

POST-BREXIT: MISSION PARTNERS LIVING AND WORKING IN EU COUNTRIES

Access to NHS for mission partners during their stays in England

Reviewed May 2026



Now that the UK has left the European Union there are changes that mission partners, agencies and churches need to be aware of regarding access to the NHS for those living and working in EU countries.

The [Withdrawal Agreement](#) set out the terms of the UK's withdrawal from the EU in March 2020, and includes provisions on citizens' rights. It protects the rights of EU citizens and their family members who live in the UK, and **UK nationals and their family members who live in EU countries**. The EEA EFTA Separation Agreement and the Swiss Citizens' Rights Agreement extend the citizens' rights provisions of the Withdrawal Agreement to nationals of these states and UK nationals who have moved between the UK and these states before the end of the transition period¹.

Please note that the information here is specifically geared for those currently living and working in EU countries. For general information for all mission partners accessing free NHS healthcare – wherever they are based - please see [Access NHS – introductory information](#).

IN SUMMARY

UK nationals who were living lawfully in an EU or EFTA country on or before 31 December 2020 will be entitled to healthcare without charge in the UK, using a valid Member State EHIC/PRC or S2, or a UK S1 for those whose healthcare costs are the responsibility of the UK:

- If they are member state insured, they will be able to use their Member State EHIC when visiting the UK for medically necessary treatment – but do note that an EHIC does not cover all healthcare costs.
- They can use a Member State S2 to access planned treatment in the UK.
- If they are a UK state pensioner with a registered UK S1, they can use that.
- Please note, however, that mission partners **cannot use a UK EHIC** to access medically necessary treatment in the UK.

If the individual does not meet any of these criteria, the only other criteria for them to be entitled to free access to NHS care for their stays in England, without charge, is whether they can be deemed 'ordinarily resident' (OR) during their times in the UK. If they are considered OR they will be eligible for free secondary NHS healthcare from day one of their arrival. If not, then they will be chargeable for NHS healthcare – at 150% of the normal cost.

- Read [Understanding 'Ordinary Residence'](#) to ensure you understand the circumstances for each mission partner when they are visiting the UK.
- Download the [Guidance on meeting the Ordinary Residence Test](#).
- Download [Registering with a GP](#) for further advice on this issue.
- Ensure your mission partners have adequate medical insurance cover if they are unlikely to be deemed 'Ordinarily Resident'. Further information can be found in [Do your mission partners need private medical insurance?](#)

Other helpful links:

[Living in Europe](#) - a GOV.UK webpage with information for UK nationals living in the EU, EEA EFTA, Switzerland and Ireland before 1 January 2021, including guidance on residency and healthcare.
[Healthcare for visitors to the UK from the EU](#) - a gov.uk webpage with information on accessing healthcare for visitors to the UK from EU countries, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland.

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¹ More information on the citizens' rights provisions can be found in [Withdrawal Agreement explainer for part 2: citizens' rights](#) published by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).