

# The NHS and You

What you can expect from us  
What we expect from you



## **Who is this leaflet for?**

This leaflet is for anyone who uses the NHS in any part of Scotland.

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# What you can expect from the NHS in Scotland

In the NHS in Scotland we will:

- help you stay healthy, and
- care for you if you become ill.

We will provide a safe, high-quality service designed to meet the needs of patients and their carers and families.

## Services for everyone

- We will provide services based on your health or medical need, not your ability to pay. Most NHS services are free but there may be charges for some things, for example for dental services.
- We will treat you with dignity and respect, no matter what your race, sex, age, sexual orientation, faith, political beliefs or disability.

## Safe, high-quality health care

- We will provide the best care and treatment we can, within the resources available to us.
- We will make sure everyone working in the NHS has the right training and skills for their job.

- We will provide care and treatment in a safe and clean setting.

### **Responding to your needs**

- We will provide health services that take account of your needs and, as far as possible, your preferences.
- If you are worried about parts of your care (for example, because of your culture or beliefs), please discuss this with us. We will respect your views and help in any way we can.
- If it helps you, and you give your permission, we will involve your carers, partner or family in decisions about your care.

### **Communicating with you**

- We will talk to you about your health and any care you may need.
- If you need tests or treatment, we will explain any choices to you, including the risks and benefits of each option.
- We will give you all the information you need in a way that you can understand (for example in a language other than English).
- If you need an interpreter or a sign-language interpreter, or have other special communication needs, we will arrange help for you if we can.

- If you want a carer, a family member, a partner or a friend to support you or help you tell us your views, we will welcome this help.
- If you want someone else to support you or help you give your views, for example an independent advocate, we can help you arrange this.

### **Involving you in decisions about your care**

- You have the right to accept or refuse any treatment, examination, test, screening or diagnostic procedure (a test to find the cause of an illness or medical condition).
- You can ask for a second opinion at any time during your care.
- If you want to have someone else present when a health care worker examines you, please let us know. This could be a friend, a relative, a partner, a carer, another health care worker, or an independent advocate.
- If you have any preferences about future treatment, please tell us. Then, if you cannot make decisions for yourself in the future, we will take your wishes into account.
- For hospital appointments, you can be involved in choosing which hospital you go to and which specialist treats you. You will have to discuss your choices with your GP, and your choice may be limited. If so, we will explain it to you.

- Sometimes we may treat you without your agreement. For example:
  - in an emergency if you cannot tell us what you want
  - if you are an adult who cannot make decisions for yourself or tell us your decisions (this is known as ‘incapacity’)
  - if you are being treated under the Mental Health Act, or
  - if you are under 16 and can’t understand what the treatment involves or tell us what you want – in these cases your parent or guardian can give consent for you.
- You have the right to be involved in decisions about your care and treatment.

See page 25 for where to get a copy of our leaflet on consent.

### **Giving you information**

- We will give you information about local health services. See page 20 for where to get this information.
- We will provide high-quality information in a format to suit you on health conditions, your rights and healthy living.
- We will tell you the names of the staff responsible for your care and how to contact them.

- If you are about to leave hospital, we will send your GP written information about your stay in hospital. If you want, we will let you see this information and give you a copy.
- We will give you a copy of any letters, faxes or emails written by NHS staff about your care and treatment if you ask for them.
- We will give you information about how to give us feedback – compliments, comments or complaints.

### Keeping your information safe

- In the NHS we have a legal duty to keep information about you confidential.
- We will keep accurate and up-to-date records of the care you receive. These records are written on paper, held on computer, or both, and are stored securely in different parts of the NHS.
- In future we will store more and more of your health information on computer. This will make it easier for NHS staff to find information about you so that you get the care you need, wherever you are.
- If you use NHS services, we will give you your own identifying number called a CHI\* number (pronounced 'kie' to rhyme with 'tie'). Whenever possible, we will include your CHI number on any records we keep about your care. It makes it easier for NHS staff to find the right medical

\*CHI = Community Health Index

information about you and to give you the best possible care.

- You have the right to know how we use, share and protect your personal health information. Tell us if you don't want us to pass your health information to other NHS staff.
- You have the right to see your health records and, if you choose, to have a copy.

