

## FAQs from Patients

| QUESTION  | ANSWER   |
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| <p><b>How can I get my Health and Care (H&amp;C) number?</b></p>  | <p>BSO are unable to disclose Health and Care numbers over the phone to members of the public for any reason.</p> <p>If you are currently registered with a surgery in Northern Ireland, you can request a medical card with the H&amp;C number on it through our website at <a href="http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net">http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net</a> or write to us at: <b>BSO, FPS Medical, 2 Franklin Street, Belfast, BT2 8DQ.</b> If you contact your surgery, they may give your H&amp;C number to you.</p> <p>You don't need a H&amp;C number to register with a new surgery. If you've never been registered with a surgery in Northern Ireland before, we will allocate you a H&amp;C number when we assess your entitlement and approve your registration request.</p> <p>If you were previously registered in England or Wales, this number will carry over from there.</p>  |
| <p><b>I can't get registered with a doctor/a surgery is refusing my registration. What should I do?</b></p> | <p>The only reasons a surgery can refuse your registration is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If their list is currently closed with board approval.</li> <li>2. If you are outside the practice catchment area</li> <li>3. If you were previously removed from the surgery due to doctor/patient relationship breakdown.</li> </ol> <p>Any reason for refusal must be given to the patient in writing. Speak to the Practice Manager if you're having difficulties receiving reason for refusal in writing.</p> <p>If you were removed under paragraph 21 of the GMS regulations for committing an act of violence or behaved in such a way that any such person has feared for their safety, BSO can assign you to a practice that specialises in that area.</p> <p>Please contact BSO by:</p> <p><b>Email – <a href="mailto:Patient.Info@hscni.net">Patient.Info@hscni.net</a></b><br/> <b>Phone – 028 95 360333</b></p> |

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|   | <p>For patients to register in Northern Ireland you will have to complete a registration form and provide documentation depending on your circumstances.</p> <p>Please select the surgery of your choice and arrange a registration appointment where you will be provided with the necessary application form and guidance.</p>  |
| <p><b>I need medication/my doctor won't give me my medication/I'm running out of medication/I can't get an appointment with my doctor soon enough. What should I do?</b></p>  | <p>The treatment of patients is outside the remit of BSO. Please speak with the Practice Manager of the surgery if you have concerns regarding your treatment.</p> <p>If you are not satisfied with the response, please ask the Practice Manager for the escalation process relative to your concerns.</p>   |
| <p><b>I have received an outside area letter and I'm unhappy about this / I have received an outside area letter, but I'm only at this address temporarily. What should I do?</b></p>   | <p>BSO has sent this letter on behalf of the GP practice. If you wish to remain on their list, you should speak to the Practice Manager. If they are willing to retain you, they will need to notify BSO to cancel the outside area request.</p> <p>If they are not willing to retain you, you should approach an alternative surgery in your area to get registered.</p> |
| <p><b>Can you send me a medical card?</b></p>   | <p>We are unable to issue medical cards over the phone. You can request a medical card through our website at <a href="http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net">http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net</a> or write to us at <b>BSO, FPS Medical, 2 Franklin Street, Belfast, BT2 8DQ.</b></p>   |
| <p><b>I need to know who I'm/a family member/friend is registered with? I need to know who someone is registered with? (This can be a member of the public phoning or any other organisation e.g. solicitor/insurance company etc.)</b></p> | <p>We are unable to disclose any patient information over the phone due to General Data Protection Regulations.</p> <p>If your request is clinically urgent please contact BSO by:</p> <p><b>Email – <a href="mailto:Patient.Info@hscni.net">Patient.Info@hscni.net</a></b><br/> <b>Phone – 028 95 360333</b></p>   |
| <p><b>Do I live within the catchment area of named practice?</b></p>  | <p>BSO do not hold details of practice boundaries. Please contact the practice to confirm your address falls within the practice boundary.</p>  |

