

LRMN



South East London

# Know your Rights and the NHS

A guide to healthcare rights  
and NHS charges for people  
from refugee, asylum seeker  
and migrant backgrounds



## What is this guide for?

Many NHS services are free for everyone, it doesn't matter what your immigration status is. For some people with a more complicated immigration status, accessing the NHS can carry charges.

### This guide will help you know:

- Which healthcare services are always free for everyone
- Who does not have to pay
- Where you can get help if you are charged



## Services that are free for everyone

These services are always free for everyone

### Registering for and using GP services

- A GP is a doctor who treats all common medical conditions. It is important to register with a GP so that you can use their services. If you have a serious medical condition, your GP will send you to another service.
- Everyone has the right to register with a GP – you should not have to show ID, immigration status, or an address. There is no charge for registering with a GP.
- GP practices are usually open Monday to Friday, 8am – 6.30pm. But if you call outside these hours, you will get information about other services.

### Urgent care

- Emergency ambulance: **call 999**
- Hospital that's Accident & Emergency (A&E), or Emergency Department
- Urgent care centre

- Walk-in centre
- Minor injuries unit
- Mental health emergency: call 111, then press 2

## NHS 111

- For 24/7 free medical advice over the phone, call 111.
- For 24/7 help with a mental health emergency, call 111, then press 2
- Or visit the website: **111.nhs.uk**

**Family planning services** (including contraception)

**Diagnosis and treatment for some diseases** such as sexually transmitted infections, HIV/ AIDS, and coronavirus / Covid.

**End-of-life / palliative care** from a registered 'palliative care' charity.

**Treatment for a physical or mental condition** caused by torture, female genital mutilation, domestic violence, and / or sexual violence



## Your health is important!

- You should never be asked to pay in advance for treatment that you need now.
- You cannot be refused urgent care that you need now (including maternity care) because of your immigration status, or if you cannot pay.
- If you are refused healthcare because of your immigration status or because you cannot pay, ask for support. Contact one of the organisations listed in this guide.

Your health is important. However, some healthcare services can carry charges if you do not meet one of the criteria below.

## Who can access all healthcare for free?

You will always get free healthcare if you:

- ✓ Are a refugee, asylum seeker (or you're making a new application for asylum!) or have indefinite leave to remain in the UK
- ✓ Have already paid the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) with your visa application, or you are exempt from paying it
- ✓ Are a British national
- ✓ Are an EEA national with an EHIC card
- ✓ Are a Looked After Child or a child without parental responsibility
- ✓ Are a victim of Modern Day Slavery (or the decision on this is pending)
- ✓ Are supported under Section 95 of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999
- ✓ Are a prisoner or living in detention
- ✓ Are receiving compulsory treatment under court order or the Mental Health Act
- ✓ Are a refused asylum seeker (or a dependent of one) getting support.

## Have you been given a bill with charges for your healthcare?



If you meet certain criteria, you might not have to pay for healthcare. Check to see if you are exempt below.



If you are charged for healthcare, you can contact the organisations listed in this guide and they can help you to challenge your charges or support you to get advice. See the next two pages.

Some people are worried about accessing healthcare if they might have to pay, but there are ways to challenge NHS charges when we work together.

## Which services might the NHS charge for?

### Some GP services

You do have to pay for some services from a GP, including:

- Private medical insurance reports
- Letters of support that you ask for, e.g. housing letter
- Private 'fitness to attend/participate' letter

### Some dental services

- Many dentists in the UK provide treatment through the NHS and privately. There are set fees for different types of dental treatment provided through the NHS



- You might be able to get NHS dental treatment for free if you are registered with the NHS Low Income Scheme and have an HC2 certificate, or you are eligible for another kind of exemption
- If you require urgent dental advice you can call NHS 111

### **Some hospital services – but only if you do not qualify for free healthcare**

If you do not qualify for free healthcare, you may have to pay for some hospital services.



**But remember: you cannot be refused urgent care, including maternity care, because of your immigration status or because you cannot pay.**

If you need help, contact one of the organisations listed in this guide.

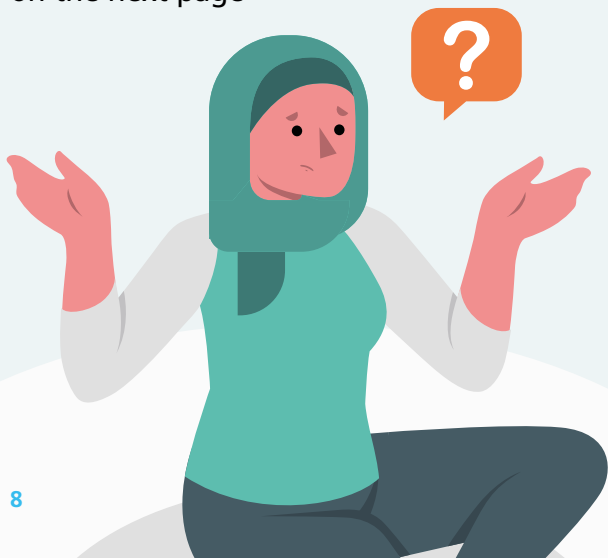
## I think I might qualify for free healthcare, but I am not sure

The list above is some of the most common reasons you can qualify for free healthcare. There are more reasons.

If you are not sure whether you qualify for free healthcare:

Visit: [patientsnotpassports.co.uk/learn](https://patientsnotpassports.co.uk/learn)

Get in touch with any of the organisations on the next page



## List of organisations here



<b>Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network</b>	<a href="https://lrmn.org.uk/get-help">lrmn.org.uk/get-help</a>
<b>Doctors of the World</b>	<a href="https://doctorsoftheworld.org.uk">doctorsoftheworld.org.uk</a> <a href="tel:08081647686">0808 1647 686</a>
<b>Maternity Action</b>	<a href="https://maternityaction.org.uk/maternity-care-access-advice-service/">maternityaction.org.uk/ maternity-care-access- advice-service/</a> <a href="tel:08088000041">0808 800 0041</a>
<b>Praxis</b>	<a href="https://praxis.org.uk/get-help">praxis.org.uk/get-help</a>
<b>Migrants Organise</b>	<a href="https://migrantsorganise.org">migrantsorganise.org</a>
<b>Patients not Passports</b>	<a href="https://patientsnotpassports.co.uk">patientsnotpassports.co.uk</a>
<b>Medact</b>	<a href="https://medact.org">medact.org</a>
<b>Healthwatch</b>	<a href="https://healthwatch.co.uk">healthwatch.co.uk</a>
<b>Docs Not Cops</b>	<a href="https://docsnotcops.co.uk">docsnotcops.co.uk</a>



## Many NHS services are free for everyone.

This guide is for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. It will tell you:

- Which services are free for everyone
- Who does not have to pay
- Where you can get help if you are charged

This guide is produced by Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network.

**We welcome your feedback.**

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