

## Who is entitled to public health services in Ireland?

If you are **ordinarily resident** in Ireland you are entitled to some public health services for free, or at a reduced fee.

**Who is ordinarily resident in Ireland?**  
You must be living here for a year, or intend to live here for at least a year.

## Who decides if you are ordinarily resident in Ireland?

The Health Service Executive (HSE) decides. Through your healthcare provider, the HSE may look for **evidence** to show you are entitled to live in Ireland for at least one year.

### Examples of evidence:

- A work permit or visa
- A statement from an employer or a contract of employment
- Evidence of transfer of funds to Ireland, bank accounts, transfer of a pension
- Proof that you bought a house or an apartment
- Proof that you are renting
- GNIB Card

In some cases you might be asked to sign a form to state that you are ordinarily resident in Ireland.

## What health services are people ordinarily resident in Ireland entitled to?

If you are ordinarily resident in Ireland you may be entitled to a **medical card**. This allows you get the following services for free:

- GP services
- Prescribed drugs and medicines, subject to a small charge for each item prescribed
- Public hospital services
- Dental, optical and aural services
- Maternity and infant care services
- Community care and personal social services such as public health nursing, home help, physiotherapy, chiropody and respite care.

To check if you are eligible for a medical card, you have to do a **means test**.

A means test is where you provide information to the HSE on your income and certain outgoings such as rent, childcare or certain medical costs. The HSE will see if you can afford your own medical care or if paying for medical care will be too much of a burden on you and your family.

**See [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie) to find out more about eligibility and applying for a medical card.**



**If you are ordinarily resident in Ireland, but do not qualify for a medical card, you are still entitled to get some public health services for a reduced fee**

### You will have to pay some hospital fees:

- In-patient fees
- Out-patient fees, and
- Accident and Emergency (A&E) fees.

**However, there is a limit to how much you will have to pay.**

The following are available free or at a reduced cost:

- Under the **Drugs Payment Scheme**, there is a monthly limit to the amount you or your family should pay for the cost of many prescribed drugs, medicines and certain medical appliances. Ask at your local pharmacy for more information.
- Under the **Long Term Illness Scheme**, you can get free prescribed drugs, medicines and medical and surgical appliances for certain conditions like epilepsy, diabetes, intellectual disability or multiple sclerosis.
- Women are entitled to the **Maternity and Infant Care Scheme** while pregnant and following the birth of their baby.
- You are entitled to some community care and personal social services such as public health nursing, home help, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, chiropody, day care and respite care.

## What if the HSE decides that I am not ordinarily resident in Ireland?

If this happens, your healthcare provider may:

- charge you the full cost for any health services provided, or
- provide **urgent necessary treatment** at:
  - a reduced cost, or
  - without cost where full economic cost would cause undue hardship

**If you are a migrant living in Ireland and are worried about your access to, or the cost of healthcare, contact:**

**Cairde**  
**Tel: 01 8552111**

or

**Email: [info@cairde.ie](mailto:info@cairde.ie)**

Coimisiún na hÉireann um Chearta an Duine agus Comhionannas  
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

North Dublin City GP Training  
HEALTH CARE FOR ALL

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Challenging ethnic minority health inequalities

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**Are you a migrant living in Ireland?  
Are you worried about the cost of health services?**



**Do you know that you may be entitled to free or subsidised public health services?**