

Annex 1: Immigrant's Access to Health Services in UK-London

English

Overview:

- 1) **Emergency Services** → First Aid - Doctor Emergency Service – Dental Emergency Service
- 2) **Primary Care** → General Practitioner (GP) - Primary Examination
How to register with a GP?
- 3) **Secondary Care** → Specialists, outpatient departments, - of hospitals, hospitalization – referrals, medical care cost free.
Secondary Care Costs Secondary Care Costs
- 4) **Dental Care** → Dentists, dental treatment, dental prosthesis, orthodontic treatment.
- 5) **Drugs – Medications – Prescriptions costs** → Drugs, recipes, prescription charge exemption, medical aids and aids.
Orthopaedist → Specialist in orthopaedics and trauma surgery (medical aids, remedies)
Opticians → Ophthalmologist (glasses, visual aids)
- 6) **Transportation** → Ambulance services, patient transport, transport costs.
- 7) **Entitled to NHS** → Insurance coverage or coverage of expenses
- 8) **Pharmacy** → Pharmacy emergency service
- 9) **Interpreter Service** → Information services of NHS

EU Emergency Call 112

EMERGENCY CALL – LIFE-THREATENING SITUATION: CALL 999

Emergency Service is free of charge for everyone.

- **Emergency:** Ambulance, Accident & Emergency Departments(Hospital)
Call 999, the emergency phone number in the UK
- Online symptom checker service:
Check your symptoms and get personalized health advice on what to do next.
<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSDirect/pages/symptoms.aspx>

EMERGENCY CALL – NOT IMMEDIATE: NHS Direct 0845 4647 or NHS 111

London: Medical help in

- **Not an immediate emergency:**
Immigrants can go to Minor Injuries Clinics, Walk-in Clinics, Urgent Care Centres, GP out-of-hours Services in order to get treatment and advice for minor injuries.
Call NHS Direct 0845 4647 or NHS 111 (GP or pharmacist)
- Available 24/7 for minor injuries and medical advice.
- Alternatively, you can also contact your local GP.

ENTITELMENT TO HEALTH SERVICES

NHS services free to all:

- Accident and emergency services (A&E)
- Treatment provided by a GP or a nurse within primary care clinics
- Family planning services (contraception and sexual health)
- Treatment for sexually transmitted diseases (for HIV and AIDS exemption applies only to the initial diagnostic test and counselling)
- Treatment of communicable/infectious diseases
- Treatment required under mental health legislation

*Help with health costs, such as prescriptions, dental and optical care etc.

Find out if the NHS Low Income Scheme can help you by filling in an HC1 form.

HOW TO REGISTER

Who can register with a GP?

To get medical help in London you should register with a local general practice where your general practitioner (GP) works, along with other healthcare professionals. If you have a medical problem this is where you should go first. Your GP can advise about, and if necessary, refer you to other services. Legally, any person living in the UK (i.e. any person who is not in the UK for a short visit/ holiday) may register with a GP. You do not need to be a British citizen, or to have lived in the country for a certain time.

How to register with a GP in London?

Find and choose your closest GP online through the “myhealthlondon website”

(<http://www.myhealth.london.nhs.uk>), the NHS Choices website at <http://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/GP/LocationSearch/4> or your local phonebook and check if they are currently accepting new patients. You can fill an application online or do it directly at your chosen GP practice.

You can always register with another GP if you like by applying to a new one so your medical records can be transferred there.

If you have any difficulty finding a GP who is prepared to register you, you can get help to find a doctor from NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 or NHS England on 0300 311 22 33.

What documents do you need to take with you to register with a GP?

Legally, you do not need any documents to register with a GP.

In practice, some GP practices may ask for:

- Your NHS card
- Proof of address (usually 1 or 2 bills with your name on it) in order to prove that you live in the area
- Your passport in order to prove your identity and to check what type of Visa you have.

But no GP practice should refuse to register you either because you are unable to provide this documentation or because you have a certain type of Visa.

