

# Healthcare: A Guide for Students studying in England

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The National Health Service (NHS) is the UK's state health service which provides treatment for UK residents through a wide range of health care services. Some of these services are free of charge and some you have to pay for.

The NHS provides primary care through doctors' surgeries and walk-in centres and secondary care through specialists usually based at a hospital. Most hospitals (not all) have Accident and Emergency Departments (A&E Departments) which are open 24 hours a day and deal with patients needing emergency hospital treatment.

This guide refers to provisions outlined by NHS England. NHS Scotland and NHS Wales provide differing levels of care and treatment and should you fall ill and require healthcare in Scotland and Wales during your period of study it is important to familiarise yourself with health provision in Scotland and Wales prior to travel.

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## 1. NHS treatment that is free of charge to everyone

The National Health Service (NHS) provides the following treatment free of charge everyone:

- Accident and emergency services (but not follow up treatment or admission as an in-patient);
- Family planning services;
- Diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases;
- Treatment of certain infectious diseases;
- Treatment of conditions caused by torture, female genital mutilation, domestic violence (provided you did not come to the UK for the specific purpose of seeking such treatment);
- Compulsory psychiatric treatment or treatment that has been ordered by a court;
- Treatment in prison or immigration detention.

## 2. Categories of overseas visitors entitled to full access to NHS treatment

Some \*overseas visitors to the UK are entitled to full access to NHS treatment on the same basis as a permanent resident i.e.:

- a) Those who have paid the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) as part of their visa application for the UK or those who are exempt from paying the surcharge: <https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application/when-you-need-to-pay>
- b) Those who applied for their current visa before the IHS was introduced on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2015 (The visa application must have been one which would have required payment or exemption from the IHS had it been made on or after 6 April 2015: <https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application/when-you-need-to-pay>)
- c) Babies aged 3 months or less, who were born in the UK to a parent who is entitled to full access to NHS treatment because they fit into category a or b above. In addition, the baby must not have left the UK since birth\*\*

\*You are classed as an overseas visitor if you have a time limit on your immigration permission to be in the UK.

\*\* Where an application for leave to remain is not submitted for a baby aged over 3 months, the parent(s) are liable to pay for any healthcare treatment the baby may receive.

For EU, EEA and Swiss nationals who have been granted either pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme or for those who have an application pending (who were residing in the UK lawfully on or before 31 December 2020 and applied before 30 June 2021), students will not be charged for their healthcare, as long as they continue to be ordinarily resident in the UK.

Where EU, EEA or Swiss students do not apply by 30 June 2021, they could lose their right to access free healthcare.

EU, EEA and Swiss students who enter the UK to study for a degree after 31 December 2020 must do so via the sponsored Student Route and will pay the Immigration Health Surcharge as part of their application, which enables them to access free NHS healthcare with the same entitlement as any UK resident.

For more information, please see the government website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-for-eu-and-efta-nationals-living-in-the-uk>

If you fall into a category that entitles you to full access to NHS treatment then you will be entitled to receive following free of charge:

- Consultation with a GP and most other GP services;
- Treatment in a hospital (both emergency and **non-emergency treatment**).

This is in **addition** to the treatment outlined in Section 1.

You *may* need to pay for:

- Medicines prescribed by your GP (prescriptions are currently £9.35 per item)
- Some GP's services (e.g. vaccinations for travel, getting a sickness certificate)
- Dental treatment
- Optical treatment

**If you do not fall into a category that entitles you to full access to NHS treatment then you will need to arrange comprehensive medical insurance before you travel to the UK. Medical insurance cannot be arranged retrospectively. If you are unclear about your entitlement then please contact LSTM's Student Experience Officer before travelling.**

### 3. Registering with a GP

A GP is usually the first point of call for all non-emergency treatment. Anyone can consult a GP either as an NHS patient (if you're entitled – see Section 2) or as a private patient, however, GPs will normally only pre-register those who are in the UK for more than 6 months. If you are in the UK for less than 6 months then you won't be able to pre-register but you will be able to be seen if you become ill.

#### *Pre-registering with GP*

The process of registering with a GP normally takes a few days, therefore, we advise you to register as soon as possible after arriving in Liverpool – you should not wait until you feel ill.

You should register with a doctor close to where you will be living. Some students may live within the catchment area of the Brownlow Group Practice, which is situated on Pembroke Place near LSTM. Students are eligible to register with the Brownlow Group Practice providing:

- They are enrolled with LSTM on a course of 6 months or longer
- They live in the postcode catchment area (you should check with the Practice if your postcode is covered)

If you are not eligible to register with the Brownlow Group Practice, then you should contact NHS Choices\* who will advise you of your nearest GP. You can search for local NHS services on the NHS Choices website: <http://www.nhs.uk/>

\*NHS Choices provides 24-hour online advice about health, illness and local health services:  
<https://www.nhs.uk/symptomcheckers/pages/symptoms.aspx>

If you are not eligible to pre-register with a GP then make yourself familiar with your local surgery in case you become ill and need to be seen.

International students studying in the UK are eligible for Covid vaccine whilst in the UK, in the same way as they can access other healthcare services.

#### 4. Out of Hours Services

##### **What should you do if you need medical attention out of hours?**

Don't hesitate to call 999 if you think someone's life may be in danger.

