

Oxford University Hospitals



NHS Foundation Trust



Health care for overseas patients

(NHS Overseas Visitors Regulations 2015)

People who do not normally live in this country are not automatically entitled to free National Health Service (NHS) health care. All hospitals in the United Kingdom (UK) are legally required to find out if their patients are entitled to free health care. Entitlement to free health care depends on where you live, not your nationality. If you are not entitled to free health care, then you may have to pay for any health care you receive.

Is any NHS care free to everyone?

Treatment given in an accident and emergency department (ED) is free to anyone. However, if you are admitted to any of the wards within the hospital, or given an outpatient appointment, charges apply if you are not entitled to free health care. Charges also apply to emergency treatment given elsewhere in the hospital, such as intensive care or coronary care.

What hospitals have to do

If a hospital suspects that a patient does not usually live in the UK, it must make reasonable enquiries to find out if they are entitled to free health care. If the hospital determines that a patient is not entitled to free health care then they must charge the patient for their care. Hospitals are not permitted to waive the charge. Payment is normally required in advance of any treatment or procedure.

Questions we will ask you

Are you a UK/EEA/Swiss national?

Do you have a valid visa or leave to enter or remain in the UK?

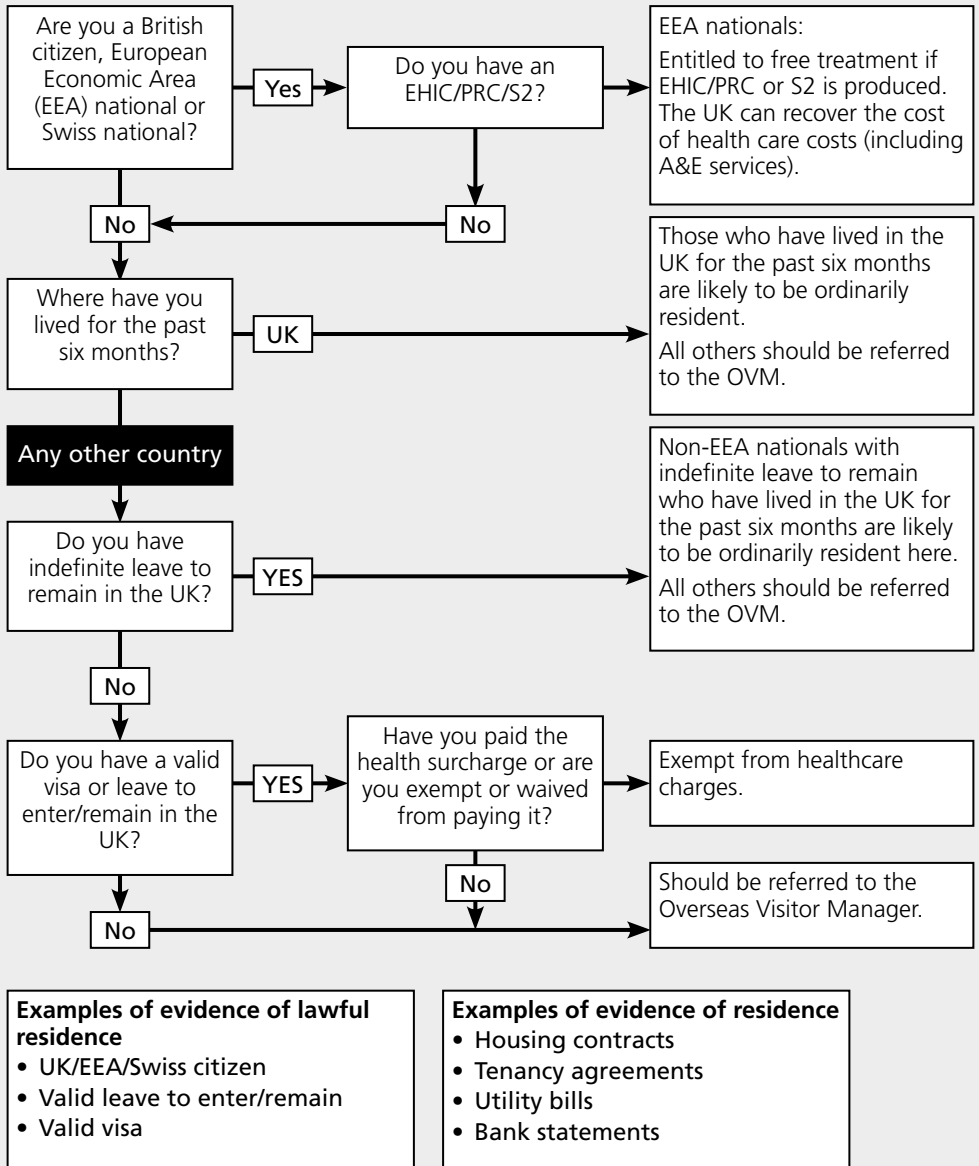
We ask this because you must be lawfully resident in the UK to be considered eligible for free health care.

What proof will we ask for?

We may ask you to show us passports or visa entry documents, such as a work permit or student visa, pension details or letters from employers or colleges. We will decide what proof is necessary, but we will not ask you for anything unreasonable.

If we determine from our discussion with you that you are not entitled to free health care, but you are subsequently able to provide satisfactory evidence that you are entitled, you will receive a refund.

Baseline questions



The process is summarised above.

How to pay, if you are not entitled to free health care

You can pay at one of the hospital's Cashiers Offices. Most major credit and debit cards are accepted **apart from** American Express.

European Economic Area (EEA) residents

Who is covered for free health care under the EU Regulations?

The EU Regulations apply to all countries within the European Economic Area (EEA).

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

If you are a visitor from an EEA state you need to show a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) to access free health care.

- The card entitles you to reduced costs, or free treatment for conditions that need to be treated during your visit which cannot wait for treatment until you return home.
- Planned care must be arranged in advance through your home country's health care system.
- If you have an EHIC but have lost or forgotten to bring it with you to hospital, you can apply for a Provisional Replacement Certificate (PRC) immediately by contacting your home health care system and asking them to fax a PRC to the hospital where you require treatment. It is your responsibility to make these arrangements, not the hospital's.
- If you cannot show either an EHIC or PRC you will need to pay for treatment, but might get a refund from your home country's health care system on your return.

Frequently asked questions

Q *"Why should I pay when I have a British passport?"*

A Having a British passport does not, in itself, make a patient exempt. Other criteria need to be satisfied.

Q *"Why should I pay when I have an NHS Number?"*

A NHS Numbers only entitle the holder to free Primary (GP etc.) care.

This leaflet is a general guide and not a full statement of the current regulations. Further information is available on the Department of Health website at: **www.nhs.uk/visitingengland** or contact the OUH Overseas Visitors Team: **overseasvisitors@ouh.nhs.uk** or call **01865 743 309**.