

Freedom of Information Request: Our Reference CTHB_315_17

You asked:

I am researching immigration and healthcare with particular focus on the Immigration Act 2014 Chapter 2 which refers to the '**immigration health charge**' and '**charges for health services**'.

I am trying to gain an understanding of the way and extent to which this is being implemented in Wales.

Please can you provide your policy with respect to charges that are imposed upon persons not ordinarily resident in Great Britain?

Our response:

Please see attached relevant extracts from Consultant Guide to Private Practice and Financial Policy Income Debtors.

13. Overseas Patients

13.1 All Cwm Taf University Health Board staff have the responsibility to identify and obtain information on potential overseas patients. Medical Records should be contacted immediately if there is any doubt whether a patient is eligible for NHS treatment. There are a number of questions which should be raised to assess eligibility and these are as follows:

- When did the patient arrive in the UK?
- Which country have they come from?
- What is the purpose of their visit?

This will assist in assessing entitlement to treatment. Ultimately, it is the patient's responsibility to provide proof. Charges can be imposed until such time that the documentation is provided.

13.2 The Medical Records Department will assume responsibility for collecting all income for overseas patients with support from the Contracting Section within the Finance Department. The procedure for elective overseas patients will be the same as for private patients except estimated bills will be produced and income collected prior to treatment or on discharge.

13.3 The procedure for emergency overseas patients will depend on their country of residence. These patients are not 'private' for the purpose of private consultant's fees, although any hospital fees collected will be attributed to the Directorate providing treatment.

13.4 The consultant may be required to complete medical reports for the patient's medical insurer to secure medical cover and payment.

Bi Lateral Healthcare Agreements

There are two types of bilateral healthcare agreements in place.

- Between all Member states of the European Economic Area plus Switzerland.
- UK and individual countries

13.5 Treatment for EEA and Switzerland – expressly in the UK for treatment. Forms E112/E123

There are separate arrangements for people from another EEA country or Switzerland who want to come to the UK expressly to seek treatment. These patients will need to obtain the prior authorisation of their social security institution, which bears the cost. There is an all-Wales procedure for patients accessing treatment in countries of the European Economic Area, and related guidance. Reference should therefore be made to such guidance where appropriate.

A person who has obtained permission from his social security institution to seek treatment in the UK will be issued with an E112 (Industrial injury or occupational disease – form E123). They must make advance arrangements for their treatment and be given the same clinical priority as NHS patients, i.e. they will be subject to waiting lists. The patient should be informed that they are entitled to treatment and that they will be included on the UHBs waiting list.

To avoid complications that may occur if a patient authorised to seek NHS treatment in the UK is inadvertently treated privately, Consultants are advised to establish when accepting such referrals whether the treatment should be at the cost of the patient's social security institution or at the patient's own cost.

Where a UHB has agreed to accept a patient under these arrangements and the patient cannot produce either forms, only treatment that is immediately necessary should be provided without charge. The remaining treatment is chargeable as a NHS charge not as a private patient (i.e. private consultant fees are not chargeable)

The cost of emergency treatment for EEA nationals is only reclaimable with an EHIC number. Where such patients are identified, it is important that the EHIC number is obtained. If a patient does not have their EHIC number, there is an agreed process across the EEA to obtain an emergency number. There is a telephone number that can be given to the patient in hospital to arrange this. This is included within the EEA policy referred to above. Any queries regarding the application of the policy should be directed to the Patient Flow Manager:

The Medical Records Department will assume responsibility for collecting all E112/E123 income for overseas patients via the Welsh Government, with support from the Contracting Section in the Finance Department.

11.2 Overseas Patients

11.2.1 Overseas Patients who are not EU citizens or covered by reciprocal agreement shall be charged for the healthcare they receive.

11.2.2 The Medical Records Officer will be responsible for identifying which overseas patients are liable to charges and for notifying finance of the amounts to be invoiced.

11.2.3 Overseas Patients will be required to complete an assessment form to establish their UK status.

11.2.4 For those patients identified as having to meet the cost of their treatment they will be required to sign an undertaking to pay form.

11.2.5 It is important that the Medical Records Officer informs those patients liable for charges that failure to settle the debt will result in information being sent to the UK Border Agency which could result in future entry restrictions into the UK.

11.2.6 The Medical Records Officer will complete an Overseas Notification of Income Form which shall be sent to the Debtors Section with the undertaking to pay attached.

11.2.7 Invoices issued by the Finance Department relating to overseas patients will include the warning that failure to settle the debt will result in the UK Border Agency being informed and this may affect future UK entry. This warning will also be included on all subsequent follow up letters issued by the HB or its representatives.

11.2.8 On a monthly basis the Debtors Manager will forward information on outstanding overseas patient debts which have been outstanding for two months and longer and are £500 or more to the UK Border Agency.