

N3 Going North - Health

This leaflet is for you if you live in the South and you want to go North to live or work. It tells you about how health services are organised and delivered and about your entitlement to free or subsidised services. It covers the general rules – there is not enough space to give all the details. You may get further information from the addresses and websites listed.

The information in this leaflet applies to you if you are a citizen of any member state of the EU, the EEA or Switzerland – these are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the UK. If you are a citizen of another country and you are lawfully resident in the North, you may be entitled to some or all of the services described.

The information in this leaflet was compiled in March 2006 . Subsequent changes may affect the accuracy of the content.

Organisation of Health Services

The Northern Ireland Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety is responsible for health policy, public health and public safety. Public safety includes food safety – this is dealt with in Leaflet N10 Consumer Issues.

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

There are four health and social services boards which are responsible for planning and commissioning health and social services for their areas:

Eastern Health and Social Services Board: <http://www.ehssb.n-i.nhs.uk>

Information helpline: 0(0044)800 665544 (freephone)

Northern Health and Social Services Board: <http://www.nhssb.n-i.nhs.uk>

Information helpline: 0845 762 6428 (all calls at local rate)

Southern Health and Social Services Board: <http://www.shssb.org>

Information helpline: 0800 665544 (freephone)

Western Health and Social Services Board: <http://www.whssb.org>

Information helpline: 0800 585329 (freephone)

There are 18 Health and Social Services Trusts and they are the providers of health and social services. The different trusts provide a range of services including acute hospitals, psychiatric services, community care and social services.

Under the recent Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland the four health boards will be replaced by the Strategic Health and Social Services Authority, and the 18

Health and Social Services Trusts will be reduced to 5. In addition the functions of the Central Services Agency (see below) will transfer to new Health and Social Services structures.

Central Services Agency

The Central Services Agency (CSA) provides support services for the Department, the HSS Boards, the Trusts and other health agencies.

25/27 Adelaide Street, Belfast, BT2 8FH.

Tel: 028 (048) 9032 4431

<http://www.centralservicesagency.com>

The Health and Care Northern Ireland website provides information on health and care services and includes links to all local Acute and Community Hospital Trusts, General Practitioner Surgeries and Clinics, Health Boards and Agencies and central government healthcare services.

<http://www.healthandcareni.co.uk/>

Medical Card

When you move to the North, you should get a medical card. You do not need to have a medical card to register with a GP or to get GP treatment but you should get one as you are likely to need it for other services. You can get the forms from a doctor or from the CSA. The completed form should be sent to the CSA. If you are registering with a GP for the first time you use Form HS22X to apply for your medical card. Frontier workers resident in the Republic of Ireland and employed in the North are entitled to a medical card and to avail of the National Health Service (NHS).

GP services

You are entitled to free GP services if you are living in the North, if you are looking for work in the North, if you are resident in the South and working in the North, or if you resident in the South and become ill on a temporary visit to the North. You may have to pay Prescription Charges and for items such as medical certificates (but not for those in connection with social welfare/security payments).

Irish people do not need any specific documents but other EU/EEA nationals who are looking for work should have Form E301 with them. Other EU/EEA nationals who are visiting the North should have their European Health Insurance Card (Form E101).

You should register with a GP. You can do this by going to any local doctor and asking to be registered. A list of GP practices is available on the Health and Care NI website. You may get temporary registration if you intend to stay in the area for a short period; otherwise you get permanent registration. You may get immediately necessary treatment

even if you are not registered. You may change your GP by asking to be registered with another one.

If you fail to get registered with the doctor of your choice, you should apply to the Central Services Agency (CSA). The CSA will then assign you to a doctor's list.

You do not need to have a medical card to register with a GP or to get treatment but you should get one as you are likely to need it for other services. Your doctor usually has application forms which you should send to the CSA. If you are registering with a GP for the first time you use Form HS22X to apply for your medical card.

Prescription Charges

Some people have to pay prescription charges when the GP gives a prescription for drugs and medicines. You do not have to pay if you:

- Are aged under 16 or aged 16-18 in full time education
- Are aged 60 or over
- Are pregnant or have had a baby in the last 12 months (you should get an exemption certificate from the CSA)
- Have a listed medical condition (see leaflet HC11, available from main post offices, social security (jobs & benefits) offices and hospitals, for the current list – you should get an exemption certificate from the CSA if you have one of these conditions)
- or your partner are getting Income Support, Income based Job Seeker's Allowance or are named on a tax credit exemption certificate or hold a HS Low Income Scheme Full Help Certificate (HC2)

You may get application forms (HC1) for the HC2 from Social Security/Jobs and Benefits Offices or the CSA.

The standard prescription charge is £6.50 (£6.65 from 01 April 06) for each item prescribed.

If you have to buy more than five prescribed items in a four month period or more than 14 items in a calendar year, you should buy a Health Service Pre-Payment Certificate. A four month certificate costs £33.90 (£34.65 from 01 April 06) and a 12 month certificate costs £93.20 (£95.30 from 01 April 06).

