



# Access to GP & Safe Surgeries

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**Doctors of the World UK, part of the Médecins du Monde network**



1098  
Service  
Users

203  
violence  
instances

241  
contacts  
in  
outreach  
sessions

**OUR  
SERVICE  
USERS  
2020**



1221 calls  
to  
adviceline

65%  
undocum  
ented

9 years  
before  
accessing  
healthcare



Mentimeter

# Barriers to healthcare for migrants



Lack of knowledge regarding the NHS



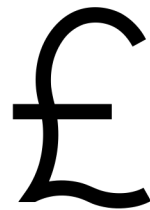
Administrative difficulties (lack of ID or proof of address)



Immigration status checks



Barriers around accessibility (language, digital, transportation)



Unaffordable charges for secondary healthcare



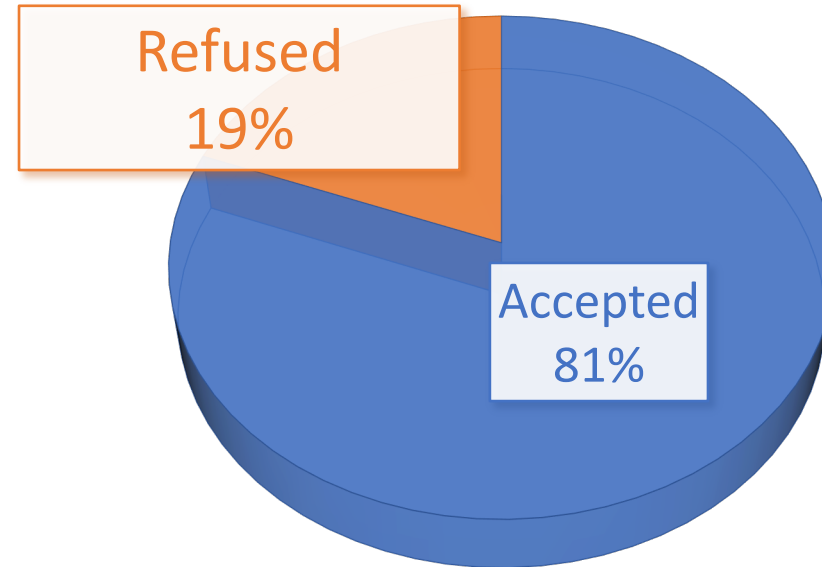
Fear of being reported to the Home Office

# Registration Refused Report 2018



- Out of the **2189** attempts by DOTW to register patients with their local GP in 2019, **419** were **refused**.

Registration Attempts in England



Some case notes show reasons for refusals:

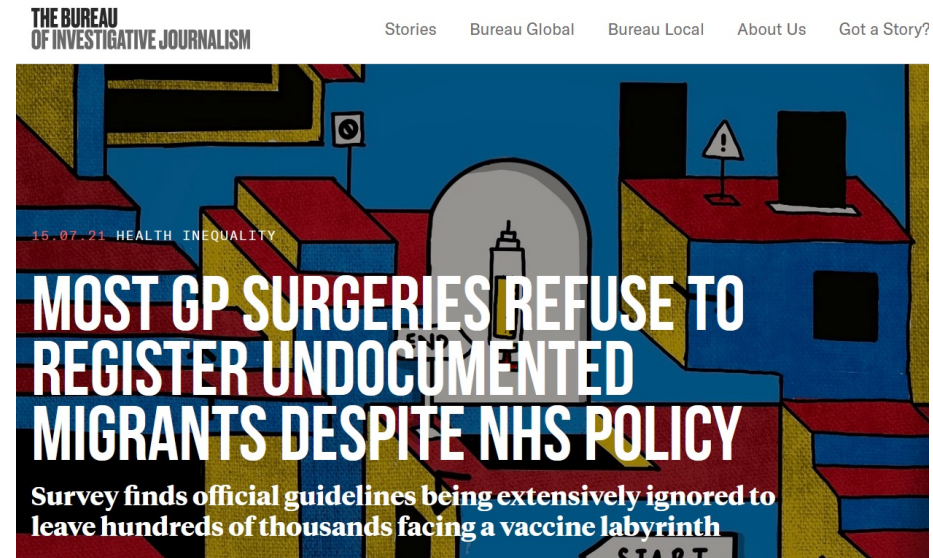
“Said they need proof that she lives here and can stay in the country”

