

Information for patients about eligibility for free NHS hospital treatment

This leaflet is for visitors to Guy's Hospital, St Thomas' Hospital or one of our other sites. It explains who is eligible to receive free hospital treatment under the National Health Service (NHS). It also tells you what hospital care you may have to pay for.

Please tell us if you have any difficulty reading this leaflet and we will try to arrange for services to help you understand it more clearly.

The NHS is state funded and provides free hospital treatment to people who are living lawfully and permanently in the UK

If you are not ordinarily resident in the UK you may have to pay according to NHS charging regulations. Even if you have a British passport or have paid National Insurance contributions and taxes in this country in the past.

Evidence of having the right to live lawfully in the UK is required to receive free hospital treatment

All patients admitted to this hospital, whatever their nationality and living status are 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 of entitlement if requested.

Treatment given in an Emergency Department (A&E)

No charge will be made for treatment in the Emergency Department. However, this does NOT include emergency treatment given in any other department in the hospital.

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 if you become unwell during your visit to the UK, provided that you have a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). This card only entitles you to emergency treatment and does not entitle you to pre-planned treatment.

If you have come from abroad to take up employment or studies in the UK you might be entitled to free hospital treatment

It will not be enough to show only your 'right to work'. You need to be able to show evidence that you are actually working for an employer who has its principle place of business in the UK.

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 month's duration.

If you are a refugee or an asylum seeker whose formal application to the Home Office is still being considered

Asylum seekers who have made formal applications with UK Visas and Immigration and are waiting for an answer are exempt from 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.

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

You will need to bring evidence with you to show you are living legally 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.

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 the Home Office
3. EU or Swiss national identity photo-card
4. Valid UK photo-card driving licence
5. Valid armed or police forces photographic identity card
6. Photographic disabled blue badge
7. Citizen card

***Please note:** it is best to bring **proof of your right to reside** in the UK (i.e. UK or EEA passport, EEA national ID photo card, visa or residence permit issued by the Home Office, Biometric Residence Card or Permit, Asylum Registration Card or valid UK armed or police forces photo ID). This will help us to determine your eligibility more quickly and avoid delays to your treatment.

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 / HM Revenue and Customs confirming your right to benefits or a state pension.

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

We will charge you for any treatment given to you, by any member of staff in any of our services, both in the hospital and in the community. There are certain circumstances when exceptions might apply which we will discuss with you.

This leaflet is a general guide only and not intended to provide a full summary of the current regulations.

How will I know if I have to pay?

The Overseas Visitors Unit can provide you with more detailed information if you are unsure whether you are entitled to free hospital treatment. You will be asked to provide evidence of entitlement and the Overseas Visitors team can advise you what documentation is acceptable.

Contact us

The office is open Monday to Friday, from 8am to 5pm. They can be contacted:

By telephone: +44 (0)20 7188 7767 / 3202. You can leave a voice message if no-one is available to take your call.

By email: ovu@gstt.nhs.uk

The office is at the following address: Overseas Visitors Unit, Governor's Hall, St Thomas' Hospital, 249 Westminster Bridge Road, London, SE1 7EH

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

To make a complaint, contact the Complaints Department.

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

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