

# The NHS and You

What you can expect from us  
What we expect from you

## **Who is this leaflet for?**

This leaflet is for anyone who uses the NHS in any part of Scotland.

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# What you can expect from the NHS in Scotland

In the NHS in Scotland we will do the following.

- Help you stay healthy
- Care for you if you become ill

We will provide a safe, high quality service that is designed to meet the needs of patients and their carers and families.

## Services for everyone

- We will provide services based on your health or medical need, not your ability to pay.
- We will treat you with dignity and respect, no matter what your race, sex, age, sexual orientation, faith, political beliefs or disability.

## Safe, high quality healthcare

- We will provide the best care and treatment we can, within the resources available to us.
- We will make sure that everyone working in the NHS has the right training and skills for their job.
- We will provide care and treatment in a safe and clean setting.

## Responding to your needs

- We will provide health services which take account of your needs and, as far as possible, your preferences.
- If you are worried about parts of your care (for example, because of your culture or beliefs), please discuss this with us. We will respect your views and help in any way we can.
- If it helps you, and you give your permission, we will make sure that your carers, partner or family are involved in decisions about your care.

## Communicating with you

- We will talk with you about your health and any care you might need.
- If you need tests or treatment and there is different action that could be taken, we will explain this clearly to you. We will tell you about the risks and expected benefits of each option.
- We will give you information in a way that you can understand (for example, on tape or in a language other than English).
- If you need an interpreter or a sign-language interpreter, or have other special communication needs, we will arrange help for you.
- If you want a carer, a family member, a partner or

a friend to support you or help you express your views, we will welcome this help.

- If you want someone else to support you or help you express your views (an independent advocate), we will arrange this for you.

### **Involving you in decisions about your care**

- You have the right to take part in making decisions about your care and treatment.
- You have the right to accept or refuse any treatment, examinations, tests, and screening and diagnostic procedures.
- There are some times when we may treat you without your agreement, for example:
  - in an emergency if you cannot tell us what you want
  - if you are an adult who cannot make decisions for yourself or tell us your decisions (this is known as ‘incapacity’)
  - if you are being treated under the Mental Health Act, or
  - if you are under the age of 16 and cannot understand what the treatment involves or tell us what you want.

See page 23-24 for where to get more information about the rights of children and young people,

people who use mental health services, or adults with incapacity.

- You have the right to choose whether or not to take part in research trials and to pull out of the research at any time, if this is possible.
- You have the right to choose beforehand not to be examined or treated by a healthcare student. This will not affect the care we give you.
- If you want to have someone else present when a healthcare worker examines you, please let us know. This could be a friend, a relative, a partner or a carer, or another healthcare worker.
- You can ask for a second opinion at any time during your care.
- If there is any particular treatment you would not like to have in the future, please tell us. We will then take your wishes into account if you cannot make decisions for yourself in the future.
- For hospital appointments, you can be involved in choosing which hospital you go to and which specialist treats you. You will have to discuss this with your GP, but you can find out more by visiting the website [www.show.scot.nhs.uk/waiting/](http://www.show.scot.nhs.uk/waiting/). There may be some limits to the choice you have. If there are, we will explain these to you.

## **Giving you information**

- We will give you information about local health services. See page 22-23 for where to get this information.
- We will give you information about the standards we are expected to meet. See page 9 for where to get this information.
- You can see reports of any inspections or reviews of services which take place.
- High quality information on health conditions, your rights and healthy living will be available in a range of formats.
- We will tell you the names of the staff responsible for your care and how to contact them.
- If you are about to leave after a stay in hospital, we will send your GP written information about your stay in hospital. We will let you see this information and give you a copy if you want.

## **Keeping your information safe**

- We will keep accurate and up-to-date records of the care you receive.
- You have the right to know how we use, share and protect your personal health information. To find out about this, see our leaflet 'Confidentiality – it's your right'. See page 25 for where to get a copy of this leaflet.

- You have the right to see your health records and, if you choose, to have a copy. To find out about this, see our leaflet 'How to see your health records'. See page 25 for where to get a copy of this leaflet.

