

UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICE **QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT THE NHS**

We have compiled this sheet based on frequently asked questions and queries on services within the National Health Service. We do hope this assists you with an understanding of our healthcare system in Scotland. If you do have a question not covered on this sheet, then please do not hesitate to contact the Practice by email on clinical.s70592@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

What is the National Health Service?

Our healthcare system is specific to Scotland and covers healthcare provided at Primary Care (GP level) and Secondary Care (hospital level). This is free to permanent residents of Scotland and others who qualify for free NHS care. This is not an insurance policy but is a healthcare service.

Am I entitled to free NHS treatment?

Yes. If you are a permanent resident of the UK or your status gives you free eligibility.

Reception staff are required to assess eligibility of all patients registering with the Practice for free NHS treatment. It will be necessary to ask you a number of questions and ask for proof of residency and status to allow us to process your application. If you are coming to the UK from overseas, then we will need to see evidence of your nationality/residency/visa. We will also ask to see your passport to confirm your ID and ask specific detailed questions about your reasons for being in the UK.

If you are from Europe, you must produce your EHIC card to get free treatment. If you do not have this, then you will be required to pay for treatment until such time as you can produce the card.

If you are a student, you are generally eligible for free NHS treatment for the duration of your course as long as you are registered at a recognised educational establishment. This eligibility ceases when your course is completed or you leave the course.

If you are not eligible for free NHS treatment, then you will be advised of this. You can still obtain treatment from the Practice however, this will be on a private patient basis and a charge will be made for your consultation, prescriptions and ongoing care. Assessment of your status will also be made at hospital level and you will also be required to pay for your care if you are ineligible for free NHS treatment.

Immigration Health Surcharge – What is this?

This surcharge was introduced on 6 April 2015 and applies to those coming to the UK from non-European economic area countries, who are not applying to remain permanently and who it is felt should contribute to the public services they access whilst here.

The surcharge applies to the following categories of visitors who wish to enter the UK for more than six months and require a visa to do so:

- Non-EEA students (international students)

- Non-EEA migrant workers
- Those from outside the EEA who are joining their family in the UK.

The cost of this visa depends on the visitor's reason for coming to the UK and this charge is usually paid along with visa fees. **Payment of this fee does not entitle a non-EEA member to free services at GP (Primary Care) level.** The application and assessment of eligibility for free healthcare remains with the GP Practice and relevant fees can still be charged. The payment of this fee does allow free NHS hospital care (secondary care level) under one of the exemptions in the NHS charging regulations.

What about dependants?

Relevant dependants may be eligible for free NHS care but proof of their visa authorising this must be produced in advance of treatment being given. Dependants are usually immediate family members only.

How do I register with a GP Practice?

Generally, registration arrangements for all GP Practices are similar although, there can be slight variances. **This sheet outlines the registration process specifically for the University Health Service.**

In order to register with us, you do have to permanently reside at an address that falls within our designated Practice area. We will check your address and you must provide proof that you live at the address you state on your registration forms. Our registration forms are electronic and available by the link on our website to Campus Doctor. **Do not come in to the practice to register.**

A form requires to be completed for each person registering and some individuals may require a registration appointment with our Practice Nurse. This allows us to get more details of how we can contact you and information on your previous medical history. We can at any time ask to see photographic proof of your identification, e.g. passport, driving licence or other similar document and confirmation of your address, e.g. utility bill or some other item with your address. We require to see original paper copies of documents.

Please note it can take up to five days to process your registration. Therefore it is unlikely you will be able to make an appointment with the Practice until at least two days later for routine matters. Any urgent clinical health needs will be attended to as soon as possible and you should speak to the reception staff regarding this.

How do we get details of your previous medical history?

If you have previously been registered within the UK, then we can request your medical record be sent to us. This may take some time, depending on the location of your previous GP. This is undertaken by a central service within Scotland contacting your previous GP and in order to do this, we require the name and address of your last GP in the UK. Until we receive your record, we only have the information you have provided us with at registration therefore, it is important that this is as detailed as possible, especially if you have ongoing and chronic conditions.

It is possible for you to be seen by a GP at this Practice prior to us receiving your full medical record but please bear in mind that until we have your record, it is important that you provide the GP with as much information as possible, especially concerning your previous medical history. **It would be useful for you to bring with you a summary of your ongoing health conditions (in English) along with a 3 month supply of your current medication.**

If you have **not** previously been registered in the UK, then we will be unable to get any details of your previous health record. It is important that you provide detailed information on your past medical history at the time of your registration to assist us to deal with and treat any health problems that you have during your time in the UK. **It would be useful for you to bring with you a summary of your ongoing health conditions (in English) along with you're a 3 monthly supply of your current medication.**

Will I have to pay for prescriptions?

The Scottish Government abolished prescription charges in 2008 so, if you are eligible for free NHS treatment, you will not have to pay for prescriptions issued and dispensed in Scotland. If you take your prescription elsewhere to be dispensed a charge may apply.

If you are seen as a private patient, then you will be required to make payment for the actual prescription and also for the item when dispensed from a local pharmacy.

Can I access dental/optical services via the Practice?

No - dental and optical services cannot be provided by us. You will have to register with a Dentist for dental services and an Optician for optical services.

