

13 Jan 2021

## Access to Healthcare in EU and EEA after EU Exit

**The United Kingdom government has updated advice for UK nationals on accessing state healthcare in the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland**

- **This updates the news item of 30 December 2020**

The United Kingdom (UK) government have updated their information about accessing state healthcare for UK nationals (UK passport holders) visiting the European Union (EU) or Switzerland and the European Economic Area (EEA) countries of Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

UK residents will still be able to access emergency and medically necessary care when travelling in the EU. This includes medically necessary treatment for a pre-existing or chronic condition.

On 11 January 2021, the UK introduced the Global Health Insurance Card; this will gradually replace existing European Health Insurance Cards. UK nationals travelling to the EU should have either:

- a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)
- [a UK Global Health Insurance Card \(GHIC\)](#)

All travellers should also ensure they have comprehensive insurance with healthcare cover before travel. An EHIC or GHIC is not a replacement for [travel insurance](#).

A current EHIC is valid as long as it is in date and UK residents can continue to use these when travelling to the EU. Travellers only need to apply for a GHIC when their current EHIC expires. Both cards offer equivalent protection for emergency and medically necessary healthcare in the EU during a temporary stay. This includes holiday, study and business travel.

The new GHIC card is free, further information is available here: [Department of Health and Social Care: UK launches Global Health Insurance Card](#).

Arrangements are different for:

- [Ireland](#)
- [Spain](#)
- Those [living, studying or working in the EU](#)
- Those visiting Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland:
  - For most people, UK-issued EHICs are not valid in Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. Travellers may not have access to free emergency medical treatment and could be charged for healthcare if they do not get health cover with their travel insurance.
  - A UK passport can be used to get medically necessary healthcare in Norway.

Further details are available here: [Healthcare for UK nationals visiting the EU](#).

UK residents planning to travel abroad should check the UK government website regularly for updates, as travel advice may change at short notice: [Travel advice: coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

## Resources

- [Brexit: new rules are here](#)
- [Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office: Foreign travel advice](#)
- [NHS: Apply for a free UK Global Health Insurance Card \(GHIC\)](#)