

Overseas Visitors

The National Health Service provides healthcare free of charge for people who are ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom. When a person who is not ordinarily resident in the UK (an "overseas visitor") and needs NHS treatment they will be subject to the National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 2015 (the "Charging Regulations") and may incur a charge for treatment.

The role of Bolton NHS Foundation Trust Overseas Team is to determine whether a patient is eligible free NHS healthcare or whether they are chargeable.

In accordance with the Charging Regulations, the Trust has a legal obligation to make and recover charges for NHS treatment in relation to any person who is not ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom.

Our approach

Bolton NHS Foundation Trust is committed to implementing the Hospital Charging Regulations consistently across the Trust, using a robust and sensible approach.

NHS services are provided without charge to people who are "ordinarily resident" in the UK.

'Ordinary residence' as defined as person who is:

- Living lawfully in the United Kingdom voluntarily and for settled purposes, as part of the regular order of their life.

In order to ascertain a person's eligibility, the Trust applies baseline questions to all patients. This include, but are not exclusive to:

- "Where have you lived in the last 12 months?"
- "Can you provide evidence to show where you live?"

Anybody who can demonstrate that they lawfully reside in the UK is unlikely to incur treatment charges. Overseas visitors with travel insurance will be required to pay for their treatment and then claim back from their insurer on their return home.

Overseas visitors are not entitled to receive an NHS subsidised prescription therefore they must pay the same charge for a private prescription.

Recovery of Income

Reasonable measures are taken to pursue overseas visitors' debt and international debt recovery agencies will be employed.

Patients should be aware that under immigration rules 320, 321, 321A and 322. any outstanding debts of over £500 for NHS treatment which remain unpaid for two months of invoicing are reported via the department of health to the Home Office, this may result in future immigration application to enter or remain in the UK denied.

In the absence of prompt, full settlement or a reasonable repayment schedule, non-clinical information relating to the debt is provided routinely to the Home Office and may be used by the Home Office to apply the above immigration rules. The information will remain active for the purpose of the above rules until the debt is settled and a record of the settled debt will also be retained, both subject to normal limitation periods.

In the event that a person may seek entry to the UK or make an advance immigration application after settling an NHS debt in the previous three months, they are advised to retain and carry evidence of payment for potential examination by Home Office officials.

Contact details

If you have any further questions, please contact the team via:

- email Overseas.team@boltonft.nhs.uk
- or by calling 01204 390053/390005