## S2: Planned Healthcare in Europe for Lothian residents

**Introduction**

This information explains how you can access planned healthcare in European countries under the S2 scheme, if you normally live in Lothian (Edinburgh, West Lothian, Midlothian and East Lothian council areas). The UK legislation covering the S2 scheme is the *Healthcare (International Arrangements) (EU Exit) Regulations 2023, (regulation 8).*

**The S2 Scheme**

The S2 scheme is for planned[[1]](#footnote-1) healthcare in state/publicly-funded hospitals abroad. You can only get S2 funding for healthcare which the NHS would be offering you here.

Please see the following websites for information about S2 and which countries are covered:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/health-rights/european-cross-border-healthcare/travelling-to-europe-for-planned-healthcare-the-s2-scheme>

This NHS Scotland website links you to the NHS England application form for S2. If you live in Lothian, please use the NHS England application form and send it to NHS Lothian Safe Haven Office, Waverley Gate, 2-4 Waterloo Placed, Edinburgh EH1 3EG. Alternatively, you can simply send an email to the NHS Lothian Safe Haven office with the required information (see next section).

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/going-abroad-for-treatment/what-is-the-s2-route/>

This is the NHS England website.

## What you should do next?

Not everyone is eligible for the S2 scheme. Prior authorisation is always required. You should discuss your plans with NHS Lothian Safe Haven Office before you make any arrangements for planned healthcare. Contact: tel. 0131 465 5448 or 07930 118919 or email [loth.safehaven@nhs.scot](mailto:loth.safehaven@nhs.scot)

and we will call you back.

If, having spoken to us, you would like to proceed with an S2 application, please send NHS Lothian Safe Haven Office the following details:

* Your name, address and date of birth
* Proof of Lothian residency x 2 (photographic identification such as driving licence/passport **and** letter from your utility company/council tax)
* National Insurance number
* Description of the required healthcare/surgery
* A letter from your NHS Lothian hospital doctor saying why the healthcare is needed. If you are already on a waiting list for treatment in NHS Lothian, the Safe Haven staff can verify this on the NHS Lothian clinical system; you do not need a letter.
* The name, address, email, telephone number of the **state/publicly funded** hospital which will provide your healthcare in the country you plan to travel to
* The name and email of the doctor who will be responsible for you
* Confirmation that the state/publicly funded hospital abroad will accept an S2
* Dates when the hospital abroad can see you
* Arrangements for any NHS follow-up care when you return to Lothian

It can take up to twenty working days to get an S2 in place once the Safe Haven Office has received the required information from you, so please contact our office well in advance of your planned treatment date.

**Once we receive this information from you:**

NHS Lothian Safe Haven office will take forward your application for S2:

* We will check your residency.
* We will check that the healthcare proposed abroad is healthcare that you would have been eligible for here in the NHS.
* We will prepare an application for S2 funding and send it to the Overseas Healthcare Services Team, NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA), Newcastle[[2]](#footnote-2) for processing.
* We will confirm with you that we have applied for an S2 on your behalf.
* NHSBSA will send your S2 certificate directly to you, by email and by post to your home address in Lothian.
* Once you receive the S2 at your Lothian address you will then take the S2 certificate with you when you travel to the hospital abroad. You will give it to the hospital abroad. This enables funding for your healthcare to be transferred directly from the UK Government to the hospital abroad.

**Important information**

* You are responsible for finding a hospital to travel to. NHS Lothian cannot locate or recommend a hospital abroad for you.
* Healthcare under the S2 scheme is provided under the same funding arrangements that apply to residents of the country you are travelling to. This could mean that you may have to pay for part of the healthcare costs yourself (sometimes referred to as a co-payment). There may be an opportunity to claim back any co-payment from NHS BSA after you return home, so keep any receipts.
* You will need to pay for your own travel, travel insurance, food, and accommodation if required. There is no NHS reimbursement for these costs.
* If problems or complications happen abroad, you will have to pay for any additional costs, including any unforeseen travel costs e.g., air ambulance.
* It is strongly recommended that you have travel insurance which includes comprehensive medical insurance specifically covering travel for medical treatment. This is your responsibility.
* You are responsible for ensuring that the healthcare you have abroad is safe within the laws of the country providing the healthcare (not under UK or Scottish legislation). NHS Lothian cannot vouch for the quality or safety of healthcare you may choose to have abroad. NHS Lothian is not liable for the outcomes of any healthcare received under the S2 scheme. Treatment outside of the UK is not covered by the NHS clinical negligence scheme.
* Make sure you also have a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or the new UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) to cover emergency, state-funded healthcare. EHIC/GHIC cards are free to obtain on the gov.uk website. Go to: <https://www.gov.uk/global-health-insurance-card>

**Contact**

For further information contact NHS Lothian Safe Haven Office.

Tel. 0131 465 5448 or 07930 118919

Email: [loth.safehaven@nhs.scot](mailto:loth.safehaven@nhs.scot)

Post: Safe Haven Office (for out-of-area referrals)

Department of Public Health and Health Policy

NHS Lothian, Waverley Gate

2-4 Waterloo Place

Edinburgh EH1 3EG

1. UK citizens travelling abroad can access free or reduced-cost emergency state-funded healthcare in certain countries using a European Healthcare Insurance Card (EHIC) or UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). EHIC/GHIC do not cover private healthcare; or any planned treatments/surgery. Check out status of EHIC/GHIC changes since BREXIT on the Department of Health NHS Choices website at: www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. NHSBSA is an arm’s length body of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) UK Government, based in Newcastle; they issue S2 certificates for residents throughout the UK. <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/contact-us/overseas-healthcare-services-contact-us> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)