

Health Services for International Students



Once you arrive in the UK it is important that you are aware of what Medical Treatment is available to you.

The National Health Service (NHS)

Is the UK's State Health Service and provides treatment through various services including:

- General Practitioner Service, usually called Doctors (GP).
- Hospital Treatment
- Accident & Emergency Treatment
- Dental & Optical Services
- Family Planning Services

Am I entitled to NHS Treatment?

Some NHS treatment is free to everyone; this includes initial Emergency Treatment and Family Planning Service.

If you are studying on a course for six months or more, then you and your dependants will be entitled to full NHS treatment. This means that you can register with a Doctor (GP) and receive free hospital treatment. If you are ill then you usually go to see your GP first, these are Doctors who have been trained to diagnose a variety of illnesses ect. They will then refer you to a specialist if you need one. Specialists are usually located in Hospitals and you will either visit them as a day patient or have to stay overnight in Hospital.

If you are studying on a course for less than six months, then you and your dependants will not be entitled to full NHS treatment unless that is, your Country has an agreement with the UK.

Please check the UKCOSA website at www.ukcosa.org.uk/guidenote.htm for more information.

European Economic Area Nationals will qualify for full NHS treatment even if they are here for less than six months if they have either filled in form E111 (EHIC from January 2006) in their country or brought their European Health Insurance card with them to the UK.

What do I do if I do not qualify for NHS Treatment?

If you do not qualify for NHS treatment we strongly advise you to take out medical insurance for the duration of your visit to the UK. If you have medical insurance in you own country, check whether you can

extend it to cover your stay in the UK. Otherwise you will need to contact Insurance Companies in the UK to find suitable cover. You can search for Insurance Companies either on the internet or through Yellow Pages phone directory but it is advisable to contact at least three companies to find out how much you will be expected to pay before you sign up to any one particular company. The Financial Services Authority can provide you with general information about insurance at www.fsa.gov.uk/consumer.

How do I register with a GP?

To register with a GP you need to contact or visit the GP Surgery, taking evidence that you are a student. You will then be sent a Medical Card with your NHS number. You can register with any GP in your area. Details of GP's in Newcastle can be obtained either from the Student Advice Centre or your University Handbook. Alternatively contact NHS Direct at www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk. If you have any problems in registering with a GP, contact NHS direct.

Do I need to pay for NHS treatment?

Visiting a GP is usually free, however if you are prescribed any medicine, then you will need to pay a standard charge for this, (currently £6.50). You may however qualify for free prescriptions and help towards other NHS treatment such as Dental and Optical charges, depending on your income. **Fill in form HC1 available from the Student Advice Centre to see if you qualify.**

Certain groups of people qualify for free NHS treatment automatically. These include:

- Children/young people under 16 or 19 if in full-time education.
- Women who are pregnant or who have had a child within the last 12 months.
- People with certain medical conditions, **See www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk for more details.**

Family Planning/Sexual Health

If you need advice about matters relating to sexual health such as contraception, pregnancy, abortion and sexually transmitted diseases, there are various services available:

- Your Doctor can provide you with advice on all range of issues but any information will be included on your medical records.

- Family Planning Services provides advice on all matters relating to sexual health as well as free contraceptives.
- Independent organisations who offer advice and information on particular areas. See www.patient.co.uk for a range of advice, information and links to organisations. Also see the Common Health Section on www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk For specific information about contraception and abortion. You can also visit the Student Advice Centre for further information about these issues.

Dentists and Opticians

In the UK, Dentists and Opticians can offer both Private and NHS treatment and most practices offer a mixture of both. If you opt for NHS treatment there are set prices for particular treatment and you may also apply for possible help towards costs of certain treatment if your income is low enough.

See - Do I need to pay for NHS treatment above.

Contact www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk for details about finding a Dentist who can offer you NHS treatment and for a list of NHS charges. Alternatively contact Tyne & Wear Contractors Services www.twcsa.nhs.uk

Mental Health

Mental health matters cover a wide range of problems from stress and depression to bereavement and serious mental illness. Depending on the problem you could visit your Doctor to discuss the matter and s/he may refer you onto specialised mental health service within the NHS, or prescribe you medication themselves.

You may however want to see alternative help such as counselling, support or self-help. The University Counselling Service offer free counselling to all its students and provide a range of leaflets on areas such as depression, alcohol abuse and bereavement which are available from the Student Advice Centre and can be found at www.ncl.ac.uk/student-support/Generalhealth_currentaffairs/psychological.htm.

There are also various independent organisations who offer advice, support and counselling to people on various matters. See www.patient.co.uk for information, advice and links to support groups and self-help organisations.

Emergencies and out of hour assistance

If you need urgent treatment you should contact your Doctor and explain that you need to see him/her urgently. If you need to contact him/her out of hours (normal office hours are usually between 9am to 5pm), you should telephone the surgery and they will give you an emergency telephone number to call.

Alternatively, or if you do not qualify for NHS treatment, you can go to your local Accident and Emergency department who are open 24 hours a day. You may have to wait several hours however, depending on how serious your condition is.

If however, you are seriously unwell and unable to travel, for example, if you are involved in an accident then you should telephone the emergency services on 999 and ask for an Ambulance who will take you to Accident and Emergency.

If you are unsure about whether you need medical assistance or not, you can telephone NHS Direct on 0845 46 47, a service run by nurses, who will be able to give advice, although you may have to wait for an answer.

Useful Addresses

University Counselling Service

Barras Building

Tel: 0191 222 7699

Web: www.ncl.ac.uk/counselling-wellbeing

Newcastle Central NHS Walk-in Centre

Unit 5, The Bar

St James Gate

Tel: 0191 233 3760

NHS Direct

Tel: 0845 46 47

Web: www.nhs direct.nhs.uk

Tyne & Wear Contractor Services Agency

2nd Floor Bede House

All Saints Business Centre

Newcastle NE1 2ES

Tel: 0191 219 6200

Web: www.twcsa.nhs.uk

Accident and Emergency Services

Newcastle General Hospital

Westgate Road NE4 6BE

Tel: 0191 233 6161

UKCOSA

Provides advice and information for international students www.ukcosa.org.uk

Student Advice Centre

Union Society, Kings Walk

Newcastle University

Tel: 0191 239 3979

Email: sac.reception@ncl.ac.uk

You can access our website at
<http://www.unionssociety.co.uk/sac>

The SAC is a member of Advice UK
(The independent advice network)