

Making a Request for Treatment in the European Economic Area (EEA)

Patients are encouraged to contact their Local Health Board to obtain information on whether the treatment they seek requires prior authorisation, to clarify eligibility and the likely level of reimbursement that will apply.

Patients are advised to read the following advice in conjunction with the '*All Wales Procedure for Welsh Patients accessing Treatment in Countries of the European Economic Area.*' <http://www.cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk/individual-patient-funding-requests>

Making a request for treatment in another EEA country and the reimbursement of its costs can be a complex task. A patient leaflet is available which summarises the entitlements of patients and explains how to make a request and the people available to help with this. It can be downloaded [EEA Patient leaflet](#)

The EU Directive on cross-border healthcare was passed in 2011. Under the terms of the EU Directive on Cross Border Healthcare (Article 56) patients can choose to obtain a healthcare service, including healthcare provided by a private organisation, in another EEA country that is the same as or equivalent to a treatment that would have been provided to the patient by their local NHS.

Prior approval must be obtained if the planned medical treatment a patient wishes to receive in another EEA country is included in the list of certain services which is detailed list that can be found [see: Appendix B - Healthcare requiring Prior Approval](#)

There are some services and treatments that are considered highly specialised and it is possible that the treatment will fall within the responsibility of the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee which commissions specialised services on behalf of Welsh health boards.

Patients are encouraged to contact their Local Health Board to obtain information on:

- **entitlement to the proposed treatment**
- **if the treatment they seek requires prior approval**
- **if the treatment is considered specialised and requires application to the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee**
- **the likely level of any reimbursement that will apply.**

The EU Directive route to accessing healthcare in Europe is similar to the S2 route, but there are some important differences. This is explained in further detail via the following link: [Funding routes](#)

Before considering travelling to another EEA country for planned medical treatment under the EU Directive, patients are advised to read the advice provided on the NHS Direct (Wales) National Contact Point web site: [EEA Directive travel information](#)

Eligibility

Patients are encouraged to contact their Local Health Board to obtain information on whether the treatment they seek requires prior approval, to clarify eligibility and the likely level of reimbursement that will apply.

In order to determine eligibility, patients will need to meet the following criteria to be eligible for funding under the EU Directive:

- The patient must be ordinarily resident in Wales
- Applications will only be considered for patients seeking treatment in the EEA
- Patients must provide evidence of their medical need for the treatment
- The treatment must also be generally available to all residents in the health board area
- Some treatments require prior approval
- Reimbursement will be limited to the cost had the treatment been provided in your local NHS services or the actual amount where this is lower than the NHS cost.

Prior approval

Patients are encouraged to contact their Local Health Board to obtain information on whether the treatment they seek requires prior approval, to clarify eligibility and the likely level of reimbursement that will apply.

The services that require prior approval is outlined in the 'All Wales Procedure for Welsh Patients accessing Treatment in Countries of the European Economic Area,' can be viewed [see: Appendix B - Healthcare requiring Prior Approval](#)

Please note that this is not a definitive list.

Patients are encouraged to seek prior approval as this will confirm:

- Patient entitlement to NHS care
- If the patient is entitled to the treatment requested
- If the patient is entitled to NHS aftercare and whether it will be available
- If the treatment requested is generally available in your local health board
- If prior approval is required;
- What level of cost reimbursement that will apply
- It will also ensure that the patient is aware of all the possible treatment options within the NHS, which may be more convenient for you than going abroad.

The information the patient must provide when applying for prior approval is detailed in section 5 of the '*All Wales procedure for Welsh patients seeking treatment in the EEA.*' To aid this process the health board will respond to such enquiries within 10 working days, providing we have all the relevant information from the patient.

Reimbursement

Patients are encouraged to contact their Local Health Board to obtain information on whether the treatment they seek requires prior approval, to clarify eligibility and the likely level of reimbursement that will apply.

The patient will be required to pay the costs of their treatment in another EEA country up front to the EEA health provider.

To receive reimbursement, patients will need to provide documentary proof detailing:-

- The treatment received
- That full payment has been made by the patient directly to the healthcare provider within the EEA for the treatment provided including the transaction date
- The value of the payment made to the healthcare provider within the EEA
- The currency used in transacting payment to the healthcare provider within the EEA.

It is expected that this information would normally be supported by a bona fide invoice from the EEA healthcare provider to the patient and a verified receipt of payment. Invoices from third party brokers acting on behalf of the patient in the pursuit of business will not be accepted.

If patients choose not to contact their Local Health Board prior to committing to a treatment in the EEA, they may discover in retrospect that they were not entitled to reimbursement or that the level of reimbursement does not cover the cost of the treatment they have incurred in the EEA. To aid this process the health board will respond to such enquiries within 10 working days, providing we have all the relevant information from the patient.

Calculating the level of reimbursement

The health boards in Wales have decided to use the English PbR tariff to ensure the reimbursement cost is determined in a fair and equitable manner. The PbR tariff is an established and recognised charging mechanism for healthcare in the UK and is updated and reviewed annually. However, the exact level of reimbursement a patient may be entitled to will depend on the expected treatment plan according to their clinical need.

In order to obtain an indication of the level of reimbursement a patient may be reimbursed, the PbR tariff 2014/15. Please refer to Annex 5A – National Prices. [PbR National Tariff 2014/15 price index](#)

Reimbursement will not be made under the EU Directive for any travel insurance, accommodation and travel costs.

Patient responsibilities

When considering seeking treatment in the EEA, it is the patient's responsibility to:

- Be clear on who in the EEA country in which they wish to be treated is accountable for assuring their safety throughout the course of their treatment;
- Understand that Health Boards cannot vouch for the quality of providers that the UK does not regulate - Health Boards are **not liable** for the clinical negligence of practitioners or clinicians in the country undertaking the treatment - any liability of the provider would have to be established in accordance with the legislation of the host state;
- Make their own inquiries about the level of insurance held by the proposed providers and the level of any liability within the country where the treatment is to be provided;
- Understand their responsibility to make arrangement for adequate insurance arrangements.
- Understand that they will be required to pay for the treatment they have received directly to the provider, prior to making a claim for reimbursement from a Health Board;
- Note that the maximum level of reimbursement will be limited to the cost of the equivalent local NHS service – sometimes this may be less than the cost of the treatment abroad;
- Ensure that appropriate aftercare arrangements are in place after they have returned home;
- Ensure that they are able to provide all of the relevant information and assurances required to make a prior authorisation request and a claim for reimbursement.
- Ensure all medical documentation is translated in to English.

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.

How to apply

To seek prior authorisation for a treatment in the EEA or to apply for reimbursement, patients will need to complete the appropriate [see: Appendices C and D](#) and submit the evidence required that demonstrates residency and clinical need.

When applying for reimbursement, original receipts and proof of payment directly to the EEA healthcare provider must be supplied.

Useful documents

- All Wales Procedure for Welsh Patients seeking treatment in the European Economic Area.
- Patient Information leaflet
- Treatments that require prior approval
- INNU Policy
- Estimation of reimbursement level (link to PbR tariff)
- Prior approval application form

- Reimbursement application form

Contact details for further information

If you are a resident in Cardiff and Vale Health Board and need advice on this guidance, please contact:

The IPFR/EEA Coordinator,

Cardiff and Vale UHB,

Public Health Team Offices,

Park Road,

Whitchurch,

CF14 7XB.

Please note that whilst we are unable to discuss your healthcare needs, we are able to talk you through how a request for treatment abroad can be made and how it will be considered.