



Patient Information Leaflet Healthcare Treatment in countries of the European Economic Area (EEA)

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia,
Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark,
Estonia, Finland, France, Germany,
Greece, Hungary, Iceland*, Ireland, Italy,
Latvia, Liechtenstein*, Lithuania,
Luxemburg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway*,
Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia,
Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland**,
United Kingdom

* Final agreement is pending on applying
these rules in these countries

** S2 route only.



What are your entitlements?

Subject to certain criteria, Welsh residents are legally entitled to request reimbursement for healthcare treatment in another EEA country if they would be entitled to that same treatment from the NHS in Wales.

Patients have a right to reimbursement of costs up to the amount that the treatment would cost the NHS in Wales - or the actual amount where this is lower.

This leaflet sets out briefly how the system works, as clarified under the recent European Union Directive on the topic.

The process in outline

The basic rule is that the treatment must be treatment which you are entitled to receive from your local NHS. You can only claim reimbursement after you have received and paid for the treatment.

For some treatments, you will need to receive prior approval from the health board beforehand if you want reimbursement.

Therefore, before seeking treatment you are encouraged to confirm that you are

entitled to the treatment under the NHS. You can do so by contacting your Local Health Board.

Once this is confirmed you are advised to check the level of reimbursement to which you would be entitled. Your Local Health Board will confirm this.

Protecting yourself

If you choose to seek treatment abroad under these arrangements, you step outside the NHS and do so at your own risk. Besides satisfying yourself that you are entitled to the treatment and the level of reimbursement, you will need to consider other issues relating to care abroad – for example, travel arrangements there and back, follow up care, differences in medical practice, the language and culture of the country as well as the quality of the care to be provided. Your provider abroad is responsible if there is a serious adverse incident connected with the treatment. The NHS has no responsibility for these matters and no duty of care in relation to treatment received abroad.

Accordingly, if considering health care in another EEA country you are encouraged

to contact your Health Board in advance of travelling to discuss:

- whether you are entitled to the treatment in question from the NHS,
- whether prior approval is required,
- the level of reimbursement.

If you do contact the Health Board you will find it helpful to have to hand information on:

- the clinical condition and the procedure/treatment in question,
- the cost of the treatment abroad.

In addition, you are advised to obtain, in advance of travelling, an EHIC card to enable you to receive emergency treatment free of charge in the EEA countries and to arrange comprehensive medical insurance. The cost of such insurance is not reimbursable by the NHS.

It is your responsibility to ensure that there are adequate arrangements in place for any after care that may be required on returning home.

In addition, you should also ensure you have adequate repatriation arrangements in place should there be a requirement to

repatriate you home following any clinical complication that requires alternative travel arrangements or death. The NHS is not responsible for reimbursing any of these costs.

Please note that reimbursement will only be made in respect of invoices directly addressed to the patient by the healthcare provider with accompanying proof of payment. Reimbursement will not be made to third party brokers acting on behalf of the patient in the pursuit of business.

Prior Approval

Prior approval is required for a number of complex and expensive treatments. A list of these is available from your Local Health Board.

The Health Board is legally entitled to refuse prior approval if the care is available locally within a clinically justified time, or if for some reason the arrangements proposed could harm you or others.

The process of prior approval, where this is applied, is intended to help the NHS manage the services for which it is responsible, but can also help you, by

enabling you to discuss issues relating to treatment options, in advance of travelling.

If you do receive prior approval, your basic situation is no different from other cases where you might travel abroad for treatment. Responsibility for the arrangements remains with you and the overseas provider is responsible for the care given.

Who should I contact for advice?

Cardiff and Vale IPFR
Commissioning Team
Public Health Division
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Woodland House
Maes-y-Coed Road
Cardiff
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