



TAKING UP PERMANENT RESIDENCE IN SCOTLAND? WHAT ARE YOUR HEALTH CARE ENTITLEMENTS?

Entitlement to NHS care in Scotland is generally based on residency status not nationality. Visitors to Scotland (ie those not ordinarily resident in Scotland for more than 3 months (or 6 months for UK state pensioners living part of the year in another member state of the European Economic Area) of each year) are not entitled to NHS care without charge unless they are accepted for care under one of the negotiated reciprocal health care agreements or fall within a specific exemption category as set out in the NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) (Scotland) Regulations 1989.

Am I entitled to National Health Service (NHS) treatment?

Under the current regulations, anyone who is taking up permanent residence in Scotland is exempt from NHS charges from arrival in the country. So are the person's spouse, registered civil partner and children under the age of 16, or under the age of 19 if in full-time education. When you are a permanent resident you will be entitled to NHS treatment on the same basis as a local resident and be subject also to NHS charges where they apply (see below).

Does this include entitlement to General Medical (or GP) Services?

Yes. On moving to Scotland it is advised to register with a General Medical Practitioner (GP) as an NHS patient. Help with finding a GP will be given by the local NHS Board (Details in the Telephone Directory).

What evidence will prove my entitlement to NHS treatment?

It is for the NHS practitioner to determine entitlement and you may be expected to provide documentation that supports your claim of permanent residence. Examples may include:

- Relevant Home Office documentation showing legal right of abode, or a UK passport;
- Single flight tickets to the UK;
- Bill for shipping personal belongings to the UK;
- Correspondence between patient and the home health or benefits authority in previous home country showing the move to the UK on a certain date.

In all cases, the responsibility for providing such evidence lies with the individual and the NHS practitioner will base their decision on the evidence provided and in accordance with the Regulations.

What happens if I need medical treatment before I have established my entitlement?

Emergency treatment received at General Practitioner (GP) surgeries or in Accident and Emergency departments of hospitals is free of charge. Any charge that is made for other treatment needs and before eligibility is confirmed will be refundable.

What happens after the "free" accident and emergency treatment?

Unless you are exempt, charges as a paying NHS patient will apply once a patient is formally admitted as an in-patient or registered at an outpatient clinic. The option for receiving treatment as a *private* patient, which is also chargeable, is also available.

If I am entitled to NHS treatment, is there anything I have to pay for?

There are a number of statutory charges for a variety of medical treatments that can apply to all in Scotland, eg dental and medication/prescriptions etc. NHS practitioners will advise in each case.

For information on help with health costs please see leaflet HC11 "*Are you entitled to help with health costs?*". This is available from main post offices, social security offices and NHS Hospitals. Some dentists, opticians, pharmacists or doctors may also hold copies.] HC11 is also available on the Internet at (www.doh.gov.uk/nhscharges/hc11.htm). This form covers the Scottish position also.

Please note that this fact sheet is a general guide and not a full statement of the current regulations.