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Guidance

Healthcare for UK nationals living in Spain

How to get state healthcare if you live, work or study in Spain.

Published 23 September 2019

Last updated 31 December 2020 — see all updates

From:

Department of Health and Social Care (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care>), Foreign & Commonwealth Office (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office>), and Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-development-office>)

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Stay up to date

This guidance will be updated if anything changes to how you get state healthcare in Spain.

Sign up for email alerts (<https://www.gov.uk/email-signup/?topic=/world/living-in-spain>)

This information is about living in Spain. There's different guidance if you're visiting Spain (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-for-uk-nationals-visiting-spain>).

All residents in Spain need to register to access healthcare.

UK nationals usually access the Spanish national health system in one of these ways:

- through entitlement to healthcare as a permanent resident if they've lived in Spain for 5 years
- through entitlement to healthcare if they're employed or self-employed in Spain
- paying directly into the public health insurance scheme (Convenio Especial)
- registering a UK-issued S1 form with the social security office
- using a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) for temporary stays

Once registered for healthcare, basic state services are free, but there are some things that patients need to pay for. For example, you usually have to pay something towards prescriptions – either a reduced price or the full price.

Healthcare if you live and work in Spain

If you're working or self-employed in Spain, you're entitled to state healthcare on the same basis as a Spanish citizen. Your dependants are also entitled.

Register at your local health centre with your social security number. You can get a social security number from your local National Social Security Institute (TGSS) office (<http://www.seg-social.es/wps/portal/wss/internet/OficinaSeguridadSocial/>) in Spain.

Your dependants need to register separately.

Once you've registered, you'll get a health insurance card. Take it with you whenever you visit a doctor.

You may be entitled to a Spanish EHIC for travel, including visits to the UK.

You may also have the right to apply for a UK S1 if you start drawing a UK State Pension.

If you're a permanent resident

If you've been a resident in Spain for 5 years or more, you can apply for permanent residency (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/residency-requirements-in-spain>). This will give you access to state healthcare on the same basis as a Spanish citizen.

Once you're a permanent resident, you need to register for healthcare at your local INSS office (<http://www.seg-social.es/wps/portal/wss/internet/OficinaSeguridadSocial/>). They will give you a document which you need to take to your local health centre.

If the UK pays for your healthcare, for example through an S1 form, you cannot register for healthcare as a permanent resident.

If you are not a permanent resident and you are not working

You can apply to join the public health insurance scheme. This is called the Convenio Especial. You pay a monthly fee to join the scheme, which gives you access to the Spanish health system.

You can apply if you've been registered on the 'padrón' (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/residency-requirements-in-spain>) (at your local town hall) for at least one year.

Find out how to apply on your regional health authority's website (<https://www.mscbs.gob.es/organizacion/ccaa/directorio/home.htm>).

If you've lived in Spain for less than one year and cannot get healthcare cover, you'll need to buy private health insurance.

If the UK pays for your healthcare, for example through an S1, you cannot join the Convenio Especial.

If you're a dependant of someone living or working in Spain

Dependants and family members are classified differently in Spain than the UK.

Find out who's considered a dependant under Spanish law (http://www.seg-social.es/wps/portal/wss/internet/Trabajadores?1dmy&urile=wcm%3apath%3a%2FPOIN_Contenidos_en%2FInternet%2F4983%2F10935%2F10938%2F30475%2F30476%2F#177505).

If you classify as a dependant of someone entitled to state healthcare in Spain (because they're either working in Spain, a permanent resident or receiving Spanish benefits) you'll need to apply at your local INSS office (<http://www.seg-social.es/wps/portal/wss/internet/OficinaSeguridadSocial/>).

You'll also need to show a letter stating that you are not covered by the UK for healthcare (documento de no exportación). You can request this by calling NHS Overseas Healthcare Services.

NHS Overseas Healthcare Services
Telephone: +44 (0)191 218 1999
Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm
Saturday, 9am to 3pm

If your UK employer has sent you to Spain temporarily ('posted workers')

A posted worker (<https://www.gov.uk/working-abroad/posted-workers>) is someone who is employed or self-employed in the UK, but temporarily sent to another European Economic Area (EEA) country.

UK posted workers can access healthcare in Spain using a UK-issued E.H.I.C. or an S1 form if Spain opts in to posted worker arrangements as a part of the agreement with the EU. Spain will need to confirm this by the end of January 2021.