“Surgery policy is not to accept anyone without documentation”

“Not willing to register, keep asking how did the SU come to the UK”

## How undocumented migrants are blocked from booking Covid vaccinations

Special Report: Investigation reveals hundreds of thousands could be unable to register with a GP – stopping them from easily accessing a coronavirus jab. **May Bulman, Rachel Hamada, Emiliano Mellino** and **Vicky Gayle** report



## GP surgeries wrongfully rejecting undocumented migrants, leaving many unable to get Covid jab



**Victoria Macdonald**

Health and Social Care Editor

# NHS England Guidance on Registration

## 2019/20 General Medical Services (GMS) contract

Guidance and audit requirements for GMS contract

May 2019



## Primary Medical Care Policy and Guidance Manual (PGM) (v2)

Nationality and immigration status are **not** relevant to GP registration:

- “**anybody** in England may register and consult with a GP without charge”
- “**all** asylum seekers and refugees, overseas visitors, students, people on work visas and those who are homeless, **whether lawfully in the UK or not**, are eligible to register with a GP practice”
- “A patient does not need to be ‘**ordinarily resident**’ in England to be eligible for NHS primary medical care”

# NHS England Guidance on Registration

NHS  
England



**Primary Medical Care  
Policy and Guidance  
Manual (PGM) (v2)**

## Documentation for registration?

- *“**there is no regulatory requirement** to prove identity, address, immigration status or the provision of an NHS number in order to register”*
- Lack of **proof of address/ID** *“would not be considered reasonable grounds to refuse to register a patient”* or withhold appointments
- *“Where necessary, (e.g. homeless patients), the **practice may use the practice address** to register them if they wish”*



# NHS England Guidance on Registration

 NHS  
England



**Primary Medical Care  
Policy and Guidance  
Manual (PGM) (v2)**

## Refusing registration

- “If a practice refuses any patient registration then they must record the name, date and reason for the refusal and write to the patient explaining why they have been refused, within a period of 14 days of the refusal”.
- “This information should **be made available to commissioners on request.**”
- “If a practice suspects a patient of fraud (such as using fake ID) then they should register and treat the patient but hand the matter over to the NHS Counter Fraud Authority (NHSCFA)”.

# A growing community:



An initiative to work together with GP practices to take steps to tackle the barriers to healthcare faced by migrants and excluded groups.

- Approved by CQC, RCGP, RCN & BMA and also acknowledged as an evidence-based intervention to tackle health inequalities in the NHS Long Term Plan.
- Making your practice inclusive: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQ7yLj-b8qY>

January 2018

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**WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?**

GP practices can take concrete steps, both at reception and in consultations, to improve equity of access to their services.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>1</b>	Don't insist on proof of address documents
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>2</b>	Don't insist on proof of identification
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>3</b>	Never ask to see a visa or proof of immigration status
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>4</b>	Make sure patients know that their personal information is safe
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>5</b>	Use an interpreter, if needed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>6</b>	Display posters to reassure patients that your surgery is a safe space
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>7</b>	Empower frontline staff with training and an inclusive registration policy