<http://www.bmehf.org.uk/index.php/information-patients/registering-gp/>

PRIMARY CARE

Primary Care

Medical services provided into the community, such as GP/dentist.

- It is free for everyone regardless residential status, nationality or any other characteristic.
- It is up to the GP to accept or refuse any person as an NHS patient, but they must not discriminate!
- You may be asked to show proof of ID and/or address.
 - o Try to find a compromise between what GP asks for and what you have.
- If a GP refuses, ask them to provide this refusal and reasons for it, in writing!

What if you feel ill and you cant see a GP?

- If you are not registered with a general practice and you feel ill, you can use a walk-in clinic. These are available across London and can be called NHS walk-in centres, urgent care centres, minor injury units or GP-led walk-in services.
- You can usually find them through **NHS Choices** (<http://www.nhs.uk>) or in your local phonebook.
- If you are not registered with a general practice you should use a walk-in clinic rather than Accident and Emergency (A&E) services.

Need help?

They can help you find a GP in your area, who is accepting new patients:

- NHS England on 0300 311 22 33
- NHS Direct on 0845 46 47

What if I am refused?

- A GP may refuse to register you if you live outside the area they serve or if their list is full.
- If this happens, you should ask them to direct you towards a Primary Care Trust (PCT) service which can help you register elsewhere.
- If a general practice refuses to register you, you may ask them to give their reasons in writing.
- If you feel a general practice has refused you unfairly, you can make a complaint through your local Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) team (www.pals.nhs.uk).

SECONDARY CARE

Secondary Care

- Treatment provided through GP referrals, usually at a hospital or specialist service, such as orthopedics and dermatologists.
- It is free of charge for 'ordinarily residents' of the UK - living legally in the UK for at least 12 months.

Secondary care treatment must be given to anyone, regardless of their ability to pay if it is considered:

- Immediately necessary treatment, which would save life, prevent a condition from becoming life-threatening or prevent serious damage (e.g. maternity and antenatal care)
- Urgent treatment, which is not considered immediately necessary, but cannot wait until the person is expected to return home (e.g. cancer)
- Only clinicians can make an assessment as to whether a patient's need for treatment is immediately necessary, urgent or non-urgent.

Secondary Care Costs:

Who doesn't have to pay for Secondary Care

You can receive secondary care for free if you:

- are UK resident for at least 12 months
- are an employee or self-employed person in the UK
- are a student of a course which lasts at least six months
- have a work or student visa
- are from a European Economic Area (EEA) country or Switzerland
- come from a country outside of European Economic Area and your country has signed a health care agreement with the UK
- are a refugee or asylum seeker (granted or not)
- are victim of human trafficking
- are a tourist and have a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

Who pays for secondary care?

- People who are not considered to be ordinarily residents, such as visa over-stayers, undocumented migrants, tourists regardless nationality and short-term visitors (including British citizens living abroad).
- Hospital staff will ask you questions to work out whether you or your family member will have to pay for treatment. Hospital registration staff will ask if:
 - o you are a UK or EEA or Swiss national, or if you have a valid visa or leave to enter or remain in the UK
 - o which country/ countries you have lived in during the past 12months
- If you answer 'no' to the first question, the hospital's overseas visitors team will interview you to decide whether you have to pay for your treatment.

OPHTHALMOLOGIST -- OPTICIAN**Opticians**

An eye test every two years is recommended, however a NHS sight test is free of charge only if it is clinically necessary. It is up to the ophthalmologist to decide whether a sight test is necessary in your case or not.

You may be entitled for a free NHS sight test if you :

- are under 16
- over 60
- over 40 and have a family history in glaucoma
- receiving benefits, etc.

There is no need to register with an optician and no catchment area applies.

There are optical vouchers to help with the costs of glasses or contact lenses in some cases - HC2 and HC3 certificates apply.

HOSPITALIZATION**DENTAL CARE****Dental Care**

Dentists can be private or NHS, however all **dentists will charge all patients unless** you:

- have a valid HC2 certificate
- are under 18, or over 18 and full time student
- are receiving benefits
- are pregnant or had a baby in the last 12 months

You have to register with a dentist, but there is no need to be located near you- they don't have catchment areas.

