, but less than 3 months. A GP has the discretion, if they wish, to register a non-EEA national or a national from a country that does not have EEA reciprocal agreements, as a temporary resident with their practice and thereby provide free primary health care services to them and their family, regardless of their status.

If a temporary resident has been in the UK for more than 3 months, a GP has the discretion, if they wish, to register a non-EEA national or a national from a country that does not have EEA reciprocal agreements, with their practice and thereby provide free primary care services to them and their family, regardless of their status.

It should be noted that other NHS services such as hospital care, might not necessarily be free to temporary residents from countries out with the EEA and countries that do not have reciprocal health care agreements with the EEA.

What is the National Health Service (NHS)?

The National Health Service, known as the ‘NHS’ is a state run national health service which provides free health care in the UK for UK nationals and citizens from other countries who also qualify for free health care in the UK.

Details of who qualifies for free NHS health care are shown in the ‘Do I and my family qualify for free NHS health care?’ section on pages 9-14.

What is a General Medical Practitioner (GP)?

A GP is your local personal NHS doctor. If you are ill or worried about your health or the health of anyone in your family, you should go and see your local GP (please refer to the booklet ‘Know Who To Turn To available at www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/index.asp for further information).

The place where you go to see your GP is called either a surgery or a health centre. GPs often work together in a small group called a practice. The benefit of GPs working in small groups is that if for any reason your own GP is not available, you may ask to see another GP in the same practice.

Many practices have both male and female GPs. If your faith, religion or culture requires that you or a member of your family are treated by a GP of the same sex, please let the GP receptionist know this when you first go to register.

Most surgeries and health centres are accessible by wheelchair, have doors that open electronically and have toilet facilities designed to meet the needs of disabled patients (a list of the Medical Practices in the Western Isles is available at www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/GPPractice.htm).

What services do GPs provide?

GPs are responsible for the comprehensive and continuing care of patients registered with them. GPs provide advice and treatment. If further treatment or investigation of a problem is required, the GP will co-ordinate this and ensure that it is provided. Further treatment might be provided by your GP, or by a member of their team such as a practice nurse, midwife or health visitor, or if required, by referral to a specialist doctor called a consultant or to other specialist services.

GPs are also keen to promote good health amongst their patients. They and their staff give advice on diet, exercise, healthy living and disease prevention.

Most patients are looked after by the same GP for many years. This builds up a bond of trust between the GP and patient and enables the GP to build up a good knowledge of you and your health care needs.

Why should I register with a GP?

By asking to register with your local GP, you are simply asking your local GP to be responsible for your ongoing medical care. If you are accepted, the GP is confirming that he or she will accept this responsibility. You will then know where to go for local medical care.

If for any reason, no GP in your local practice is able to accept your registration, you can approach other GP practices.

REFUGEES

A refugee is someone who: “has a well founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion; is outside the country they belong to or normally reside in; and is unable or unwilling to return home for fear of persecution.”

As a refugee, you are entitled to the same free NHS health care as the indigenous population. You should produce your HC2 certificate when you go to register with a GP. They are issued to the main applicant but details of dependants are included on the certificate in order to enable the whole family to access NHS services.

In addition, as a refugee you may also have been issued with an Applicant Registration Card (ARC card), for identification purposes. Again, if you have an ARC card, this should be taken with you when you go to register with a GP. The ARC card is proof that you have lodged an application for asylum in Britain.

WORK PERMIT HOLDERS

Many non-EEA nationals and nationals from countries that do not have EEA reciprocal agreements, enter the UK on a work permit each year. If you hold a work permit which is for less than 6 months duration, neither you nor your family here as dependents have any entitlement to free health care.

If you hold a work permit which is for more than 6 months duration, you and your family here as dependents are entitled to free NHS health care.