## Safe Surgeries Principles

Don't insist on proof of address

Don't insist on ID

Never ask about immigration status

Keep information safe

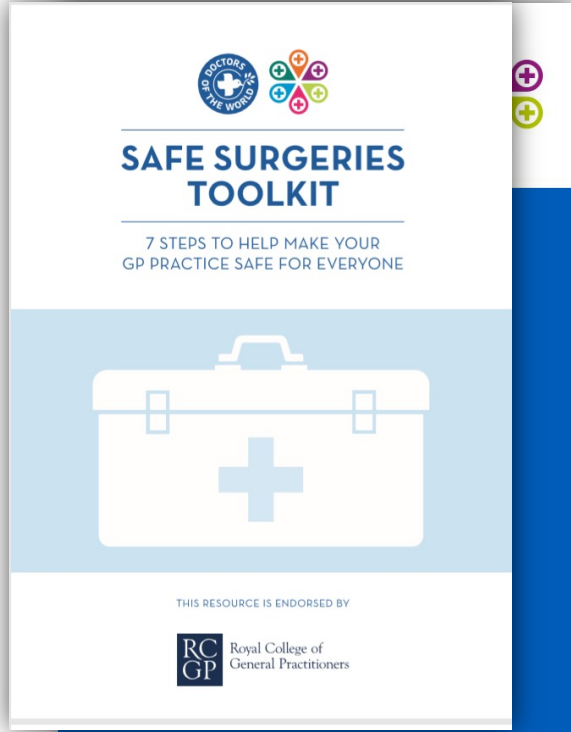
Use an interpreter

Display Posters

Empower frontline staff



# Free resources to improve patient registration



## SAFE SURGERIES TOOLKIT

7 STEPS TO HELP MAKE YOUR GP PRACTICE SAFE FOR EVERYONE



THIS RESOURCE IS ENDORSED BY



Toolkits



## لا داع للقلق إذا لم يكن لديك وثائق رسمية



نحن عيادة آمنة للجميع في قطاع عملنا

قد نطلب منك إبراز الهوية الشخصية أو عنوان اقامتك. ولكن في حال كنت لا تملك هذه الوثائق وتقيم في نطاق عملنا فإن هذا لن يؤثر على تسجيلك في عيادتنا. لن نسالك عن أية وثائق تتعلق بملفات بالهجرة

Translated patient-facing posters



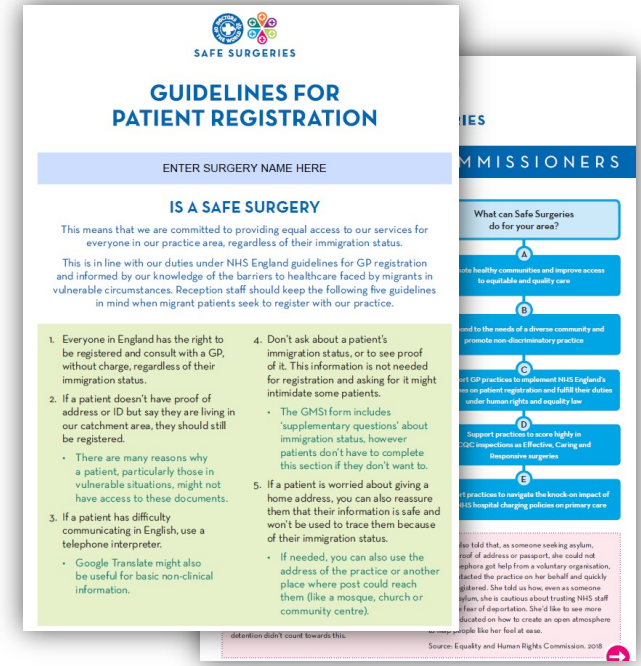
## December Newsletter

### The latest Webinars about Inclusion

Keep your practice up to date

We want to invite the Safe Surgeries Network to a special round of webinars on Inclusive Primary Care organized by the NHS in collaboration with Doctors of the World.