### **Working together and with others**

- All parts of the NHS will work together to make sure your care is co-ordinated and consistent.
- We will work closely with other organisations that are involved in providing care and support in the community. This includes local authorities, voluntary organisations, independent healthcare providers and community health groups.

### **Working with you to help you stay healthy**

- We will give you information and advice on how to stay as healthy as possible, and support and encourage you in doing this.
- We will offer you the opportunity to take part in screening and programmes to prevent illness.

### **Working with you to improve our services**

- We will make decisions about changes to our services in an open and honest way.
- We will involve patients, carers and members of

the public in making decisions about services. See page 21 for information on how to get involved.

- We will learn from any comments and complaints we receive.

### **Comments and complaints**

- We welcome any comments on the care you have received, good or bad.
- We will tell you what will happen as a result of any comments you make.
- For information about what to do if you are not happy about any part of your care, see page 10.

## How we make sure standards are met

The organisation NHS Quality Improvement Scotland has been set up to improve the quality of care we provide. It sets standards for NHS services in Scotland. It monitors and reviews services regularly to make sure that the standards described in this leaflet are being met.

NHS Quality Improvement Scotland also provides information about national standards of care and detailed standards for specific health conditions.

You can contact NHS Quality Improvement Scotland at:

Elliott House

8-10 Hillside Crescent

Edinburgh

EH7 5EA

Phone: 0131 623 4300

Fax: 0131 623 4299

E-mail: [comments@nhshealthquality.org](mailto:comments@nhshealthquality.org)

Website: [www.nhshealthquality.org](http://www.nhshealthquality.org)

## **What to do if you think we're not meeting our standards**

If you have any concerns about your care or our services, discussing them with NHS staff involved in your care can often help.

You can contact your local independent advice and support service or Citizens Advice Bureau for support or advice. See page 22 for how to contact your local independent advice and support service or Citizens Advice Bureau.

You can also make a formal complaint. For more information about making a complaint, see the leaflet 'Making a complaint about the NHS'. You can get this leaflet at any place where you receive NHS care, or by phoning the NHS Helpline on 0800 22 44 88 or NHS24 on 08454 24 24 24 (textphone 18001 08454 24 24 24).

## Waiting for an appointment, a test or treatment

If you have to go on a waiting list for an appointment, a test or treatment, we will try to make your wait as short as possible. Ask how long the wait is likely to be. If we tell you that you must wait longer than the national target time, see 'What to do if you think we're not meeting our standards' on page 10.

### National targets

The Health Department has set targets for the whole of Scotland which set out how quickly you should be able to get certain kinds of appointment, test or treatment. These targets are as follows:

#### Contacting your GP surgery

- When you contact your GP surgery, you should be able to see or speak to someone for advice within two working days. The surgery team will decide who they think is best suited to deal with your problem. This could be a GP, a practice nurse, or someone else.

## **Outpatient appointments**

- By the end of 2005, you should not have to wait more than 26 weeks from a GP referral for a hospital outpatient appointment.
- By the end of 2007, you should not have to wait longer than 18 weeks from a GP referral for a hospital outpatient appointment.

## **Hospital inpatient and day case treatment**

- You should not have to wait more than nine months for inpatient or day case treatment.
- By the end of 2005, you should not have to wait more than six months for inpatient or day case treatment.
- By the end of 2007, you should not have to wait more than 18 weeks for inpatient or day case treatment.

## **Accident and Emergency department**

- By the end of 2007, when you arrive at an Accident and Emergency (A&E) department, the longest you will wait is four hours before being admitted to a ward, discharged or transferred to another hospital.

## **Cataract surgery**

- By the end of 2007, if you are referred by your GP or optometrist for cataract surgery, you will not have to wait more than 18 weeks.

## **Hip fracture**

- By the end of 2007, if you fracture your hip and are admitted to a specialist orthopaedic unit for surgery, your operation will be carried out within 24 hours.

## **Heart disease**

- If you see a specialist and they refer you for angiography, you will not have to wait for more than eight weeks to have this done.
- If you have angiography done and you then need a heart bypass operation or angioplasty, you will not have to wait more than 18 weeks after the angiography for this.
- By the end of 2007, if you are being referred by your GP for treatment through the rapid access chest pain clinic, you will not have to wait for more than 16 weeks.
- By the end of 2007, if you are being referred by a heart specialist for treatment, you will wait no more than 16 weeks.