How to register with a dentist?

It's like to register with a GP!

Dentists and opticians do not have catchment areas, so they do not have to be located near you but you still have to register with a dentist.

Not happy with the dental care or treatment you've received and you have a complaint to make?

You can always make a complaint to the practice manager.

Also, you can contact **NHS** England on 0300 311 22 33, NHS Direct on 0845 4647 to get information and help to make a complaint.

There is the **Healthwatch** independent service as well, where you can make a complaint online at <http://www.healthwatch.co.uk/> .

PRESCRIPTION FOR MEDICATION AND MEDICAL AIDS**Who can write a prescription?**

Doctors and sometimes nurses and pharmacists can write prescriptions.

Prescriptions Costs (medicines, medical aids, remedies)

Prescriptions costs:

- £ 7.85 per item
- £ 104.00 12 months prepayment certificate (PPC)
- £ 29.10 3 months PPC

Doctors and sometimes nurses and pharmacists can write prescriptions.

You can get **free NHS prescriptions** if you:

- are an NHS inpatient
- are over 60 or under 16
- are 16-18 and full-time student
- are pregnant or have had a baby in the last 12 months
- have a specified medical condition and a continuing physical disability
- receive any kind of Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance or benefits

PHARMACY

Who can write a prescription?

Doctors and sometimes nurses and **pharmacists** can write prescriptions.

Medicines are **free** if they are:

- administered at hospitals, walk-in centres or by a GP
- prescribed contraceptives
- supplied at hospitals or primary care trust clinics for treatment of STIs or certain diseases

<http://www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/1629.aspx?CategoryID=68&SubCategoryID=161>

INFORMATION – INTERPRETER SERVICES

Interpreter Service

It is free and offered upon request.

- Inform the medical center in advance of your appointment so they can arrange this service if available.
- NHS Direct telephone interpreter service on 0845 4647 - in case of emergency, dial 999 and the operator will access an interpreter as soon as possible.
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Courses.

Other important things to know

- Confidentiality - Data Protection Act
The NHS should not share any information without your consent!
- Independent organisations can help for free
Community organizations can provide valuable help and support in terms of accessing health services or getting information.

Not happy with the care or treatment you've received and you have a complaint to make?

Complaints about services, treatments etc..

- Contact the practice manager
- NHS England on 0300 311 22 33
- NHS Direct on 0845 4647
- Voice Ability – independent complaint agency
- Local Healthwatch – the independent consumer champion for health & social care in England
<http://www.healthwatch.co.uk/>.

FURTHER INFORMATION :

Health services information and advice available at MRC.

For further information, help and health advice come to MRC and ask for Sylwia.

You can visit the Migrant Resource Centre at 24 Churton Street, London, SW1V 2LP and speak to Sylwia, the Health Inclusion project coordinator, who will be able to assess your individual case with confidentiality and give you the information and support you need.

You can contact Sylwia at MRC: Tel. 020 78342505, ext.104,

E-mail: healthworks@migrants.org.uk

“How can I get medical help in London?”

The booklet, “How can I get medical help in London?” provides an easy to follow guide to accessing primary health care in the capital.

The booklet takes the user through the steps they need to take in order to access primary health care. It

- sets out the information needed to register with a GP and how to get treatment in an emergency.
- is useful for healthcare professionals who commission primary care service and set local public health priorities.
- seeks to enable primary healthcare providers to deliver their services more effectively.

The booklet is available, including in other languages, on:

<http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/health/publications/access-to-primary-health-care>

HELPFULLY INFORMATION:

NHS - National Health Service

<http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx>

MRC Trainingscripts, Autor Slawia Lemanska,

<http://healthwork@migrants.org.uk>

The booklet, “How can I get medical help in London?”

<http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/health/publications/access-to-primary-health-care>

The Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Health Forum

<http://www.bmehf.org.uk/index.php/information-patients/your-rights/>