Newsletters



## GUIDELINES FOR PATIENT REGISTRATION

ENTER SURGERY NAME HERE

### IS A SAFE SURGERY

This means that we are committed to providing equal access to our services for everyone in our practice area, regardless of their immigration status. This is in line with our duties under NHS England guidelines for GP registration and informed by our knowledge of the barriers to healthcare faced by migrants in vulnerable circumstances. Reception staff should keep the following five guidelines in mind when migrant patients seek to register with our practice.

- Everyone in England has the right to be registered and consult with a GP, without charge, regardless of their immigration status.
- If a patient doesn't have proof of address or ID but say they are living in our catchment area, they should still be registered.
  - There are many reasons why a patient, particularly those in vulnerable situations, might not have access to these documents.
- If a patient has difficulty communicating in English, use a telephone interpreter.
  - Google Translate might also be useful for basic non-clinical information.
- Don't ask about a patient's immigration status, or to see proof of it. This information is not needed for registration and asking for it might intimidate some patients.
  - The GMS1 form includes 'supplementary questions' about immigration status, however patients don't have to complete this section if they don't want to.
- If a patient is worried about giving a home address, you can also reassure them that their information is safe and won't be used to trace them because of their immigration status.
  - If needed, you can also use the address of the practice or another place where post could reach them (like a mosque, church or community centre).

Guidance, templates, policy notes



## How to join Safe Surgeries?



Sign up at  
[www.bit.ly/newsafesurgery](http://www.bit.ly/newsafesurgery)  
or use QR code

**“As the primary care service we should be able to provide continuity, reliability and safety for our patients and Safe Surgeries can benefit all local practices in this.”**

*PM from a Safe Surgery*

**“Safe Surgeries is a brilliant example of how passionate people can offer their help to the marginalised”**

*NHS England Deputy National Medical Director  
for Primary Care*



# Access to Secondary Care

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# Case study





# ACCESS TO SECONDARY CARE



There are restrictions on some secondary care services dependant on a person's immigration status:

- Undocumented migrants are charged for some services – *this includes refused asylum seekers in England*
- Charges must be paid before treatment.