See page 25 for where to get our leaflets on confidentiality and how to see your health records.

### **Working together and with others**

- All parts of the NHS will work together to make sure you get co-ordinated and consistent care.
- We will work closely with other organisations that provide you with care and support in the community.

### **Working with you to help you stay healthy**

- We will give you information and advice on how to stay as healthy as possible, and support and encourage you in doing this.
- We will offer you the opportunity to take part in screening and programmes to prevent illness.

## **Working with you to improve our services**

- We will make decisions about changes to our services in an open and honest way.
- We will involve patients, carers and members of the public in making decisions about services. To find out more about how we are involving people in your area in decisions about NHS services, or to get involved, you should contact your local NHS board. See page 20 for how to contact them.
- We will use your comments and complaints to improve services.

## **Comments and complaints**

- We welcome any comments on the care you have received, good or bad.
- We will tell you what will happen as a result of any comments you make.
- If you have any concerns about your care or our services, discussing them with NHS staff involved in your care can often help.

See page 25 for where to get our leaflet on complaints.

## Waiting for an appointment, a test or treatment

If you have to go on a waiting list for an appointment, a test or treatment, we will try to make your wait as short as possible and to let you know how long you are likely to wait.

### National targets

The Scottish Government Health Directorates have set targets for the whole of Scotland which set out how quickly you should be able to get certain kinds of appointment, test or treatment. These targets are given below.

### Contacting your GP surgery

- When you contact your GP surgery, you should be able to see or speak to someone for advice within two working days, if this is what you need.
- You should be able to book an appointment more than two days ahead.
- The team at the GP surgery will help you decide who should give you the care you need. This could be a GP, a practice nurse, or another health professional.

## Hospital appointments

By the end of March 2011, you should be able to:

- get a hospital outpatient appointment within 12 weeks from when a GP refers you
- get inpatient or day-case treatment within nine weeks from referral
- be seen within six weeks if you need to have one of the tests below to find the cause of a medical problem or condition.
  - MRI scan
  - CT scan
  - Ultrasound
  - Barium scan
  - Upper endoscopy
  - Cystoscopy
  - Sigmoidoscopy
  - Colonoscopy

## Accident and Emergency department

When you arrive at an Accident and Emergency (A&E) department, you should not wait more than four hours before being admitted to a ward, sent home or transferred to another hospital.

## **Cataract surgery**

If your GP or optometrist refers you for cataract surgery, you should have it within 18 weeks.

## **Hip fracture**

If you fracture your hip and are admitted to a specialist orthopaedic unit for surgery, your operation will be carried out within 24 hours, if this is what you need.

## **Heart disease**

- If your GP refers you for treatment through the rapid-access chest pain clinic, you will get the treatment within 16 weeks.

## **Cancer**

- If your GP refers you urgently to hospital for investigation because they think you may have cancer, and you are then found to have cancer, you should start treatment within two months from your referral.
- If doctors tell you that you have cancer, and you have agreed to treatment, you should start treatment within one month.

- If your GP refers you urgently to hospital for investigation and you are then found to have acute leukaemia, your treatment should start within one month from referral.
- If your GP refers your child urgently to hospital for investigation and your child is then found to have cancer, treatment should start within one month of referral.

Sometimes, hospital services in your local area might be so busy that they cannot treat you within the national target times. If this happens, you will have the opportunity to go somewhere else in Scotland to get treatment within the target time. If you want to find out about this, speak to a member of NHS staff involved in your care.

The Scottish Government has produced a leaflet for patients entitled **Hospital appointments & waiting times explained** ([www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)).

## What we expect from you

You can help yourself, other patients and NHS staff if you do the following.

### Look after yourself

Look after your own health and have a healthy lifestyle. This could mean:

- taking more exercise
- eating a balanced diet
- stopping smoking
- not drinking too much alcohol
- not using illegal drugs
- using a condom when having sex.

You can get more information about healthy living on the Keep Well Scotland website ([www.keepwellscotland.org.uk](http://www.keepwellscotland.org.uk)).

### Use health services properly

- If you are feeling unwell and your GP surgery is closed, you can still get medical advice and care out of hours. You can do this by phoning NHS 24 on **08454 24 24 24**. Depending on your situation, they can tell you how to treat yourself at home, recommend you see a doctor or, in an emergency, arrange an ambulance.

