landfall

LANDFALL BOOKLET · NOVEMBER 2026

Healthcare

The NHS, the Immigration Health Surcharge, doctors, dentists and emergencies.

Build your free, personal move plan at **yourlandfall.com/plan**: five questions, and only the steps that apply to you.

yourlandfall.com · Based in Scotland, covering the UK.

General information, not personal tax, financial, legal or immigration advice.

Contents

1 How does healthcare work when you move to the UK?

How does healthcare work when you move to the UK?

THE SHORT ANSWER

Most visa holders pay the Immigration Health Surcharge with their visa application. That gives you NHS care on broadly the same terms as people who live here. Once you arrive, you register with a local doctor, called a GP.

The Immigration Health Surcharge

If you're coming on most types of visa for more than six months, you pay the **Immigration Health Surcharge** as part of your application. It's charged per person, per year of the visa, and paid upfront. Some visas are exempt. Check the current amount on GOV.UK when you apply.

Once you've paid it, you can use the NHS on broadly the same basis as people who live here.

Registering with a GP

In the UK, your first stop for almost everything is a **GP**, a family doctor at a local practice. Specialist referrals usually go through your GP.

- Register once you have a UK address. You can usually do it online.
- You don't need to wait until you're ill. Registering early makes everything easier later.

Prescriptions

- **Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland:** prescriptions are free.
- **England:** most adults pay a flat charge per item, with exemptions and prepayment options.

Dentists and eye tests

NHS dental care isn't free for most adults in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. You pay set charges by type of treatment, and NHS dentists taking new patients can be hard to find, so start looking early. Many people use private dentists. In Scotland, NHS dental check-ups and eye examinations are free.

Emergencies

Call **999** in an emergency, or **111** for urgent medical advice that isn't an emergency. Accident and emergency (A&E) departments treat emergencies free of charge.

Private health insurance

Many people use the NHS alone. Some add private insurance for faster access to specialists or particular treatments, and some employers include it. It works differently from US insurance: it usually covers planned treatment, not emergencies, which the NHS handles.

What to do next

Build your move plan to see healthcare alongside the other steps for your first month.

About Landfall

Landfall helps Americans plan their move to the UK, with free move plans and guides that cover both countries. It's run by Leah Guevara from Edinburgh. Based in Scotland, covering the UK.

Members get dated reminders, templates, a community and time with Leah. When a step needs a qualified specialist, such as tax in both countries, investments or immigration, we say so plainly and can introduce you to people we trust. We're independent and never take a fee for introductions.

Your next step: build your free move plan at yourlandfall.com/plan, or see memberships at yourlandfall.com/membership

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Our guides are general information, not personal tax, financial, legal or immigration advice, and don't take account of your circumstances. Rules change: check the date of this edition and take advice before acting. We don't give immigration advice; we introduce you to regulated advisers.