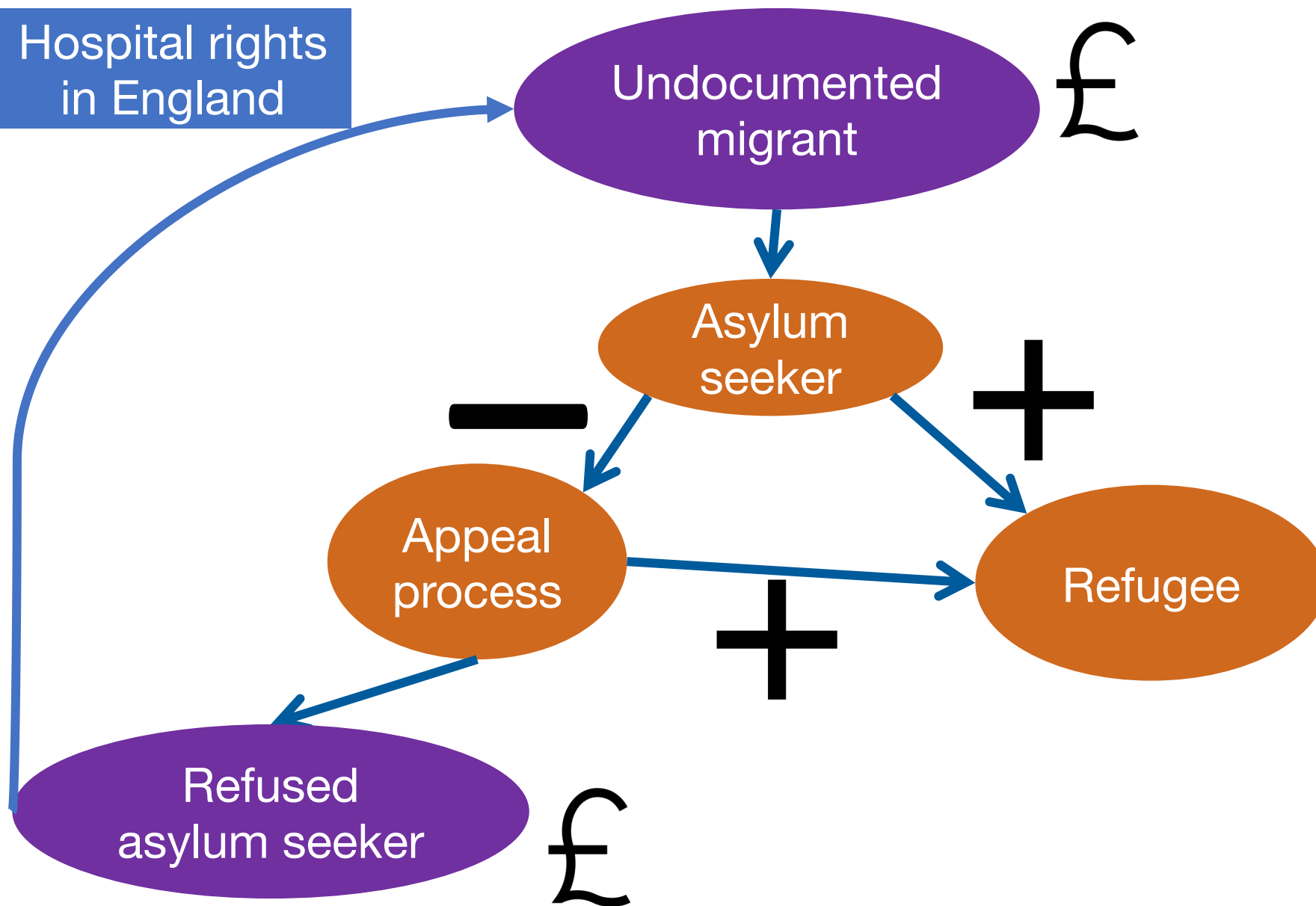


But:

- Some services are always free - *A&E, communicable diseases and family planning. COVID-19 test and treatment included*
- **“Urgent or immediately necessary”** treatment to be provided regardless of ability to pay

# When I might be asked to pay for NHS?

Hospital rights  
in England





# GROUPS EXEMPT FROM CHARGES

- Refugees and asylum seekers 
- Refused asylum seekers receiving “section 4” support  
- *those destitute and prevented from returning to country of origin* 
- Survivors of trafficking 
- Children looked after by a local authority 
- People treated under the Mental Health Act 
- People in immigration detention. 
- Treatment caused by sexual or domestic violence, FGM, or torture 

# Use our Secondary Care Guide

## WHEN IS MY PATIENT LIKELY TO RETURN HOME?



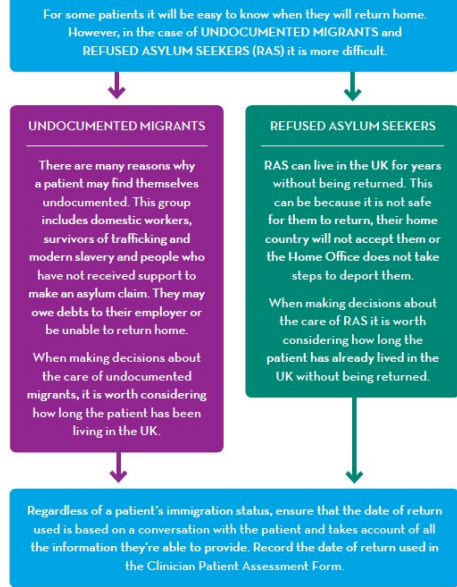
You are being asked to decide if care is, or will become, urgent in the time before a patient returns home. This means that a condition that may not be urgent for a person

who is likely to leave the UK within the next couple of months, may be considered urgent for a patient who is not likely to leave in the next 6 months.

