

# GUIDANCE ON IMPLEMENTING THE OVERSEAS VISITORS HOSPITAL CHARGING REGULATIONS

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## What is immediately necessary, urgent and non-urgent treatment?

4.4 Only clinicians can make an assessment as to whether a patient's need for treatment is immediately necessary, urgent or non-urgent. In order to do this they may first need to make initial assessments based on the patient's symptoms and other factors, and conduct further investigations to make a diagnosis. These assessments and investigations will be included in any charge.

4.5 **Immediately necessary treatment** is that which a patient needs:

- to save their life, or
- to prevent a condition from becoming immediately life-threatening, or
- promptly to prevent permanent serious damage from occurring.

4.20 While urgency of treatment is a matter of clinical judgement, this does not mean that treatment should be unlimited; there may be some room for discretion about the extent of treatment and the time at which it is given. In many cases, a patient undergoing immediately necessary treatment may be able to be stabilised, allowing them to be safely discharged and giving them time to return home for further treatment rather than incurring further avoidable NHS charges. This should be done wherever possible, unless ceasing or limiting treatment would precipitate a deterioration in the patient's condition.

4.12 The decision on whether a patient's need for treatment is immediately necessary, urgent or non-urgent is only for clinicians to make. However, in determining whether or not a required course of treatment should proceed even if payment is not obtained in advance, or if it can safely wait until the patient can return home (i.e. whether it is urgent or non-urgent), clinicians will need to know their estimated return date.

4.6 Relevant NHS bodies must always provide treatment which is classed as immediately necessary by the treating clinician irrespective of whether or not the patient has been informed of, or agreed to pay, charges, and it must not be delayed or withheld to establish the patient's chargeable status or seek payment.

**For Further information contact:**

**Patricia Collins**  
**Overseas Visitor Manager**  
**Tel: 0207 288 3820**  
**Bleep 2639**  
[Patricia.collins3@nhs.net](mailto:Patricia.collins3@nhs.net)