If you incur prescription charges for which you are not liable you may be able to get a refund from the CSA.

Dental Services

Dental services are provided by dentists who usually have both public and private practices. You may ask to be registered with a dentist of your choice – you need your medical card/number to do this. If you want to be treated under the National Health Service (NHS - that is, as a public patient), you must make this clear to the dentist. If you are being treated privately you must pay the full costs involved.

If you are not registered, you are not entitled to treatment but you may be able to find a dentist who will provide you with treatment for the relief of pain and temporary repairs and dressings. Dentists must have a Patient Information Leaflet outlining the services they provide.

If you are being treated under the NHS, you are entitled to the care and treatment which, in the dentist's opinion, is necessary to secure and maintain your oral health. Some people are entitled to this free of charge while others have to pay some of the costs.

Everyone is entitled to certain dental services free of charge. These services include repairs to dentures, stopping of bleeding and re-cementing a bridge.

You are automatically entitled to free dental treatment if you:

- Are aged under 18 or under 19 and in full-time education
- Are pregnant or have a child under a year old
- Or your partner are receiving Income Support, Income-Based Job Seeker's Allowance, or Pension Credit Guarantee Credit
- have a certificate for full help with the cost of Health Services (an NHS Tax Credit exemption certificate or HC2 certificate)

If you are not automatically eligible for free dental treatment but have a low income, you may be eligible for reduced charges or free treatment. You must apply to the social security office (using Form HC1). When your application has been processed you may get no help with dental charges, partial help or full payment of the charges.

The cost of each item of dental treatment is set centrally by the UK government and is contained in the Statement of Dental Remuneration. If you do not qualify for free or reduced charges, you have to pay 80% of the gross cost of the treatments up to a maximum of £384 (from 01 April 2005). You are entitled to get a Treatment Plan and an estimate of the costs, in writing, if you ask for this.

Ophthalmic Services

You should apply for free or subsidised sight tests in advance. The optician should have the relevant applications form – Form HC1 – or you can get it from social security/Jobs and Benefits offices.

You are entitled to free sight tests if you:

- Are aged under 16 or under 19 and in full time education
- Are aged 60 or over;
- Are a diagnosed glaucoma patient;
- Are aged 40 or over and are a parent, brother, sister, son or daughter of a diagnosed glaucoma patient, or
- Have been advised by an ophthalmologist that you are at risk of glaucoma;
- Have been diagnosed as diabetic;
- Are registered blind or partially sighted;
- Need complex lenses;
- Are someone whose sight test is carried out through the hospital eye department as part of the management of your eye condition;
- Or your partner are getting Income Support or Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or Minimum Income Guarantee or Pension Credit guarantee credit
- Are entitled to, or named on, an NHS tax credit exemption certificate or have a HC2 certificate.

You may apply for a HC3 certificate which entitles you to some help with the cost of a private sight test.

If you need glasses or lenses you may get vouchers towards their cost if you:

- Are aged under 16 or under 19 and in full time education
- Need complex lenses
- Or your partner are getting Income Support or Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or Minimum Income Guarantee or Pension Credit guarantee credit
- Are entitled to, or named on, a tax credit exemption certificate or have a HC2 certificate.

If you have paid for treatment but should have got free or subsidised treatment, you may be able to claim a refund from the CSA. Forms for refunds (Form HC5) are available at Social Security/Jobs and Benefits offices.

If you have paid for a sight test or glasses, but would have been entitled to free or reduced cost treatment, you should complete form HC5 available from Social Security or Jobs & Benefits offices. You will be required to show the original receipts for any such treatment.

Other Services

Hearing Aids

Health Service hearing aids are available on free loan are fitted, supplied and maintained by hearing aid centres. Your GP may refer you to a hospital and/or the hearing aid centre

Wigs and Fabric Supports

Broadly, people who are entitled to free prescriptions may get help with the cost of wigs and fabric supports.

Maternity Services

You may get free maternity services from your GP, a midwife in a hospital or local health centre or clinic and an obstetrician in a hospital if necessary. Maternity services are available to frontier workers resident in the South and employed in the North. You are entitled to have a home birth with support from a midwife or GP.

Hospital services

Hospital in-patient and out-patient services are generally free of charge. Generally, you must be referred by a GP. In emergencies you may go to the Accident and Emergency Department. Some hospitals have minor injury units which you may attend without a GP referral.

If you are receiving income support or income-based jobseeker's allowance you may be able to get help with travel costs to and from hospital if you are the patient. You may also be entitled to help from the Social Fund in respect of travel costs incurred in visiting a close relative (see Leaflet N2 *Going North – Social Welfare*).

Community Care Services

Community care services for people who need them are provided by the various trusts. There is a range of services available including health visitors, district nursing, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, domiciliary care and domiciliary meals. Services for older people and for people with disabilities are also provided. All of these services are provided on the basis of need.

Direct cash payments may be made to people who need services to allow them to buy the relevant services. Such payments may be made to people with disabilities who are aged 16 and over, to parents of children with disabilities and to carers over the age of 16.