

Patients' Charter

Part 1b

My health, my rights, my NHS

Getting and using NHS services in Scotland



Using health services in the right way



NHS stands for 'National Health Service'.

- using the right NHS service will help make sure I get the help I need and make sure all NHS services run well



- I can find information about NHS services in Scotland through my local health board or on the website www.nhsinform.scot



- through my GP practice I will usually be able to see healthcare staff who can give treatment and medical advice including:
 - doctors
 - nurses and healthcare staff
 - midwives

NHS 24 on 111 can help me:



- when my local GP practice is closed and I am too ill to wait until it opens
- if I have a dental emergency when my dentist is closed
- if I need advice for myself or someone else, for physical problems or for mental health support, when I cannot wait and my local services are closed



- if I use British Sign Language, Contact Scotland BSL can help me contact NHS 24

Find out how on their website

www.contactsotland-bsl.org



- my local pharmacy or chemist can help me with a wide range of common conditions, like coughs, colds, aches and pains.

They can also help me to stop smoking and can provide emergency contraception



- my NHS dentist can help with:
 - toothache and pain
 - swellings
 - injury to your mouth
 - ulcers or odd patches that don't go away after a couple of weeks
 - general advice on keeping your teeth and mouth healthy



- my optometrist can help:
 - red or sticky eye
 - pain in or around the eye
 - sudden loss of vision
 - blurred or reduced vision
 - 'flashes' and 'floaters' in the eye



- if I have mental health distress I can get support 24 hours a day by calling 111 and choosing 'mental health hub' from the choices the telephone message will give me



I can also get support by contacting Breathing Space on 0800 83 85 87 or by using web chat at:

www.breathingspace.scot



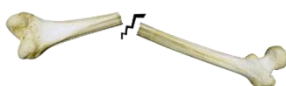
More advice to support mental wellbeing is available online at:

www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing



- my local minor injuries unit can help with:

- cuts and minor burns
- sprains and strains
- suspected broken bones or fractures



Urgent and emergency care



- I should only go to the Accident and Emergency Department (A&E) if I have a very serious injury or if it is an emergency
- If I have a medical emergency or someone else is seriously ill or injured, I should call 999 and ask for the ambulance service.

The ambulance service will ask some questions to find out what has happened and arrange the right help.

- I can call 111 for any urgent health advice when my GP practice, dentist, pharmacy or other local services are closed
- If I think I need A&E but it is not an emergency, I can call 111 before I go to A&E.

111 will give me urgent care and I will be assessed for a range of injuries or illnesses.

This could be a telephone or video call with a clinician, or an appointment to attend A&E or Minor Injuries unit, so I do not have a long wait in a hospital waiting room.

Medicines



- my doctor or other qualified healthcare professional will give me medicines that are right for me and will check them regularly.

- I have the right to be given all the information I need about my medicines, their possible side effects, and other treatments, in a way I can understand



- the '[Medicines in Scotland, What's the right treatment for me?](#)' booklet explains how I can work with NHS staff to decide if I need a medicine and if it is right for me

I can call Healthcare Improvement Scotland on 0131 623 4300 to ask for a copy of the booklet.



- I can ask for more information and speak to NHS staff if I am not sure how to take any medicines I have been given



- I should order repeat prescriptions in plenty of time, and only order the things I need

It is important I take responsibility for my own treatment and care by:



- telling NHS staff about:
 - any medicines I am taking
 - if I have an allergy to any medicine or if I have ever had side effects from that medicine



- not taking prescription medicine that has not been prescribed for me
- keeping medicines in a safe place where children cannot reach it
- not taking medicine that is out of date



I can give any old medicine or medicine I have not used, to my pharmacist, who will get rid of them safely.

- always finishing a treatment plan or course of treatment



- I can speak to a healthcare professional involved in my care if I want to change or stop the treatment they have prescribed for me

Safe care and treatment that works well



I can expect that the treatment and care I receive:

- is right for me
- follows the law, guidance and standards



- is given to me in the right way – this could be face to face, by phone or online



- aims to be 'trauma-informed' – recognising the emotions you feel when something terrible like an accident has happened



- I have a right to expect that everyone working in the NHS has the right skills and training for their job

The care and treatment I get will be given with care by properly qualified NHS staff.