If you think you may need to see a GP, first call the practice you are registered with. Their out-of-hours answering service should tell you what to do to get an urgent consultation.

Some local pharmacies are open until late in the evening and at weekends, and the pharmacist can advise on home treatment for many minor ailments. You can also get information and health advice (including the availability of late night pharmacies) from a qualified advisor by calling NHS Choices on 111.

The Accident and Emergency Service at the Royal Liverpool University Hospital and Aintree Hospitals NHS Trust are open 24 hours a day, but remember it's for accidents and emergencies only.

#### 5. NHS Walk-In Centres

It can sometimes take up to a week to get an appointment with a GP for a non-emergency. Therefore, it is useful to know that anyone can receive treatment at an NHS Walk-in Centre. You do not need an appointment nor to you need to register. Any treatment received is free of charge for those **entitled to full NHS treatment (See Section 2)**, although you will have to pay for any medicines prescribed. NHS Walk-in Centres are nurse led – you will not be able to see a GP, although they will be able to advise you on what to do should you need to see one.

NHS Walk-in Centres provide access to a range of NHS services. Experienced NHS nurses are available to treat a range of minor illnesses, such as coughs, colds and infections, as well as minor injuries like strains, sprains and cuts. They also provide information, such as the opening times and contact numbers, for all other local health services, including pharmacies, dental services and out-of-hours GP services. Medical care doctors are also part of the Walk-In Centre teams however they are not the same as GP's.

Walk-in Centre's are not intended to replace GP's or hospital services but complement them, nor should they replace the provision of adequate medical insurance.

The nearest NHS Walk-in Centre to LSTM is:

**Liverpool (City) NHS Walk-in Centre**  
6 David Lewis Street  
Liverpool  
L1 4AP

Tel: 0151 247 6500

Opening Times:

Mon -Fri 7.00am to 10.00pm

Weekends / Bank holidays - 9.00am 10.00pm

Other Walk-in Centre's in and around

Liverpool can be found at <http://www.nhs.uk/>

## 6. Dental Treatment

There is a charge for all dental treatment in the UK. However, if you are entitled to full NHS treatment (See Section 2) and can find a dentist accepting NHS patients then you will be able to receive reduced cost treatment. However, this is now increasingly difficult and you may find that you have to register as a private patient and pay the full cost. A list of dentists accepting NHS patients can be found at <http://www.nhs.uk/>. If you run into any problems finding an NHS dentist then please contact LSTM's Student Experience Officer who will contact the Primary Care Trust on your behalf.

You may be eligible for help towards NHS dental cost on the basis of low income (See Section 8).

Please note: you need to be registered with a doctor in order to receive NHS dental treatment.

### 6.1 Dental Emergencies

The Liverpool University Dental Hospital is situated on Pembroke Place a two minute walk from LSTM.

The Dental Hospital provides a daytime emergency dental service for adults and children with a problem requiring urgent attention.

The following groups of patients are accepted for emergency dental treatment:

- Patients who have suffered trauma to their teeth/mouth as a result of an accident or injury
- Patients with a swelling of the face/jaws (e.g. due to a dental abscess)
- Patients who have bleeding from their mouth (e.g. following removal of a tooth)
- Patients with serious medical conditions or disabilities which prevent them being seen by dentists outside the hospital

The Dental Hospital cannot provide treatment for all patients with toothache, lost fillings, dentures or crowns but because they provide training for dental students, they are able to offer limited treatment to a small number of patients.

No appointment is needed and patients are seen on a first come first served basis until the clinic is full. The doors open at 8am and assessments start at 8.45am. LSTM advises students to queue up from 7.30am.

Please note: the Dental Hospital are not accepting walk in cases during the Coronavirus pandemic.

## 7. Optical Treatment

You will normally have to pay a minimum charge for an eye test under the NHS. If the test shows that you need glasses then you will be given a prescription. The cost of frames and lenses varies considerably.

You may be entitled to help with the cost of your glasses on the basis of low income.

## 8. Help towards Health Costs

As of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, standard prescription charges in the UK are currently set at £9.35 per item. If you are receiving ongoing treatment and need more than 4 items in 3 months, or more than 14 items in 12 months, it may well be cheaper to buy a **Prescription Prepayment Certificate (PPC)**. A PPC currently costs £30.25

for a 3-month certificate, and £108.10 for a 12-month certificate. The certificate covers all prescription charges during that period.

You will automatically be entitled to free prescriptions if you are:

- Under 19 and studying full-time; if you are aged 60 or over; if you are pregnant or have had a baby within the last 12 months and have a valid exemption certificate; or if you have a listed medical condition and an exemption certificate.
- Your children can get free prescriptions if they are under 16, or under 19 and studying full-time.

As a student you may also be entitled to free or reduced cost prescriptions, dental treatment, glasses/ contact lenses and other health related costs on the grounds of low income. An application form to apply can be collected from the Student Support Desk or from your local GP Surgery or pharmacy.

*For further information please contact Student Experience Officer – Leah Dempsey / [leah.dempsey@lstm.ac.uk](mailto:leah.dempsey@lstm.ac.uk) / 0151 702 9591*

\*NHS Choices provides 24-hour online advice about health, illness and local health services:  
<https://www.nhs.uk/symptomcheckers/pages/symptoms.aspx>

*Information on this documents has been sourced from UKCISA and NHS Choices and Liverpool PCT*