



Technical Notice (12)

Getting ready for the end of the Transition Period

European Health Insurance Cards and Healthcare

18 November 2020

On 31 December 2020, the Transition Period (sometimes also referred to as the “Implementation Period”) under the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement will come to an end. The end of the Transition Period will bring an end to the current status quo whereby Gibraltar, its citizens and its business, have enjoyed EU rights. Therefore, subject to the outcome of ongoing negotiations concerning the UK and Gibraltar’s future relationship with the EU, the end of the Transition Period will bring about important changes which Gibraltar, as a whole, will need to be ready for.

Purpose.

The purpose of this Notice is to explain what the effect of those changes are on your ability to access emergency healthcare in the EU on the basis of your European Health Insurance Card and other matters related to healthcare.

Gibraltar’s departure from the European Union means that certain processes and procedures will inevitably become more difficult, cumbersome and bureaucratic. It is important that citizens and businesses are aware of this and that, where possible, they plan ahead. The Government can only prepare in areas that are within its control. Even then, there will be certain areas where mitigation is not possible because the new situation simply reflects what it means to be outside the European Union.



If there is no agreement with respect to the UK and Gibraltar's future relationship with the EU before 31 December 2020.

Emergency Healthcare in the EU.

If there is no agreement to the contrary, European Health Insurance Cards issued in Gibraltar will, as from 1 January 2021, no longer be valid in EU Member States (including Spain) for the purposes of accessing state-provided healthcare (including emergency healthcare) during a temporary stay in the EU.

Therefore, after 31 December 2020, you may not have access to free medical treatment in the EU and you could be charged for your healthcare if you do not have health cover with your travel insurance.

In this scenario, the public is advised to ensure that, as from 1 January 2021, they have appropriate travel insurance with medical cover for any trip abroad to the European Union, including trips to Spain.

Planned Treatment in the EU.

The default position, as from 1 January 2021, is that you may no longer be able to access GHA-funded healthcare in EU Member States on the basis of EU legislation establishing the "S2 Route" (where there were direct funding arrangements between the GHA and the relevant EU Member State) or the "EU Directive Route" (where you could apply to the GHA for reimbursement with respect to healthcare received in EU Member States).

In light of the above, the GHA has secured individual arrangements with certain Spanish private healthcare providers to allow for the continued referral of Gibraltar patients to such hospitals to receive planned treatment where necessary.



Emergency Healthcare and Planned Treatment in the UK.

With regard to the position in the UK, it should be recalled that, following the HMGoG-UK Joint Ministerial Council of 8 March 2018, the UK Government announced that it would maintain the current reciprocal healthcare arrangements between the UK and Gibraltar. Therefore, post-31 December 2020, Gibraltar will be able to continue to refer patients to the UK for elective treatment and residents of Gibraltar will be able to access UK state-provided healthcare (including emergency healthcare) during a temporary stay in the UK.

If there is an agreement with respect to the UK and Gibraltar's future relationship with the EU before 31 December 2020

It is likely that, in the event of an agreement on the future relationship with the EU, matters with respect to healthcare will be touched upon. However, negotiations with regard to the UK and Gibraltar's future relationship with the EU are ongoing and, at this stage, it cannot be guaranteed that agreements will be reached before 31 December 2020.

In any event, the arrangements between Gibraltar and the UK described above will remain unchanged regardless of what the future relationship with the EU will be.

Further information

This Notice is meant for guidance only.

Further information can be sought from brexit@gibraltar.gov.gi.