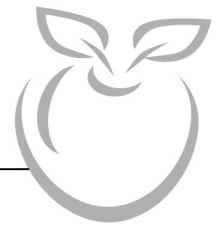




Overseas visitors and primary care



Following the UK's departure from the EU, The DHSC updated "[Guidance on implementing the overseas visitor charging regulations](#)". This guidance provides information for NHS bodies who need to make and recover hospital charges from overseas visitors, however, it refers to and highlights that a patient does not need to be ordinarily resident in the UK to be eligible for NHS primary medical care.

Therefore, anybody in England, including overseas visitors, may fully register as an NHS patient or as a temporary resident if they are to be in an area for between 24 hours and three months, and consult with a GP without charge. This applies even if they may be chargeable for non-exempt relevant services.

So, whereas all overseas patients are entitled to receive NHS primary care at a GP practice only certain patients have a right to free secondary care. NHS England guidelines advise GPs to refer patients for secondary services on clinical grounds alone; it is the receiving organisation, not the GP, who is to assess a patient's eligibility for free secondary care.

Key points for overseas visitors accessing primary medical services in the UK

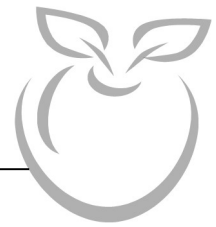
- **You have a duty of care:**
Practices have a contractual duty to provide emergency treatment and immediate necessary treatment free of charge for up to 14 days to any person within their practice area.
- **Pre-existing conditions are included:**
There is no definition of immediate necessary treatment in primary medical services contract regulations but it should be viewed as including treatment not only of new conditions but also pre-existing conditions that have become exacerbated during the period of a person's stay in the UK.
- **Procedures for overseas visitors should be in place:**
Practices should have appropriate procedures in place to ensure that patients in need of this treatment can be identified and assessed by a health care professional.
- **Registration should be discretionary:**
When a person does not require emergency or immediately necessary treatment; practices have some degree of discretion under the contract regulations about whether to register the person. A patient should be registered as temporary if they intend to be resident in the practice area for more than 24 hours but fewer than three months. If the patient intends to reside in the practice area for longer than three months, they should be registered as permanent.

Temporary resident is an option for registration:

Practices, if their list of patients is open, may accept overseas visitors as temporary residents, if they will be in the area for 24 hours to three months, or may accept an overseas visitor's application for inclusion in their patient list.

- **Discrimination rules apply:**
Persons applying for registration cannot be turned down for reasons relating to the applicant's race, gender, social class, age, religion, sexual orientation, appearance, disability or medical condition.

Chapelgreen Practice



- **Requesting formal identification:**

Overseas visitors have no formal obligation to prove their identity or immigration status to register with a practice. However, asylum seekers may be able to show an Immigration Service issued 'Application Registration Card' (ARC) or official documents that confirm their status. Where practices have a policy of asking applicants for identification then it should be for all patients and not just overseas visitors

Discretion should be used to consider the individual circumstances of an overseas visitor who cannot provide documents that they would normally require for patient registration.

- **Care on a private basis:**

Any person who does not require emergency or immediately necessary treatment and has not been accepted onto a patient list or accepted as a temporary resident can still be treated by a GP on a private basis, for which they may be charged. Alternatively those persons can be directed to contact the appropriate local body, who can advise on what services are available locally.