Dental - There may be a charge for this service unless you are eligible for exemption. You can obtain details of NHS dentists via www.lothianhealth.scot.nhs.uk

Not all dentists register NHS patients although; those who do provide some of their services free but you will be required to pay a contribution towards these services.

In terms of optical services, there is currently no charge for eye testing. Unless you are eligible for exemption, all other optical charges require to be paid for.

Please check with dentists/opticians for the most up to date details of their services.

What happens if I require to be referred to hospital level?

After consultation with a doctor in the Practice, it may be decided you require to be referred to a specialist at hospital level.

You can not generally access hospital level services without a Primary Care, i.e. GP Practice referral and you can only be referred once you have registered with a GP. If you are coming from overseas and are seeking ongoing hospital level care, then you should register as soon as you arrive in the

UK. If you are a student, you must matriculate to ensure your status for free NHS care is recognised.

Once seen at Practice level, the doctor will send a referral letter to the hospital asking for you to be seen. The hospital will contact you direct to advise you of an appointment date. If you are unable to attend the allocated appointment, then **you must** contact the hospital to arrange an alternative date. If you do not do so, then an alternative date will not be sent to you and you will go to the bottom of the waiting list or be removed from the list. If you change your address tell you GP and also phone the hospital department and tell them your new address so they can contact you. Your GP does **not** do this.

Most specialities have waiting lists and, at present, you can often wait many months before you are seen. This can be longer for particular specialities.

The Practice can only confirm that we have sent the referral letter. We do not have any details of the progress of your referral or when you will be seen.

Can I have a cervical smear each year?

No. The Screening Programme in Scotland allows for smears to be provided free of charge every 3 years for women aged 25-49. Women ages 50-64 can get a smear every 5 years. Women on non routine screening will be invited for a smear up to age 70.

When eligible to receive a smear, you will be sent a recall notice from NHS Scotland inviting you to attend the Practice for a smear. We are unable to provide smears for women out with the three/five year timescale unless there is a clinical indication that there is a requirement for more regular smears. Anyone requiring this must consult with a doctor in the first instance.

Anyone wishing a smear out with the recall process or on a more frequent basis will be required to contact a private GP to have this done and a charge will apply for this.

Can I choose to be seen by a hospital out with the area I am living in?

Generally, if the service you require at hospital level is available locally, then you will require to be referred to your local hospital. For services outwith Lothian, permission has to be given for your referral by NHS Lothian and the doctor will advise you of the arrangements for this process.

Please note that the service available within Scotland and the healthcare system may be different from the system you have been used to in your home country.

Can I see a nutritionist or some other type of specialist?

The route to seeing any specialist is via the doctor. If you require to see a nutritionist and it is found this is clinically necessary, then the GP will make the appropriate referral.

If it is not appropriate for a nutritionist to see you clinically and this is a lifestyle choice, similarly for a variety of other services, then you will require to make arrangements to see the individual privately and a charge will apply for this.

Will the drugs I get at home be available in the UK?

Some drugs prescribed overseas are not licensed in the UK. The doctor can discuss alternatives with patients. If you are only here for a short time, then we advise that you bring at **least three months' supply of medication with you.** You will be required to have the correct paperwork to allow you to bring drugs into the UK.

GP's are also restricted in terms of the amount of medication they can prescribe to take out of the UK. You may require a letter or further information to take drugs out of the UK.

What if I arrive late for my appointment?

Due to the scheduling of patient appointments, if you arrive late for your appointment, the doctor may not be able to see you, as this will delay the appointment times for other patients waiting to be seen after you. Whether or not you are seen by the doctor will be at the discretion of the doctor you are scheduled to see and based on the amount of time that you are late. It is important that you make all possible efforts to arrive on time for your appointment, taking into account you may suffer delays in any transportation arrangements you have to get here.

What happens if I do not attend for my appointment?

If you have made an appointment with us and you do not phone us in good time to cancel this appointment, then you will be regarded as having failed to attend and it is likely that the Practice Manager will make contact with you to advise this is not acceptable as that appointment could not be taken by another patient.

If you have made an appointment and are unable to keep this, then please contact us by telephone as soon as you are aware that you will not be able to attend, so that this appointment can at least be offered to someone else. **We generally ask for 24 hours notice of cancellation.**

Will I be kept waiting to see the doctor?

You may be. The doctor may be delayed attending the clinical needs of others seen before you and so this can cause delay. Reception staff will keep you updated about delays.

Why do you have to see the doctor to get a repeat prescription?

If you are on a particular medication for any length of time, the doctor requires to review your clinical condition on this medication. It is good clinical practice for the doctor to see you on a regular basis to discuss the situation with you. All those on repeat prescriptions will require to see the doctor to allow repeat prescribing arrangements to continue.

How can I obtain further details on the NHS services?

Details on the NHS system can be obtained by visiting www.nhsinform.scot

What do I do when the Practice is closed?

Please note that the Practice is open on a Monday - Friday basis, excluding notified public holidays, from 8am - 6pm and you should contact us with any queries in the first instance.

NHS 24 is also available for advice 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by telephoning 111 or visiting www.nhs24.com

Out with the opening hours of the Practice, i.e. between 18:00 - 08:00, at weekends and on public holidays, NHS 24 should be contacted on telephone number: 111.