

## **NHS Guidance**

To: Primary Care Trusts in England  
Local Health Boards in Wales  
NHS Boards in Scotland  
NHS Boards in Northern Ireland

Date: 13 December 2006

Gateway reference: 7587

## **Subject: Update on EU Enlargement & Overseas Visitors rights to Primary Care Treatment in the UK**

### **EU Enlargement**

1. On 1 January 2007, Bulgaria and Romania join the European Union. This means that they become covered by the European Union healthcare arrangements that currently apply to visitors from existing EU countries such as France and Spain. In effect, visitors from these countries should not be charged for any treatment which becomes medically necessary during a temporary stay in the UK, other than normal charges that UK residents pay.

### **Overseas Visitors rights**

2. We would like to take this opportunity to remind you about the reciprocal healthcare arrangements between the UK and other European and Non-European countries, which entitles eligible residents of these countries to treatment which becomes medically necessary whilst temporarily staying in the UK<sup>1</sup>. In return, eligible UK residents are entitled to receive free or reduced cost medical treatment whilst visiting these countries<sup>2</sup>.
3. **European Healthcare Arrangements:** The arrangements governing treatment provided to visitors from the European Economic Area (EEA) (i.e. the European Union member states, plus Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland) and Switzerland, are governed by EC Regulation 1408/71, as amended. A list of the EEA countries and the proof of entitlement you should ask for is attached at Annex A.

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<sup>1</sup> [More](http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/10/60/24/04106024.pdf) detailed information about who is eligible for treatment under these arrangements is available at <http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/10/60/24/04106024.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Detailed information about these health care arrangements are available at: [www.dh.gov.uk/travellers](http://www.dh.gov.uk/travellers)

4. **Bilateral Agreement Countries:** There are also a number of bilateral healthcare agreements. In summary, they relate to Anguilla, St. Helena, Turks & Caicos, the British Virgin Islands, Channel Islands, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Australia, New Zealand some Caribbean countries, most of the countries making up the former Soviet Union, and all of the States comprising of the former Yugoslavia. Please see Annex B for the details of these arrangements.
5. In essence, these agreements focus on healthcare treatment that becomes necessary during a visit. **They do not cover situations where people come to the UK, without an explicit referral, in order to access treatment**<sup>3</sup>.

The following types of healthcare services can be obtained by eligible overseas visitors to the UK, under the current European healthcare arrangements: Blood tests, Blood pressure checks, routine maternity care, Cholesterol checks, Insulin, Oxygen, Renal Dialysis, Warfarin tests.

6. It is important to establish an entitlement to free NHS treatment. Visitor's from EEA countries and Switzerland should demonstrate their right to healthcare treatment by producing a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)<sup>4</sup>. If the visitor's card has been lost or stolen, they should produce a Provisional Replacement Certificate (PRC). For non-EEA countries, it is necessary to either check nationality (for example through a passport) or proof of residence in the country concerned (for example a passport, or driving licence).
7. A list of the countries where bi-lateral agreements apply (and a summary of the proof of entitlement that you should ask for) is attached at Annex B.

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<sup>3</sup> Guidance about the referral arrangements is available at:  
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/10/60/24/04106024.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> We aim to move to a situation where the EHIC becomes the sole method of establishing an entitlement to NHS treatment, however, for the time being you can also accept a passport, identity or residence card. Exceptionally, visitors from **Ireland** only need to show a passport.

## Annex A: European Countries

EEA <sup>5</sup> Countries	Proof of Entitlement	Level of Care	What is excluded
Austria Belgium Bulgaria Cyprus ( <u>not</u> North) Czech Republic Denmark Estonia Finland France Germany Greece Hungary Iceland Ireland Italy Latvia Liechtenstein Lithuania Luxembourg Malta Netherlands Norway Poland Portugal Romania Slovakia Slovenia Spain Sweden Switzerland	European Health Insurance Card <sup>6</sup>	Treatment which a GP decides is medically necessary.	Elective treatment or the treatment of pre-existing conditions which in the medical opinion of the GP can wait until they return to their home state.

<sup>5</sup> The EEA consists of the member states of the European Union, plus Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland and Switzerland.

<sup>6</sup> We aim to move to a situation where the EHIC becomes the sole method of establishing an entitlement to NHS treatment, however, for the time being you can also accept a passport, identity or residence card. Exceptionally, visitors from **Ireland** only need to show a passport.

## **Annex B: Bilateral agreement countries**

<b>Who is covered:</b>	<b>Proof of Entitlement</b>	<b>Level of Care</b>
<u>Nationals</u> from the following countries:  Armenia Azerbaijan Georgia Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Moldova New Zealand Tajikistan Turkmenistan Russia Uzbekistan Ukraine	Passport	Visitor is entitled to “immediately necessary” treatment.
<u>Residents of:</u>  Anguilla Australia Barbados Bosnia-Herzegovina British Virgin Islands Channel Is. Croatia Falkland Islands Gibraltar Isle of Man Macedonia Montenegro Montserrat Serbia St Helena Turks & Caicos Islands	A passport or proof of residence in the country concerned e.g. an identity or residence card.	