- **If you think your life is in danger and you need an emergency ambulance, always phone 999 and ask for an ambulance.**
- Only use out-of-hours services and Accident and Emergency (A&E) in urgent situations or emergencies. You should always use your GP surgery for routine treatment and medical advice.

### **Keep your appointments**

- Be on time for appointments.
- If you are going to be late, phone and let us know.
- If a member of our staff is coming to visit you at home (for example, a health visitor or community psychiatric nurse), make sure you are in at the agreed time.
- If you cannot keep your appointment, let the hospital or clinic know as soon as possible so that we can offer your appointment to someone else.
- If ambulance transport has been booked for a hospital appointment but you no longer need it, let the Scottish Ambulance Service know by phoning **0800 389 1333** (calls are free).

### **Tell us if you have moved house**

- Make sure that your GP surgery, dental surgery or any hospital or clinic you go to has up-to-date information about how to contact you.

- If they don't have your new address, staff who treat you won't be able to get your health records.

### **Ask about things you don't understand**

- If there's anything you don't understand about your condition or treatment, let us know and we will explain it.
- If we use words you don't understand, ask us to explain them.

### **Follow advice and treatment**

- Try to follow any advice or treatment we have agreed with you.
- If you are worried about doing this:
  - discuss it with the person giving you the advice or treatment
  - contact your GP surgery, or
  - speak to someone at your local community pharmacy.

### **Take care with medicines**

- Follow our instructions about taking any medicine we give you and finish the course of treatment. If you decide to change or stop treatment, you should first discuss this with your doctor or pharmacist.

- Don't take medicine that is out of date or prescribed for someone else.
- Give any out-of-date or unused medicine to your pharmacist to get rid of safely.
- Always try to order repeat prescriptions in plenty of time.
- Store medicines safely and out of the reach of children.
- If you go into hospital, let the staff know about any medicines you are already taking. The best way to do this is to take all your medicines with you and give them to a member of staff. If you can't do this, try to bring with you a list of all the medicines you are taking and give it to a member of staff.

### **Help us stop the spread of infection**

- Clean hands help stop the spread of infection. Always wash and dry your hands before visiting a hospital ward, particularly after going to the toilet. Use the hand gel provided at the ward door or at the bedside.
- If you think a member of staff has forgotten to wash their hands before examining you, ask them to do this.
- If you, or someone you live with, have a cold or diarrhoea, or if you feel unwell, try not to visit anyone in hospital until you're better.

- Ask ward staff for advice before you bring in food or drink for someone you are visiting in hospital.
- If you visit someone in hospital, don't sit on their bed. Also, keep the number of visitors as low as possible at any time. Never touch dressings, drips or other equipment around the bed.
- If you think NHS premises are not as clean as they should be, let a member of staff know. If you are in hospital, you can ask to speak to the ward sister or charge nurse about this.

### **Treat NHS staff considerately**

- Treat health care staff politely and with respect.
- Violence towards NHS staff or other patients is completely unacceptable. Violence includes verbal abuse and threats as well as physical assaults. If you are violent we may:
  - remove you from health care premises
  - pass information about you to other health care providers, or
  - pass information about you to the police.
- We will not accept racial, sexual or any other kind of harassment or abuse.

## Other ways you can help

### Donating blood, organs, tissues or bone marrow

Every year, hundreds of lives are saved with the help of donated blood, organs, tissues and bone marrow. You may save or improve the lives of several other people if you become a donor.

- If you are interested in becoming a blood donor, phone **0845 90 90 999**, visit the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service website (**[www.scotblood.co.uk](http://www.scotblood.co.uk)**) or text “blood” to **61611**.
- If you want to become an organ or tissue donor after you die, you should put your name on the NHS Organ Donor Register. You should also discuss your wishes with the people close to you, and carry a donor card. For more information, phone the Organ Donor Line on **0300 123 23 23** or visit the NHS Organ Donor website (**[www.uktransplant.org.uk](http://www.uktransplant.org.uk)**).
- You can also decide to donate an organ such as a kidney as a living donor. A living donor is often a relative or someone close to the recipient. The donor must always consider the risks carefully. For more about becoming a living donor, phone the Organ Donor Line on **0300 123 23 23** or visit the NHS Organ Donor website (**[www.uktransplant.org.uk](http://www.uktransplant.org.uk)**).