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| <p><b>I have been waiting to be registered for a long time, how do I follow this up?</b></p>       | <p>You should contact the GP Practice you are waiting to be registered with and ask for an update.</p> <p>If you are not satisfied with the response please contact BSO by:</p> <p><b>Email – <a href="mailto:Patient.Info@hscni.net">Patient.Info@hscni.net</a></b><br/> <b>Phone – 028 95 360333</b></p> <p>We will aim to respond to you within 5 working days.</p> |
| <p><b>I have been removed from my practice, what can I do to complain?</b></p>                     | <p>Please contact the Practice Manager of the GP surgery that removed you and request a copy of their complaints procedure. Follow the steps within the procedure provided.</p>  |
| <p><b>How do I access my medical records?</b></p>  | <p>If you are currently registered with a GP in Northern Ireland, please contact the surgery.</p> <p>If you are not registered in Northern Ireland please email the BSO Data Protection Team at <a href="mailto:DPA.BSO@hscni.net">DPA.BSO@hscni.net</a> requesting a copy of your records.</p>  |
| <p><b>I am registered elsewhere in Europe/UK – How do I get my medical records?</b></p>            | <p>If you would like your medical records to be sent from your old GP to a new GP in Northern Ireland, please register with your new GP and they will be sent directly to them.</p> <p>To request a copy of your medical records, please email the BSO Data Protection Team at <a href="mailto:DPA.BSO@hscni.net">DPA.BSO@hscni.net</a>.</p>                           |
| <p><b>Can anyone in Northern Ireland register with a GP or get health care free?</b></p>           | <p>Only persons who are ‘ordinarily resident’ or ‘eligible visitors’ can register with a GP in NI</p>  |
| <p><b>What is Ordinarily Resident in NI</b></p>  | <p>To satisfy this test you need to be lawfully residing for a settled purpose. Most people who were born here, went to school here and continue to live and work here are considered ‘ordinarily resident’. People who come to Northern Ireland to live and work, when they are lawfully here, are considered ‘ordinarily resident’</p>                               |
| <p><b>I have paid the Immigration Health Surcharge. Am I considered ‘ordinarily Resident’?</b></p> | <p>No. You are a visitor. You will be entitled to access publically funded health care in the UK during the validity period of your Biometric Residence Card</p>   |

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| <p><b>If you have an HCN you are entitled to access publically funded health care in NI?</b></p>   | <p>Everyone who is or has been registered with a GP or receives health care in a hospital will have a Health &amp; Care Number. This number is your unique identifier for your medical records. It is not confirmation that you have entitlement to access publically funded health care in Northern Ireland.</p>   |
| <p><b>If you are issued with a medical card that means you are entitled to access publically funded health care in NI?</b></p>   | <p>The medical card provides you with a Health and Care Number. The letter that accompanies the card advises you that you only have entitlement if the BSO are able to verify your entitlement. If the BSO are unable to do so, they will write to you and if you do not provide satisfactory proof of your entitlement to access publically funded health care in NI, your registration with a GP will be cancelled and you will be unable to register again until you have provided all the necessary documents to the BSO.</p> |
| <p><b>If you were born in Northern Ireland you are entitled to access publically funded health care in NI?</b></p>   | <p>Only if you reside in NI for a Settled Purpose. If you leave NI to live elsewhere, your entitlement ends. There are some circumstances when you can have treatment if you come back on a visit, but if you do not provide satisfactory proof of your entitlement, you will be charged for your treatment and may not be able to register with a GP</p>   |
| <p><b>If you are not a UK or Irish national, but you are married to a person from NI or the UK you are entitled to access publically funded health care in NI?</b></p> | <p>Only if you have regularised your stay in the UK with the Home Office, i.e. obtained a VISA or Permit which allows you to reside in the UK and you are residing in NI</p>  |
| <p><b>If you hold a British Passport you are entitled to access publically funded health care in NI?</b></p>   | <p>Only if you reside in NI for a Settled Purpose</p>   |
| <p><b>You are entitled to get your healthcare treatment anywhere in the UK</b></p>   | <p>Only immediately necessary treatment</p>   |
| <p><b>Proof of identity is the same as proof of lawfulness in the UK</b></p>   | <p>No. Not all documents that prove your identity also prove your lawfulness for example, a driving licence , an Electoral ID Card or a Translink pass will only confirm</p>  |