## **Cancer**

- By the end of 2005, if you are referred urgently to hospital by your GP for investigation and then found to have cancer, you should not have to wait for more than two months for the treatment to start.

- If investigation has shown that you have breast cancer, you should start the treatment within one month of doctors telling you that you have cancer.
- If you are referred urgently to hospital by your GP for investigation and then found to have acute leukaemia, you should not have to wait for more than one month for the treatment to start.
- If your child is referred urgently to hospital by your GP for investigation and is then found to have cancer, treatment should start within one month.

Sometimes, hospital services in your local area might be so busy that it will not be possible for you to get an appointment, a test or treatment within the national target times. If this is the case, you will be given the opportunity to travel to somewhere else in Scotland to get the appointment, test or treatment within the target time. If you want to find out about this, speak to a member of NHS staff involved in your care.

## What we expect from you

You can help yourself, other patients and NHS staff if you do the following.

### Look after yourself

Look after your own health and have a healthy lifestyle. This could mean:

- taking more exercise
- eating a balanced diet
- stopping smoking
- not drinking too much alcohol
- not using drugs, and
- using a condom if having sex.

You can get more information about healthy living on the internet at [www.healthyliving.gov.uk](http://www.healthyliving.gov.uk).

### Treat healthcare staff considerately

- Treat healthcare staff politely and with respect.
- Violence towards NHS staff or other patients is completely unacceptable. Violence includes verbal abuse and threats as well as physical assaults. Violence could lead to:
  - you being removed from healthcare premises

- information about you being passed to other healthcare providers, or
- information about you being passed to the police.

We will not accept racial, sexual or any other kind of harassment or abuse.

### **Keep your appointments**

- Be on time for appointments.
- If you are going to be late, phone us and let us know.
- If a member of our staff is coming to visit you at home (for example, a health visitor or community psychiatric nurse), make sure you are in at the agreed time.
- For hospital appointments we might contact you to arrange an appointment time that suits you. If this happens, please let us know what time would suit you best.

### **Let us know if you have to cancel**

- If you cannot keep your appointment, let us know as soon as possible so that we can offer your appointment to someone else.
- If we have booked you transport for a hospital appointment but you no longer need it, please phone the Scottish Ambulance Service Cancellation Line on 0800 289 1333.

## **Make sure we can contact you**

- Make sure that your GP surgery, dental surgery or any hospital or clinic you go to has up-to-date information about how to contact you.
- If you change your address or phone number, please let us know.

## **Follow advice and treatment**

- Try to follow any advice or treatment we have agreed with you.
- If you are worried about doing this:
  - discuss it with the person giving you the advice or treatment
  - contact your GP surgery, or
  - phone NHS 24 on 08454 24 24 24 (textphone 18001 08454 24 24 24).

## **Ask about anything you don't understand**

- If there is anything you don't understand about your condition or treatment, let us know and we will explain it to you.
- If we use words which you don't understand, ask us to explain them to you.

## Use health services appropriately

- Only use emergency services in a real emergency. If you are not sure, contact your GP surgery or phone NHS 24 on 08454 24 24 24 (textphone 18001 08454 24 24 24).
- Remember that we always try to treat people who need care most urgently first.

## Take care with medicines

- Take any medicine we give you in line with our instructions and finish the course of treatment. Before you decide to change or stop treatment, you should discuss this with your doctor or pharmacist.
- Do not take medicine which is out of date or prescribed for someone else.
- Give any out-of-date or unused medicine to your pharmacist to get rid of safely.
- Try to order repeat prescriptions in plenty of time.
- Store medicines safely and out of the reach of children.
- If you go into hospital, let the staff know about any medicines you are already taking. The best way to do this is to bring all the medicines you are taking with you and give them to a member of staff caring for you. If you can't do this, try to bring a list of all the medicines you are taking and give it to a member of staff.