- To donate bone marrow contact the Anthony Nolan Trust on **0207 284 1234** or visit their website (**[www.anthonynolan.org.uk](http://www.anthonynolan.org.uk)**).

### **Become a volunteer or get involved**

If you want to become a volunteer, you can find out what opportunities there are in your local area by:

- contacting your local NHS board (see page 20 for how to do this)
- contacting your local volunteer centre, or
- visiting the Volunteer Centre in Scotland Network website (**[www.volunteerscotland.org.uk](http://www.volunteerscotland.org.uk)**).

### **Let us know what you think of our service**

- Help us improve services by giving us your views, good as well as bad.
- Examples of ways to do this include talking to staff, taking part in surveys or using suggestion boxes.

## Where to get more information

### Information about NHS services

- Phone the NHS inform Helpline free on **0800 22 44 88** (textphone **18001 0800 22 44 88**) for reliable information about illnesses and conditions, NHS services and current health issues.
- Phone NHS 24 on **08454 24 24 24** (textphone **18001 08454 24 24 24**) if you're unwell and feel you can't wait until your GP surgery is open (calls are charged at local rates).
- **www.nhs24.com** has general information about illnesses and conditions, NHS services and current health issues. You can also find details about your local services, including GPs, dentists and community pharmacies (chemists).
- Contact your local NHS board for more about local NHS services. You can find the contact details in the phone book under 'health services' or by phoning the NHS inform Helpline on **0800 22 44 88**.

### Information, advice and advocacy

- Contact your local citizens advice bureau for free, confidential and independent advice on a wide range of issues, including NHS services and your rights. If you would like to speak to someone for

advice or help with raising a concern or making a complaint about the NHS, your local bureau will provide independent advice and support. To find your nearest branch, look in your local phone book or on the internet ([www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk)).

- Contact the **Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance** by phoning **0131 260 5380**. Visit their website ([www.siaa.org.uk](http://www.siaa.org.uk)) for more about advocacy or to find an independent advocacy organisation in your area.
- If you can't make decisions for yourself, or can't tell others your decisions, this is called 'incapacity'. For more about the rights of adults with incapacity, contact:

### **The Office of the Public Guardian (Scotland)**

Hadrian House

Callendar Business Park

Callendar Road

Falkirk

FK1 1XR

Phone **01324 678 300**

Email [opg@scotcourts.gov.uk](mailto:opg@scotcourts.gov.uk)

Website [www.publicguardian-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.publicguardian-scotland.gov.uk)

- For more about the rights of children and young people, contact:

### **The Scottish Child Law Centre**

54 East Crosscauseway,  
Edinburgh  
EH8 9HD

Information helpline **0131 667 6333**

Freephone number **0800 328 8970** (for people under 18)

Free text enquiry service **80800** (Text 'SCLC' followed by your question. Replies will be sent by text to your mobile phone.)

Email **enquiries@sclc.org.uk**

Website **www.sclc.org.uk**

- For more about the rights of people with a mental illness, learning disability, dementia or other mental disorder, contact:

### **Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland**

Thistle House  
91 Haymarket Terrace  
Edinburgh  
EH12 5HE

Phone **0131 313 8777** or **0800 389 6809**

(Freephone for service users and carers)

Email **enquiries@mwscot.org.uk**

Website **www.mwscot.org.uk**

## Information about standards

**NHS Quality Improvement Scotland** (QIS) has been set up to improve the quality of care we provide. It sets standards for NHS services in Scotland. It monitors and reviews services regularly to make sure we meet the standards described in this leaflet.

- You can see reports of any inspections or reviews of services that take place.
- NHS Quality Improvement Scotland can give you information about the standards we are expected to meet.

