

Healthcare for refugees and people seeking asylum

This information is about healthcare for refugees and people seeking asylum in the UK. It also explains support available from Macmillan for people affected by cancer.

If you have any questions about this information, ask your doctor or nurse at the hospital where you are having treatment.

You can also call Macmillan Cancer Support on **0808 808 00 00**, 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm. We have interpreters, so you can speak to us in your own language. When you call us, please tell us in English which language you need.

There is more cancer information in other languages at [macmillan.org.uk/translations](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/translations)

This information is about:

- The UK healthcare system
- Rights to healthcare if you are seeking asylum
- Rights to healthcare if you have been refused asylum
- Rights to healthcare if you are a refugee
- Help to access healthcare
- How Macmillan can help you
- More information in your language
- References and thanks

The UK healthcare system

Most healthcare in the UK is provided by the National Health Service (NHS). The NHS includes:

GP and community-based care

A GP (General Practitioner) is a doctor who treats general health conditions. GPs usually work in a local centre. In English, this type of centre can have different names. It may be called a [GP practice], [GP surgery] or [medical centre]. This centre is often your first and main point of contact for healthcare. They work closely with other community-based services such as district nurses and palliative care teams. Your GP and other community-based services treat and manage many health problems. If you need more specialised treatment, they can arrange this for you. This is called making a referral.

Urgent and emergency care - This includes:

- emergency help for life-threatening conditions if you phone 999
- care at an accident and emergency (A&E) department, or other urgent care centre such as a walk-in centre or minor injuries unit
- advice about urgent health problems if you call 111 (in England, Scotland or Wales).

Specialist care

For some health conditions, you may need advice or treatment from a healthcare professional with specialist training. When you stay in hospital for specialist treatment, this is called inpatient care. When you have specialist treatment at a clinic, or at home, this is called outpatient care.

Pharmacists

Pharmacists give out medicines and give advice about taking medicines. They may also give some medical advice.

Dental care

Dentists help look after your teeth, gums and other parts of the mouth.

Eye care

Optometrists help test eyesight. They prescribe and fit glasses and contact lenses. They give treatment and advice for some eye health problems, such as eye infections.

NHS healthcare is free in the same way if you are:

- applying for asylum in the UK
- a refugee.

Rights to healthcare if you are seeking asylum

If you are applying for asylum in the UK, NHS healthcare is free in the same way as an ordinary UK resident, while you:

- apply for asylum
- wait for a decision
- appeal any decisions.

This means you can have free GP and hospital care, and urgent and non-urgent treatment.

Rights to healthcare if you have been refused asylum

If your asylum claim has been refused, you may still be allowed free NHS healthcare. This depends on the area of the UK.

Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland

If you are refused asylum in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, you are allowed free NHS healthcare for as long as you are still in the country.

England

If you are refused asylum in England, you are still allowed free NHS healthcare if you are getting support from:

- the Home Office, called section 4(2) support
- a local authority, called section 21 or part 1 support.

If you are not getting this support, you can continue any course of treatment you had already started, free of charge. If a healthcare professional thinks you need further immediate or urgent treatment they can give you this. You may be asked to pay, but you do not have to pay before the treatment is given.

Some emergency healthcare is always free to everyone in the UK. You never pay for:

- emergency help for life-threatening conditions if you phone 999.
- advice about urgent health problems if you call 111 (in England, Scotland or Wales).
- care at an accident and emergency (A&E) department, walk-in centre, minor injuries unit or urgent care centre.

Other healthcare services that are always free to everyone include:

- testing and treatment for some types of infections and sexually transmitted diseases
- contraception services
- treatment for conditions caused by torture, female genital mutilation, and domestic or sexual violence.

Rights to healthcare if you are a refugee

If you are a refugee in the UK, NHS healthcare is free, in the same way as an ordinary UK resident. This includes GP and hospital care, and urgent and non-urgent treatment.

Help to access healthcare

If you need help to access healthcare, or you are not sure of your rights to healthcare, the following organisations can help:

- **Migrant Help** - visit www.migranthelpuk.org or call their free asylum helpline on 0808 801 0503. To check for information in your language visit www.migranthelpuk.org/Pages/FAQs/Category/translated-advice
- **British Red Cross** - visit www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-as-a-refugee or call their free support line on 0808 196 3651. To check for information in your language visit www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-as-a-refugee/translated-pages
- **Refugee Council** - visit www.refugeecouncil.org.uk for information. If you are in England, call their free Infoline on 0808 196 7272.

Getting the right care and support for you

If you have cancer and do not speak English, you may be worried that this will affect your cancer treatment and care. But your healthcare team should offer you care, support and information that meets your needs.

We know that sometimes people may face extra challenges in getting the right support. For example, if you work or have a family it can be hard to find time to go to hospital appointments. You might also have worries about money and transport costs. All of this can be stressful and hard to cope with.

We also offer Macmillan Grants to people with cancer. These are one-off payments that can be used for things like hospital parking, travel costs, childcare or heating bills.

Our free support line **0808 808 00 00** can offer advice, in your language, about your situation. You can speak to nurses, financial guides, welfare rights advisers and work support advisers.

How Macmillan can help you

At Macmillan, we know how a cancer diagnosis can affect everything, and we are here to support you.

Macmillan Support Line

We have interpreters, so you can speak to us in your language. Just tell us, in English, the language you want to use. We can help with medical questions, give you information about financial support, or be there to listen if you need someone to talk to. The free, confidential phone line is open 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm. Call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

Macmillan website

Our website has lots of information in English about cancer. There is also more information in other languages at macmillan.org.uk/translations

We can also arrange translations just for you. Email us at cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk to tell us what you need.

Information centres

Our information and support centres are based in hospitals, libraries and mobile centres. Visit one to get the information you need and speak with someone face to face. Find your nearest centre at macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

Local support groups

At a support group, you can talk to other people affected by cancer. Find out about support groups in your area at macmillan.org.uk/supportgroups or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

Macmillan Online Community

You can also talk to other people affected by cancer online at macmillan.org.uk/community You can access it at any time of day or night. You can share your experiences, ask questions, or just read through people's posts.

More information in your language

We have information in your language about these topics:

Coping with cancer

- Cancer and coronavirus
- Cancer care in the UK
- Claiming benefits when you have cancer
- Eating problems and cancer
- End of life
- Healthcare for refugees and people seeking asylum
- Healthy eating
- Help with costs when you have cancer
- If you are diagnosed with cancer
- LGBTQ+ people and cancer
- Sepsis and cancer

- Side effects of cancer treatment
- Tiredness (fatigue) and cancer

Types of cancer

- Breast cancer
- Cervical cancer
- Large bowel cancer
- Lung cancer
- Prostate cancer

Treatments

- Chemotherapy
- Radiotherapy
- Surgery

To see this information, go to [macmillan.org.uk/translations](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/translations)

References and thanks

This information has been written and edited by Macmillan Cancer Support's Cancer Information Development team. It has been translated into this language by a translation company.

The information included is based on our treatment decisions content available in English on our website.

This information has been reviewed by relevant experts and approved by members of Macmillan's Centre of Clinical Expertise.

Thanks also to the people affected by cancer who reviewed this information.

All our information is based on the best evidence available. For more information about the sources we use, please contact us at cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk

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