## Help us stop the spread of infection

- If you, or someone you live with, has a cold or diarrhoea, or if you feel unwell, try to stay away until you're better.
- Wash and dry your hands before visiting a hospital ward, particularly after going to the toilet. If there is alcohol hand gel provided at the ward door or at the bedside, use it.
- Ask ward staff for advice before you bring in food or drink for someone you are visiting in hospital.
- If you visit someone in hospital, don't sit on their bed. Also, keep the number of visitors as low as possible at any time. Never touch dressings, drips or other equipment around the bed.
- If you think NHS premises are not as clean as they should be, let a member of staff know. If you think a healthcare worker has forgotten to wash their hands before examining you, remind them about this.

## Other ways you can help

### Donating blood, organs, tissues or bone marrow

Every year, hundreds of lives are saved with the help of donated blood, organs, tissues and bone marrow. You could save or improve the lives of several other people if you become a donor.

- If you are interested in becoming a blood donor, you can phone 0845 90 90 999 or visit the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service website at **[www.scotblood.co.uk](http://www.scotblood.co.uk)**.
- If you want to become an organ or tissue donor after you die you should put your name on the NHS Organ Donor Register. You should also discuss your wishes with the people close to you, and carry a donor card. For more information, phone the Organ Donor Line on 0845 60 60 400 or visit the NHS Organ Donor website at **[www.uktransplant.org.uk](http://www.uktransplant.org.uk)**.
- If you are an existing blood donor and want to find out about joining the British Bone Marrow Register, phone 0845 90 90 999 or see the website **[www.scotblood.co.uk](http://www.scotblood.co.uk)**. To find out more if you are not an existing blood donor, contact the Anthony Nolan Trust on 0207 284 1234 or see the website **[www.anthonynolan.org.uk](http://www.anthonynolan.org.uk)**.

## **Become a volunteer or get involved**

- If you want to become a volunteer, you can find out what opportunities there are in your local area by contacting your local NHS board (see page 22 for how to do this) or your local volunteer centre, or by visiting the website at **[www.volunteerscotland.info](http://www.volunteerscotland.info)**.
- To find out more about how we are involving people in your area in making decisions about NHS services, or to get involved, you should contact your local NHS board. See page 22 for how to contact your NHS board.

## **Let us know what you think of our service**

- Help us to improve services by giving us your views, good as well as bad.
- Examples of ways to do this include talking to staff, filling in surveys or using suggestion boxes.

## Where to get more information

### Information about NHS services and your health

- **Phone the NHS Helpline free on 0800 22 44 88** for information about health conditions and services.
- **Phone NHS 24 on 08454 24 24 24** for advice about what to do if you are ill, or for information about health conditions and services (calls are charged at local rates).
- **Contact your local NHS board** for information about local NHS services. You can find the contact details for your local NHS board in the phone book under 'health services' or on the internet at [www.show.scot.nhs.uk/organisations/orgindex.htm](http://www.show.scot.nhs.uk/organisations/orgindex.htm).
- **Contact your local independent advice and support service** if you would like to speak to someone for advice or help with making a complaint. To find out who will be providing the independent advice and support in your area you can contact your local NHS Board. See above for how to contact them.
- **Contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau** for free, confidential and independent advice on a wide range of issues including NHS services and your rights. To find your nearest branch, look in your local phone book or on the internet at [www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk).

## ● Use the internet

- [www.show.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.show.scot.nhs.uk) has information on national and local health services.
- [www.show.scot.nhs.uk/waiting](http://www.show.scot.nhs.uk/waiting) has information on waiting times for patients referred by GPs to consultant outpatient clinics. You can use this information with your GP to help you decide where you would like to be referred for assessment.

### Information about rights

- Your local Citizens Advice Bureau will provide free, confidential and independent advice on a wide range of issues. To find your nearest bureau, look in the phone book or on the internet at [www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk).
- If you can't make decisions for yourself, or can't tell others your decisions, this is called 'incapacity'. For more information about the rights of adults with incapacity, contact:

The Office of the Public Guardian

Hadrian House

Callendar Business Park

Callendar Road

Falkirk

FK1 1XR

Phone: 01324 678 300

Fax: 01324 678 301

Website: [www.publicguardian-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.publicguardian-scotland.gov.uk)

- For more information about the rights of children and young people, contact:

The Scottish Child Law Centre  
54 East Crosscauseway  
Edinburgh  
EH8 9HD

Information helpline: 0131 667 6333

Freephone number for under 18s: 0800 328 8970

Fax: 0131 662 1713

Website: [www.sclc.org.uk](http://www.sclc.org.uk)

- For more information about the rights of people with mental disorders, contact:

The Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland  
Argyle House

3 Lady Lawson Street

Edinburgh

EH3 9SH

Phone: 0131 222 6111

Fax: 0131 222 6112

Website: [www.mwcscot.org.uk](http://www.mwcscot.org.uk)

## Other leaflets in this series

This leaflet is part of a series. The other leaflets in the series include the following.