You can contact NHS Quality Improvement Scotland at:

Elliott House

8-10 Hillside Crescent

Edinburgh

EH7 5EA

Phone **0131 623 4300**

Textphone **0131 623 4383**

Email **comments.qis@nhs.net**

Website **www.nhshealthquality.org**

## Information about health rights

- **Confidentiality – it's your right** explains how the NHS protects your personal health information
- **How to see your health records** explains your right to see or have a copy of your health records
- **Making a complaint about the NHS** tells you how to complain using the NHS complaints procedure
- **Consent – it's your decision** explains how you should be involved in decisions about your health care and treatment
- **Health care for overseas visitors** – is a set of factsheets explaining what NHS services overseas visitors can expect while they are in Scotland

### Information for young people

- **Confidentiality – your rights** tells you know how the NHS keeps information about you private
- **Have your say! Your right to be heard** tells you how to give feedback or make a complaint about the NHS
- **Consent – your rights** explains how you should be involved in decisions about your health care and treatment

## Information for carers

- **Caring and consent** explains your right to be involved in decisions about the health care of the adult you care for.

You can get this information from:

- GP and dental surgeries, hospitals and other places where you get NHS care
- **www.hris.org.uk**, and
- your local citizens advice bureau (find your nearest bureau on the internet at **www.cas.org.uk** or in your local phone book)
- the NHS inform Helpline on **0800 22 44 88** (textphone **18001 0800 22 44 88**; the helpline also provides an interpreting service).

We have tried our best to make sure the information in this leaflet is correct. However, the leaflet is for guidance only so you should not rely on it as a full statement of the law. If you are thinking about taking legal action, you should contact a solicitor, a citizens advice bureau or other advice agency.

Produced by Health Rights Information Scotland, a project of Consumer Focus Scotland, for the Scottish Government Health Directorates.



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To get this information in another language or format phone your local NHS Board.

If you need help to do this contact the NHS inform Helpline on 0800 22 44 88 (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88).

للحصول على كراسة 'أنت وهيئة الرعاية الصحية الوطنية NHS' باللغة العربية اتصل بهاتف المكتب المحلي لهيئة الرعاية الصحية الوطنية NHS board. وإذا احتجت للمساعدة للقيام بذلك، اتصل بخط الاستعلامات التابع للهيئة NHS Helpline على رقم 0800 22 44 88

'এন.এইচ.এস এবং আপনি' তথ্যপত্রটি বাংলায় পেতে চাইলে আপনার স্থানীয় এন.এইচ.এস বোর্ডে ফোন করুন। এটি করার জন্য আপনার সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হলে, এন.এইচ.এস হেল্পলাইনে 0800 22 44 88 নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

如欲索取《國民保健服務處與你》資料單張，請致電你當地的NHS管理局。如需協助致電管理局，請致電NHS求助熱線 0800 22 44 88。

Pour obtenir « La NHS et vous » en français, téléphonez à votre Bureau NHS local. Si vous avez besoin d'aide pour cela, contactez l'assistance téléphonique de la NHS au 0800 22 44 88.

'NHS और आप' हिंदी में पाने के लिए, अपने स्थानीय NHS बोर्ड को फोन करें। अगर आपको ऐसा करने के लिए मदद चाहिए, तो 0800 22 44 88 पर NHS हेल्पलाइन को कॉल करें।

Norėdami gauti informaciją 'NHS ir jūs' lietuvių kalba, skambinkite į savo vietinę NHS tarnybą. Jei tai padaryti jums reikalinga pagalba, kreipkitės į NHS pagalbos liniją telefonu 0800 22 44 88.

Aby otrzymać broszurę "NHS i Ty" w języku polskim, prosimy o telefoniczny kontakt z lokalnym oddziałem NHS. Więcej informacji można uzyskać dzwoniąc pod numer linii informacyjnej NHS: 0800 22 44 88.

Для получения «NHS и Вы» на русском языке, позвоните в местное управление Государственной Службы Здравоохранения. Если Вам нужна помощь, обратитесь в телефонную службу помощи по номеру 0800 22 44 88.

Para obtener una copia del folleto 'El NHS y usted' en español llame a su oficina local del NHS. Si necesita ayuda para hacerlo puede llamar al teléfono de asistencia del NHS: 0800 22 44 88.

'این ایچ ایس اور آپ' اردو میں حاصل کرنے کیلئے اپنے مقامی این ایچ ایس بورڈ کو ٹیلیفون کریں۔ اگر اس کیلئے آپ کو مدد درکار ہو تو این ایچ ایس ہیلپ لائن کو 0800 22 44 88 پر ٹیلیفون کریں۔

[www.hris.org.uk](http://www.hris.org.uk)