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|   | your identity  |
| <b>Once registered with a GP you are always entitled to access publically funded health care in NI</b>  | Only if you lawfully reside for a Settled Purpose in NI. If you leave for more than 3 months, your registration is no long valid.  |
| <b>I am a UK/Irish national and I own property in Northern, does that makes me entitled to access publically funded health care in NI?</b>                          | No. You must reside in Northern Ireland for a Settled Purpose. Owning property or paying rates does not entitle you to access publically funded health care in NI.   |
| <b>I live in NI, but I receive my pension from another country, am I entitled to access publically funded health care in NI?</b>                                    | Yes, but only if you are lawfully in the UK for a Settled Purpose and can demonstrate that you reside in NI.   |
| <b>I live in NI, but work in another country, am I entitled to access publically funded health care in NI?</b>  | Yes. If NI is your centre of your family life. For example your main residence is here, your family live here and you regularly return home. NB: if you reside in the UK for more than 3 months in any tax year you are also required to be registered as part of the UK Tax and Social Security System and you will be asked to demonstrate this. |
| <b>I live in the Republic of Ireland and work in England/Scotland/Wales. Am I entitled to access publically funded health care in Northern Ireland?</b>             | No. You must work in NI.   |
| <b>I was born and raised in NI and now live elsewhere, but return home every year to visit family. Am I entitled to access publically funded health care in NI?</b> | Not unless you satisfy an exemption under the Health and Social Care Provision of Health Care to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015   |
| <b>I live in another country and have come to study in NI for more than 6 months. Am I entitled to access publically funded health care in NI?</b>                  | Yes, if you are not a British or Irish National and you have paid the Immigration Health Surcharge. OR If you are a British or Irish National you must satisfy Regulation 6. (D) of the Health and Social Care Provision of Health Care to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015                                     |

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| <p><b>I live in another country and have come to study in NI for less than 6 months. Am I entitled to access publically funded health care in NI?</b></p>                             | <p>There is no exemption which provides entitlement for a person studying for less than 6 months. However, you might satisfy another exemption under the Health and Social Care Provision of Health Care to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.</p>  |
| <p><b>I am from NI, but studying in England/Scotland or Wales and I am home on a visit. Am I entitled to access publically funded health care in NI?</b></p>                          | <p>Yes, during your course of study, provided NI remains your centre of family life. You should not be registered with a GP in NI when you are not in NI, but you may be entitled when you are home on a visit. Once your course of study ends, if you do not return to NI within 3 months, you will no longer be entitled as a resident and will be required to satisfy and exemption under the Health and Social Care Provision of Health Care to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.</p> <p>When you return to Northern Ireland you will be required to register with a GP Practice and provide the necessary documentation to confirm your entitlement</p> |
| <p><b>I live in another country and split my time between there and NI. Am I considered to be 'ordinarily resident' in NI?</b></p>  | <p>You may be and you will need to provide satisfactory documentary proof to demonstrate your entitlement. <b>NB:</b> If you are entitled, this will only be for the months that you reside in NI, which means you will need to register with a GP each time you come back.</p>   |
| <p><b>I was born in NI; I now live in another country and pay National Insurance Contributions to the UK. Does this entitle me to access publically funded health care in NI?</b></p> | <p>No. You must either be Ordinarily resident or eligible visitor. Paying voluntary National Insurance contributions does not provide you with entitlement to access publically funded health care in Northern Ireland</p>  |
| <p><b>I am entitled as I was registered with a GP in England/Scotland/Wales.</b></p>  | <p>The rules in England/Scotland/Wales are different to Northern Ireland. If you are coming to take up residence or returning to NI, when you apply to register with a practice (even if you were registered with them before) you will have to provide your proof of lawfulness in the UK and address in the practice catchment area. You will also be subject to the same verification of entitlement process and may be contacted by the BSO if we are unable to confirm your entitlement.</p>   |

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| <p><b>I am entitled as I used to be registered with a GP in Northern Ireland when I lived there.</b></p>                            | <p>If you are returning to NI to take up residence, when you apply to register with a practice you will have to provide your proof of lawfulness in the UK and address in the practice catchment area. This is required, even if you were registered with the same practice before. You will also be subject to the same verification of entitlement process and may be contacted by the BSO if we are unable to confirm your entitlement.</p>  |
| <p><b>I am entitled as I used to be registered with a GP in Northern Ireland and I only left to undertake a course of study</b></p> | <p>When you return to NI after your course of study and wish to register again with a GP in NI, you will have to provide your proof of lawfulness in the UK and address in the practice catchment area. This is required, even if you were registered with the same practice before. You will also be subject to the same verification of entitlement process and may be contacted by the BSO if we are unable to confirm your entitlement.</p> |