- **Confidentiality – it's your right: How the NHS protects your personal health information**
- **How to see your health records**
- **Making a complaint about the NHS**

You can get these leaflets from:

- GP surgeries, dental surgeries and hospitals
- other places where you receive NHS care
- the NHS Helpline on 0800 22 44 88
- NHS 24 on 08454 24 24 24 (textphone 18001 08454 24 24 24)
- [www.scotconsumer.org.uk/hris](http://www.scotconsumer.org.uk/hris)
- [www.show.scot.nhs.uk/healthrights](http://www.show.scot.nhs.uk/healthrights), and
- your local Citizens Advice Bureau (find your nearest bureau on the internet at [www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk) or in your local phone book)

We have tried our best to make sure that the information in this leaflet is correct. However, the leaflet is for guidance only so you should not rely on it as a full statement of the law. If you are thinking about taking legal action, you should contact a solicitor, a Citizens Advice Bureau or any other advice agency.

Produced by Health Rights Information Scotland, a project of the Scottish Consumer Council, for the Scottish Executive Health Department.

 **Scottish  
Consumer Council**  
Making all consumers matter



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Version 1

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To get this information in another language or format phone your local NHS Board. If you need help to do this contact the NHS Helpline on 0800 22 44 88 or NHS 24 on 08454 24 24 24 (textphone 18001 08454 24 24 24).

للحصول على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى أو بنسق مختلف، اتصل بالمكتب المحلي لهيئة الرعاية الصحية الوطنية NHS. وإذا احتجت للمساعدة للقيام بذلك اتصل بخط الاستعلامات التابع للهيئة NHS Helpline على الرقم 0800 22 44 88 أو على الرقم 08454 24 24 24 (أو رقم textphone 18001 08454 24 24 24 الخاص بالصم).

এই তথ্যগুলি অন্য ভাষায় কিম্বা আকারে পেতে চাইলে আপনার স্থানীয় এনএইচএস বোর্ড (NHS Board)-কে ফোন করুন। এতে আপনার সাহায্যের দরকার হলে যোগাযোগ করুনঃ এনএইচএস হেল্প লাইন (NHS Helpline)- 0800 22 44 88 কিম্বা এনএইচএস২৪ (NHS 24)-08454 24 24 24 (টেক্সটফোনঃ18001 08454 24 24 24)

若要取得此份資料的另一種語言或形式版本，請致電 NHS Board。若您需要幫助，請致電 NHS 求助熱線：0800 22 44 88 或 NHS24：08454 24 24 24 (盲文電話：18001 08454 24 24 24)。

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਜਾਂ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਆਪਣੇ ਲੋਕਲ NHS ਬੋਰਡ ਨੂੰ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ। ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਅਜੇਹਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ NHS ਹੈਲਪਲਾਈਨ ਨੂੰ 0800 22 44 88 ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਜਾਂ NHS 24 ਨੂੰ 08454 24 24 24 (ਟੈਕਸਟਫੋਨ 1 8001 08454 24 24 24) ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان یا شکل میں حاصل کرنے کیلئے اپنے این ایچ ایس کے مقامی بورڈ کو ٹیلیفون کریں۔ اگر آپ کو اس سلسلے میں مدد درکار ہو تو این ایچ ایس ہیلپ لائن سے 0800 22 44 88 پر یا این ایچ ایس 24 سے ٹیلیفون نمبر 08454 24 24 24 (ٹیکسٹ فون 18001 08454 24 24 24) پر رابطہ کریں

[www.scotconsumer.org.uk/hris](http://www.scotconsumer.org.uk/hris)