If Spain does not opt in to posted worker arrangements, you may need to do one or more of the following:

- join a local healthcare scheme
- cover the cost of your healthcare with private health insurance

HMRC has a helpline for National Insurance enquiries from non-UK residents (<http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs/contact/national-insurance-enquiries-for-non-uk-residents>). They can answer questions about posted worker status and explain which documents you will need to get healthcare while posted.

UK-funded healthcare: using an S1 form in Spain

There's different guidance if you're a posted worker.

You may be entitled to state healthcare paid for by the UK if you're a Spanish resident (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-spain>) and receive a UK State Pension.

You may also be entitled to an S1 form if you're a frontier worker (someone who works in one state and lives in another). You must contact HMRC National Insurance enquiries (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs/contact/national-insurance-enquiries-for-non-uk-residents>) to find out if you're eligible.

If you were living in Spain before 1 January 2021, you may also be entitled to an S1 if you receive some other 'exportable benefits'.

Not all UK benefits that can be claimed while abroad entitle you to UK-funded healthcare. Read more about claiming benefits if you move abroad (<https://www.gov.uk/claim-benefits-abroad/where-you-can-claim-benefits>) or contact Jobcentre Plus (<https://www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus>) to ask about a benefit.

When you get your S1 form, you must register it with your local social security office (INSS).

This will mean you and your dependants will be entitled to state healthcare on the same basis as a Spanish citizen.

You'll also get:

- a UK-issued **EHIC** (<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/apply-for-a-free-ehic-european-health-insurance-card/>) for travel
- planned treatments (<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/going-abroad-for-treatment/what-is-the-s2-route/>) in other EU countries

If you moved to the EU before 1 January 2021, you'll have access to the NHS in England when you're visiting.

How to get an S1 form

If you have a UK State Pension, you must request an application form by phone from the Overseas Healthcare Services. This is part of the NHS Business Services Authority (BSA).

NHS Overseas Healthcare Services

Telephone: +44 (0)191 218 1999

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

Saturday, 9am to 3pm

How to use an S1 form in Spain

You must register your S1 at your local INSS office.

The INSS will give you a Spanish social security number. Take this to your local healthcare centre to register.

You'll be given a medical card which you can use when you visit a doctor.

Studying in Spain

You can use an ~~EHIC~~ or GHIC (<http://www.nhs.uk/ehic>) to get medically necessary healthcare until the end of your study period.

Moving back to the UK

If you return to the UK you'll be able to use the NHS like any other UK resident.

Read more about using the NHS when you return to live in the UK. (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/using-the-nhs-when-you-return-to-live-in-the-uk>)

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1. 31 December 2020

Updated sections on living and working in Spain, using an S1 form in Spain, posted workers and studying in Spain. Changes reflect healthcare arrangements for people moving to Spain under the new rules of the UK's deal with the EU.

2. 9 November 2020

Updated 2 sections: 'Healthcare if you're using an S1 form in Spain' and 'Healthcare if you're studying in Spain'. Students and people with a registered S1 in Spain can now apply for a new UK European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) that will remain valid from 1 January 2021.

3. 31 January 2020

Details on the ways that you access healthcare have been updated. The guidance now only covers living, working and studying. Information on visiting has been moved to: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-for-uk-nationals-visiting-spain>

4. 23 September 2019

First published.

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Related content

- Healthcare for UK nationals living in France (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-in-france-including-martinique-and-guadaloupe>)
- Healthcare for UK nationals living in Germany (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-in-germany>)
- Apply for healthcare cover in the EU, European Economic Area or Switzerland (CA8454) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-health-care-cover-in-the-european-economic-area-ca8454>)
- Healthcare for UK nationals visiting Spain (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-for-uk-nationals-visiting-spain>)

- [Healthcare for UK nationals living in Portugal \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-in-portugal-including-madeira\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-in-portugal-including-madeira)
- [Spain travel advice \(https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/spain\)](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/spain)

Detailed guidance

- [Living in Spain \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-spain\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-spain)
- [Healthcare for UK nationals visiting Spain \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-for-uk-nationals-visiting-spain\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-for-uk-nationals-visiting-spain)

Collection

- [Healthcare in the EU, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland \(https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/healthcare-in-the-eu-norway-iceland-liechtenstein-and-switzerland\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/healthcare-in-the-eu-norway-iceland-liechtenstein-and-switzerland)

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- [Living abroad \(https://www.gov.uk/going-and-being-abroad/living-abroad\)](https://www.gov.uk/going-and-being-abroad/living-abroad)
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