After 12 months of working in the UK, a work permit holder can apply for an EEA Residents Permit. If as a work permit holder you have spent five continuous years in the UK, you would usually become eligible for “Indefinite Leave to Remain”. Holders of an EEA

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA (EEA) COUNTRIES AND COUNTRIES WITH RECIPROCAL AGREEMENTS

All nationals of the European Economic Area (EEA) countries (and Switzerland) and those countries with reciprocal agreements, are eligible to receive free NHS health care, the “treatment the need for which arose during the visit”. The list of EEA countries and those countries with reciprocal agreements are available at www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/eucitizens/

For EEA nationals, the entitlement to free NHS health care is certified by the European Health Insurance Card.

Countries with Reciprocal Health Care Agreements

Non-EEA countries have reciprocal agreements with the EEA countries. Their nationals are entitled to receive free NHS health care for “treatment the need for which arose during the visit”.

ASYLUM SEEKERS

An asylum seeker is someone who has submitted an application for protection under the Geneva Convention and is waiting for that claim for asylum to be decided by the Home Office.

As an asylum seeker, you are entitled to the same free NHS health care as the indigenous population. You should produce your HC2 certificate when you go to register with a GP. They are issued to the main applicant but details of dependants are included on the certificate in order to enable the whole family to access free NHS services.

In addition, as an asylum seeker you may also have been issued with an Applicant Registration Card (ARC card), for identification purposes. Again, if you have an ARC card, this should be taken with you when you go to register with a GP. The ARC card is proof that you have lodged an application for asylum in Britain.

How do I register?

First, locate your nearest GP practice.

If you are unsure where this is, you can look this up in the telephone directory or ask an English-speaking friend or relative to do this for you if you are non-English speaking. You/your friend or relative can telephone the GP practice to find out when would be a good date and time for you to go along and register. If you are non-English speaking, your friend/relative making the call should let them know what your main language is. This will enable the practice staff to set up the Language Line telephone interpretation system for your visit. When you visit you should take with you details of:

- Your name
- Age
- Date of birth
- Birth certificate
- Address (even if this is temporary)
- Phone number (if you have one)
- Your passport or other evidence of your free entitlement to NHS health care, for example your European Health Insurance Card, or if you are an asylum seeker or a refugee your HC2 certificate and ARC card. If you are unsure whether you and your family are entitled to free NHS health care, please see the ‘Do I and my family qualify for free NHS health care?’ section on pages 9-14 which will provide guidance.
- Any health records you may have such as vaccination records or immunisation records.

If you are also registering other members of your family, you should also take along the same information for them.

At the surgery or health centre, the GP receptionist will fill out a registration form with you and then you are registered. A similar form will be filled out for each member of your family you wish to register.

Will I be able to communicate with my GP if I speak little or no English?

All GP practices in the Western Isles are equipped with the “Language Line” telephone interpretation service, and have staff who are trained in its use. Language Line gives access to expert interpreters for 120 different languages, on the telephone, in 60-90 seconds. So if you are non-English speaking or if your English is not very good, you will still be able to communicate easily with your GP and their staff.

GP Practices in the Western Isles do not use friends/family members of patients as interpreters due to confidentiality issues.

Some GPs ask all new patients to have a full health check. This will usually be carried out by a nurse. It is important that you and your family members go to this appointment, even if you/they are well.

The health check will give the doctor a good indication of your/their general health and will enable the GP to provide the most appropriate advice and future treatment.

How do I get to see my GP?

You can make an appointment either by telephone or by visiting the surgery or health centre. If you want to make an appointment by telephone but you do not speak English, you can ask an English speaking friend or relative to telephone on your behalf and make an appointment at a time which is convenient to you. If your need to see your GP is urgent, ask your friend or relative to ensure that this information is clearly stated to the receptionist.

Patients with more urgent health care needs are seen as quickly as possible. If the doctor thinks that you are too ill to come to the surgery, then he or she may visit you at home. If your appointment is for a non-urgent problem, you may have to wait a short period for an appointment.

What if I need non-emergency health care when my GP surgery or health centre is closed?

In these circumstances, you should telephone the NHS24 helpline on 08454 24 24 24. If you are non-English speaking, you should ask an English speaking friend or relative to telephone on your behalf.

Do I and my family qualify for free NHS health care?

Below is a short summary which gives the basic information to establish if you and your family are entitled to free NHS health care. If you are in doubt, please ask the GP receptionist for guidance.