### What does the guidance say?

For undocumented migrant patients, including failed asylum seekers, the likely date of return may be unclear, and will have to be assessed on a case-by-case basis, including their ability to return home. Some may be prevented by travel or entry clearance restrictions in their country of origin, or by other conditions beyond their control. For some cases relating to undocumented migrants, it will be particularly difficult to estimate their return date. Relevant bodies may wish to estimate that such patients will remain in the UK initially for 6 months, and the clinician can then consider if treatment can or cannot wait for six months, bearing in mind the definitions of urgent and non-urgent treatment given above. However, there may be circumstances when the patient is likely to remain in the UK longer than six months, in which case a longer estimate of return can be used.

DHSC, 2017. Guidance on implementing the overseas visitor charging regulations.

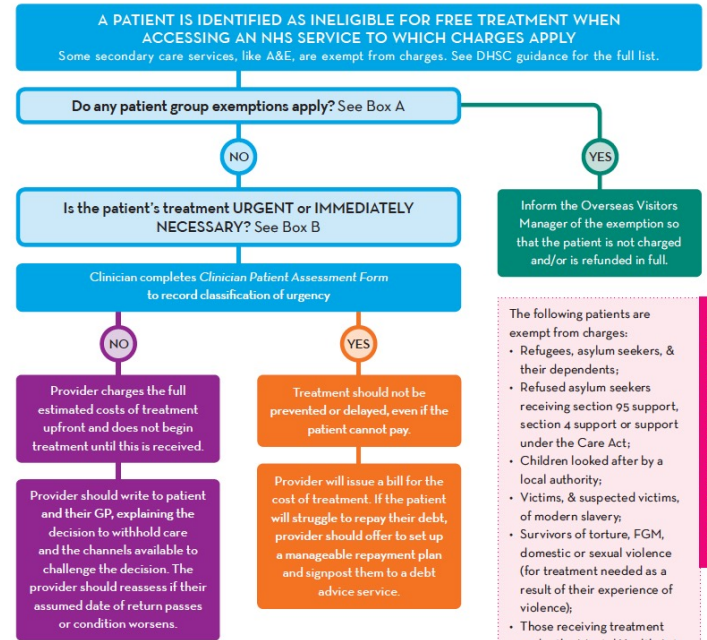


## NAVIGATING NHS CHARGING IN SECONDARY CARE



A guide for NHS clinicians in England, based on Department of Health and Social Care guidance<sup>1</sup>

This guide supports NHS doctors to ensure that their patients' health is protected by various international instruments ratified by the UK. Ensuring that patients access urgent treatment is also crucial to upholding their rights to life and freedom from inhumane or degrading treatment (Human Rights Act 1998, art. 2, 3). These legal protections apply to everyone, no matter what their immigration status, and bind all UK public authorities.



- BOX A: PATIENT GROUP EXEMPTIONS**
- The following patients are exempt from charges:
- Refugees, asylum seekers, & their dependents;
  - Refused asylum seekers receiving section 95 support, section 4 support or support under the Care Act;
  - Children looked after by a local authority;
  - Victims, & suspected victims, of modern slavery;
  - Survivors of torture, FGM, domestic or sexual violence (for treatment needed as a result of their experience of violence);
  - Those receiving treatment under the Mental Health Act;
  - Prisoners and those held in immigration detention.

- BOX B: DEFINITIONS**
- 'Urgent'** care is care that cannot wait until they can leave the UK.\*
- Should take into account pain, disability, and the risk of the delay exacerbating their condition.
  - For undocumented migrants, assume they may not be able to return within 6 months.
- 'Immediately necessary'** care is care that:
- is life saving;
  - will prevent a condition becoming life-threatening or;
  - will prevent permanent serious damage.
- \*See page 2

<sup>1</sup> Department of Health and Social Care, 2017. Guidance on overseas visitors' hospital charging regulations. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-overseas-visitors-hospital-charging-regulations>

