



Getting Ready for Brexit – Healthcare for Disabled People

prepared 21 January 2020

The Government has decided that the Britain will leave the European Union (EU), after 45 years as a full member, on 31 January 2020. The word “Brexit” means ‘British Exit’. Amongst other things there will be a change to the rights and status of both UK nationals living in the EU, and nationals of EU countries in the UK which may affect their arrangements for healthcare.

BuDS is not a political charity and we do not have a view on this. Our concern is to provide disabled people and carers with information about issues which may affect them that is as accurate and reliable as we can make it.

The Government has negotiated a “Withdrawal Agreement” with the EU in which the UK will no longer be a member of the EU after 31 January 2020, but will continue to apply EU law as if it were a member state, for a “Transition Period” until 31 December 2020. Hence, the many legal and other agreements affecting UK and EU citizens will not change overnight, but will continue largely as at present for a further 11 months.

What happens to these agreements after 31 December 2020 will be the subject of further negotiation over this year. It is important to note that this may mean that in 2021 there are substantial changes to the arrangements with which we have become familiar.

This guide gives information about what healthcare you can expect when living or travelling in Europe after the UK leaves the EU. At the time it was updated we believe it to be as accurate as we can make it. However, the details around Brexit are changing all the time as they depend on the ongoing negotiation, so you should check this information before acting on it.

Healthcare for UK citizens if Travelling or Holidaying in Europe

<p>Until 31 December 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) cards are expected to continue to be valid until at least 31 December 2020. • This means that, for the present, you don’t need to change what you do. • As long as you have an EHIC, you can get the same free or reduced cost healthcare treatment in Europe as citizens of the country you are in. This applies whether you have an accident or if you need help with a pre-existing condition or disability needs. (Although this doesn’t apply if you travel abroad just to get medical treatment or give birth). • The NHS pays for the state funded treatment you receive abroad under the EHIC system • If you receive healthcare treatment which isn’t covered by the EHIC system, you need to pay or use travel insurance to cover the cost.
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<p>From 1 January 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government has said it is urgently negotiating with EU countries to see if they can agree deals on healthcare, but nothing has been agreed yet. You can check the situation for the countries you are visiting at https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/healthcare-when-travelling-abroad/ • It is expected that EHIC cards will stop being valid on 1st January 2021. You will then need to take out full travel insurance to pay for medical treatment you may need in Europe, including emergency treatment. • If you don't have travel insurance, you could face very large medical bills if you need emergency treatment or if your disability or medical conditions need treatment. • You may find it difficult to get affordable travel insurance if you are disabled and have pre-existing medical issues.
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UK citizens living or working in the EU

<p>Until 31 December 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be no change to your rights and status as a UK national. • UK citizens who live in the EU can usually get free (or mostly free) healthcare in the country where they live, if they have an S1 certificate, as the NHS pays for the healthcare you receive in the EU country where you live • Under the Withdrawal Agreement made between the UK and the EU, EHIC cards and S1 certificates are expected to continue to be valid until at least 31 December 2020.
<p>From 1 January 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the Gov.Uk website for information about living in the EU. https://www.gov.uk/uk-nationals-living-eu • From 1 January 2021, UK citizens living in the EU except Ireland may have to pay for any NEW healthcare they need, including for any emergency treatment. In Ireland only, healthcare treatment will remain free as it is now. • The Government says that if you are covered by the Withdrawal Agreement you will have “broadly” the same rights as at present • The Government has said that the NHS will continue to pay for any healthcare which UK nationals living in the EU (except Ireland) need IF they have applied for or started the course of treatment before 31 January 2020. But the NHS will only pay healthcare costs under this scheme for one year. • The Government has introduced the Healthcare (International Arrangements) Act, to allow UK citizens living in EU countries to have some free healthcare. However, other governments have to agree new arrangements. This may take some time and, until things change in the country you live in, you may still have to pay for some or all of your healthcare. • Depending on the country you live in, you may be able to register to live in that country as a foreign national and get some access to free or reduced cost healthcare for some time. However, this is not guaranteed until it happens. You should check what applies in the country you live or work in.

Healthcare for EU, EEA or Swiss Citizens living in the UK, EXCEPT Irish citizens

Until 31 December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EU citizens and their family members who are living in the UK on or before 31 January 2020 and are in the UK lawfully, can continue to get free treatment on the NHS, on the same basis as UK citizens. Individuals who come to the UK after 31 January, or who are here illegally (eg waiting to be deported), will not be eligible for free healthcare on the NHS.• The NHS recovers the cost of treatment given to EU citizens from their own countries
From 1 January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Government have said that only those Non-Irish EU citizens living in the UK who hold “Settled Status” or “Pre-settled Status” will retain the right to free healthcare on the NHS indefinitely or for a prescribed period. N.B. EU citizens must have made a successful application for this status by 31 July 2020.• Without this status, they will probably lose the right to free healthcare treatment.

Healthcare for Irish EU Citizens living in the UK

From 31 January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Under an agreement between the UK and Irish governments, Irish EU citizens and their family members will still be able to get free healthcare on the NHS the same as now. This is not expected to change in the future, and is it is not based on the UK’s membership of the EU.• The NHS recovers from Ireland the cost of treatment given to Irish citizens in the UK