

How to access health care in Scotland



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Access to health care - English

This leaflet provides information about how to access healthcare in Scotland. It provides answers to questions about getting health care while you are going through the asylum process and beyond.



Can I get health care in Scotland?

- Yes, in Scotland most health care is provided by the National Health Service (NHS). Everyone who lives legally in Scotland has a right to some level of NHS healthcare.
- If you are an asylum seeker or a refugee, many of these services will be available to you free of charge.

How do I:

access health care in Initial Accommodation (you will normally stay here for 2 - 4 weeks)?

- If you have any urgent medical concerns, you should contact our Scottish Induction Service (SIS) office during medical drop in times at 9:30am Monday to Friday
- While staying in Initial Accommodation you will be temporarily registered with one of the doctors at Fernbank Medical Centre. This is located at 194 Fernbank Street, Springburn, Glasgow, G22 6BD
- You should make your appointments with the doctor via our Scottish Induction Service (SIS) office during the medical drop in times at 9:30am Monday to Friday.

access health care after I have been moved to longer term accommodation (known as dispersal)?

- You will be assigned to a local doctor
- You should be sent your Doctor Registration Card within 48 hours of arriving at your new address. If you do not receive this card, you should contact your accommodation provider.
- Your Doctor Registration Card provides the name, address and contact number of your new doctor.
- It is very important that you go to your assigned doctor's office (surgery) once you have received your Doctor Registration Card to complete your registration. You will only be able to access health services when you have completed your registration.

How do I:

access health care if I have been granted refugee status or leave to remain?

- If you are successful in obtaining refugee status or leave to remain, you can continue to access free healthcare in Scotland and across the UK. You will remain registered with your existing doctor unless you wish to move to another area. If you move to another area, you will be able to register with the local doctor at their office (surgery).

access health care if I have *not* been granted refugee status or leave to remain?

- If you are appealing against a negative decision on your asylum claim, you may continue to access free healthcare until a decision is made.
- If your claim for asylum has been refused, and any appeals against the decision have also failed but you are still in the UK, you can still get healthcare from the NHS while you are in Scotland.

access health care in an emergency?

- If you or a family member is seriously ill or badly hurt, you should attend Accident and Emergency (A&E) at your local hospital. If you need an ambulance to take you to Accident and Emergency, you should phone **999**. 999 is an official emergency telephone number, which will allow you contact emergency services for urgent assistance; it is only to be used in an emergency.
- Accident and Emergency (A&E) at the hospital is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week
- No appointment is necessary to attend Accident and Emergency at the hospital but there may be a lengthy wait to be seen by a doctor or nurse.

What should I do if I have not registered with a doctor?

If you have not registered with a doctor, you should contact your accommodation provider or any local refugee organisation so that they can provide advice and tell you how to register in your area.

What should I do if I am not happy with a service provided by the NHS?

It is important to remember that:

- You are entitled to be treated with respect, dignity and on an equal basis with any other person when accessing NHS health care.
- You have the right to an interpreter for your NHS appointments. If you prefer a male or a female interpreter, you can request this. If you are not happy with the person assigned to interpret for your appointment, you should tell an NHS staff member immediately. For example, if you know the interpreter personally and you are not comfortable disclosing personal information to them or if your interpreter does not speak your particular dialect well enough for you to understand and be understood, you should tell a member of NHS staff.
- You have the right to ask to change the doctor (GP) assigned to you to another doctor at that office (surgery). For instance, if you are a woman and would prefer to see a female doctor or therapist, you may request this. Your request should be accommodated wherever possible.

If you are not happy with a service provided by the NHS or you believe that you have received poor or inadequate service by anyone working for the NHS, you are entitled to make a complaint. Making a complaint will **not** affect your immigration status or your asylum claim.

For more information about making a complaint, you should contact your local advice service or the NHS complaints department on 0141 201 4500 or email complaints@ggc.scot.nhs.uk. There are also light blue 'Comments, Concerns and Complaints' posters displayed in all NHS premises that provide more information about making a complaint.