Health and cleanliness standards



- I have the right to expect that the treatment and care I get is given in a safe way, in a clean place
- healthcare buildings should meet the standards of hygiene agreed by the NHS and Healthcare Improvement Scotland



- I can raise any concerns about the safety or cleanliness of services that may affect my care with a member of NHS staff first, or with my local health board



- I can find out about the Healthcare Environment Inspectorate online at: www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org or I can call them on 0131 623 4300

Helping to stop infection from spreading



- NHS staff should always wash their hands before they examine me
- I can remind a member of staff to wash their hands before examining me if they have forgotten

- I can help stop the spread of infection in NHS buildings by:



- always washing and drying my hands and using the hand gel provided before entering a hospital ward
- always washing and drying my hands after using the toilet
- not visiting a patient in hospital if I am not well or if anyone else I live with is not well



- If I am being sick or have diarrhoea I should wait for 2 days before visiting a patient in hospital.

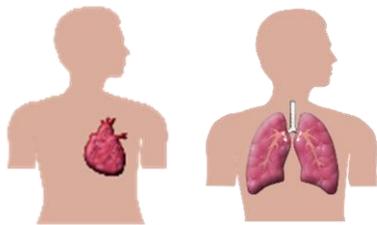
I may be able to phone the ward and speak to the person instead



- when I visit people in hospital I will follow the guidance and rules set by the hospital.

I can also speak to NHS staff about how to support a patient in a hospital when visiting.

Organ and tissue donation



- I have the right to have my decision about organ and tissue donation respected after my death

Organ and tissue donation means you agree that parts of your body can be used after you die.

Organs are parts of your body like the heart, lungs, kidneys and liver.



- I can register my decision to donate (or not to donate) on the NHS Organ Donor Register.

Whatever I decide it is important to share my decision with my friends and family.

For more information or to join the NHS Organ Donor Register, I can phone 0300 123 23 23 or get information online at:

www.organdonationscotland.org



Treatment Time Guarantee



- I have the right to start getting treatment before 12 weeks (3 months) have passed after I agreed to the treatment

This is called the Treatment Time Guarantee.



- If my treatment has not started in 12 weeks, my health board must:
 - explain why
 - give me information on the average waiting time for when my treatment will take place

I may also be offered a cancellation appointment at short notice.



My health board should take all reasonable steps to arrange for my treatment, which may be in a different area.

I will be told as soon as possible if I need to travel to get treatment.



- sometimes waiting times may be changed if I cannot go to an appointment or if I refuse to go



I should contact NHS staff beforehand to let them know:

- if I will be late
- to cancel or rearrange the appointment for a time that suits me better

A small number of treatments are not included in the Treatment Time Guarantee.



- I can ask NHS staff if my treatment is included in the Treatment Time Guarantee.

My health board will give support so I can easily get health services.

Cancer waiting times



If I am an adult who has been diagnosed with cancer my health board should give me treatment:

- before 31 days have passed from when the decision is made to treat my cancer
- before 62 days have passed from being referred urgently with suspected cancer, including referrals from national cancer screening programmes





- I can ask NHS staff if my cancer diagnosis is covered by the waiting time standard



- sometimes my waiting time will be changed for example if:
 - I cannot go to an appointment
 - there is a medical reason like an infection or if am waiting for a wound to heal

Mental health waiting times



Most people referred to:

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- psychological therapies

should start treatment before 18 weeks (less than 4 months) have passed.



- sometimes my waiting time can be changed, for example if I cannot go to an appointment or I decide to have my treatment at a later time



I can find more information about treatment times at www.nhsinform.scot

I can find guidance about the Treatment Time Guarantee and NHS Scotland Waiting Times on the Scottish Government website: gov.scot

Treatment abroad



- If I want to have treatment abroad I should talk about this with my local health board

I can find more about my right to go to other countries outside the UK for treatment at www.nhsinform.scot

Visitors from abroad (and UK nationals living abroad)



If I am visiting Scotland from abroad and need treatment during my stay, NHS staff may ask me to provide health insurance documents

- I may have to pay for some NHS services



- If I need to stay in hospital or I need specialist treatment I will have to pay for it unless the hospital has agreed I am **exempt** from charges.

Exempt means I do not have to pay.



- I will not have to pay for:
 - emergency treatment
 - general medical services from a GP Practice



- I can find more about my rights when visiting Scotland from abroad on www.nhsinform.scot or by phoning the NHS inform helpline on 0800 22 44 88

Asylum seekers and refugees



An **asylum seeker** or **refugee** is a person who has fled their home country because of war or other things harming them or their family.



- If I am an asylum seeker or a refugee living in Scotland I have the right to free NHS healthcare while I am here



- I can find more about my rights to access to NHS healthcare on the [NHS Inform website](#) or by phoning the NHS inform helpline on 0800 22 44 88

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