

Help to access health and care services

Healthwatch East Sussex has created some factsheets providing information on how to access key health and care services in East Sussex, and what help may be available with the costs of accessing healthcare.

Who are we?

Healthwatch East Sussex is an independent organisation that provides an Information and Signposting service to help people navigate health and care services, find out what services and support groups are available in their area, understand their patient rights, and share feedback about local services.

Why have we created these information sheets?

Our Information and Signposting service regularly provides outreach sessions at community locations across East Sussex. During these sessions we became aware that many people are unsure how to access key health and care services, and the cost of accessing some services is a barrier to people receiving health and care support.

Who is it for and how can it be used?

We produced these factsheets to provide a quick and easy reference point to key information for accessing services, and to address some of the common barriers to health and care.

We intend for this to be a flexible resource that can be used by volunteers to help signpost clients, or to be printed out for clients to refer to directly in the form of posters or flyers.

Contact

For further information, or for help with issues not covered by these information sheets, please contact Healthwatch East Sussex Information and Signposting service using the contact details below:

Phone: **0333 101 4007** Monday – Friday (10am–2pm)

Email: enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk

Freepost: Unit 31, The Old Printworks, 1 Commercial Road, BN21 3XQ

Website: <https://healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk/>

Help with the costs of accessing and receiving health or care services

Find out if you are entitled to support through the NHS Low Income Scheme.

The NHS Low Income Scheme can help you pay for **prescriptions**, **dental** charges, **eye care** costs, **travel to hospital appointments** and **wigs** and fabric supports.

To qualify, you must receive certain means-tested benefits or fill out a form about your personal situation, income, and savings.

To check eligibility and for further information call **0300 330 1343**.



www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/help-with-health-costs/nhs-low-income-scheme-lis/

Check if you are entitled to free prescriptions, dental treatment or eye care.

A separate NHS scheme also provides free **prescriptions** to specific groups including those under 19, over 60, pregnant or recently given birth, with certain medical conditions, or receiving a war pension. Some of these groups are also entitled to free **dental care** and **sight tests**.

For further information and to check your eligibility call:
0300 330 1343.



www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/check-if-youre-eligible-help

NHS Prepayment Certificates (PPC) could save you money if you pay for your NHS prescriptions.

The certificate covers all your NHS prescriptions for a set price. You will save money if you need four or more items in 3 months, or 12 or more items in 12 months. Before buying a PPC, check if you're entitled to free NHS prescriptions. You can buy online or ask in your local pharmacy.

www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/help-nhs-prescription-costs/nhs-prescription-prepayment-certificate-ppc



Help with welfare advice or applying for benefits, including Personal Independence Payments (PIP).

Hastings Advice and Representation Centre (HARC) provide free and independent welfare and benefits information, advice and support service to East Sussex residents.

Contact them on:

Benefits helpline: **0333 344 0681**

Advice line: **01424 428375**

Email: benefitseastsussex@harcuk.com

Website: www.harcuk.com



Cost of Living advice and support

The East Sussex County Council (ESCC) website has comprehensive information on the support available due to the increased cost of living, including benefits, food, transport and help for households:

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/community/cost-of-living-support



Contact Healthwatch East Sussex Information and Signposting team to find out:

- how to access the health or care services you need,
- about support services, advocacy services, safeguarding and patient rights,
- how to raise a concern or complain about your care,
- to leave feedback about your experiences of health and care services.

Phone: **0333 101 4007**

Email: enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk

Website: www.healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk

How to access health and care services

How to register with a GP

Anyone can register with a GP and it is free. You do not need proof of address, immigration status, ID or an NHS number.

If you cannot find a local GP accepting new patients, please request a GP allocation form from sxicb.gpallocations@nhs.net

NHS Sussex will then assign you to a GP practice. You will then need to register as normal.

For information on what to do if a GP practice suspends new registrations visit:

www.sussex.ics.nhs.uk/you-r-care/local-nhs-services/list-capping/



How to access NHS dentistry

Patients not registered or current users of an NHS dentist can use the [Find a dentist - NHS](#) tool on the NHS website, or call the **Sussex dental helpline** on **0300 123 1663**.

If you cannot find an NHS dentist, but require urgent dental treatment, you may be able to access the Urgent Dental Care NHS sessions using the following QR below or calling the Sussex dental helpline (see number above).

Anyone with an emergency dental need outside normal business hours should contact the East Sussex **Emergency Dental Service** (EDS) between 6.30pm and 10.30pm on weekdays, and the times below on weekends and Bank Holidays:



Eastbourne – 1pm to 5.30pm
01223 449170

Hastings – 9am to 1.30pm
01424 850792

<https://www.esht.nhs.uk/service/emergency-dental-service/>

Contact Healthwatch East Sussex

Information and Signposting team to find out:

- how to access the health or care services you need,
- about support services, advocacy services, safeguarding and patient rights,
- how to raise a concern or complain about your care,
- to leave feedback about your experiences of health and care services.

Phone **0333 101 4007**

Email:

enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk

Website:

www.healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk

Getting help with your mental health

If you are worried you may hurt yourself or somebody else, or experiencing suicidal feelings, call **999** or go to A&E for immediate help.

For same or next day help, call **NHS 111** and select the mental health option, or the Samaritans on **116 123** (both available 24/7).

NHS Talking Therapies for anxiety and depression:

If you are experiencing common mental health problems such as feelings of depression, excessive worry, or social anxiety, you can refer yourself to NHS Talking Therapies East Sussex:

Phone: **0300 0030 130**

Website: www.healthinmind.org.uk

Or contact your GP surgery for support.



How to access health and care services

Support for unpaid carers

If you provide unpaid care for a friend or family member who, due to disability, illness or another problem, cannot cope without your support, you may be entitled to additional help or support.

All carers are entitled to a carer's assessment from their local council.

To request an assessment or find out more, contact ESCC using the details below:

Phone: **0345 60 80 191**

Email: hsc@eastsussex.gov.uk

Website: www.eastsussex.gov.uk/social-care/carers



Care for the Carers are an independent charity that provide free practical and emotional advice and support to unpaid carers in East Sussex.

To find out more, contact them via:

Phone: **01323 738390**

Email: info@cftc.org.uk

Website: www.cftc.org.uk/



Support for social care needs

If you're aged 18 or over and living with a disability, long-term condition, or are an older person, or recovering from hospital treatment, you are entitled to an assessment to see if you require support to help you with daily living tasks.

Unlike healthcare services, social care isn't always free. A **financial assessment** will determine whether you qualify for free social care or need to contribute towards the cost of your care.

To check, contact East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and ask for a **needs assessment**:

Phone: **0345 60 80 191**

Email: hsc@eastsussex.gov.uk

Website:

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/social-care



How to make a complaint about health or care services

Healthwatch East Sussex have produced a guide on how to make a complaint about a health or care service in East Sussex. Copies are on our website:

www.healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk/complaints/



Alternatively, contact our Information and Signposting team for a copy, or to receive advice:

Email: enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk

Phone: **0333 101 4007** Monday – Friday (10am–2pm)

Getting support to make a complaint: Independent Health Complaints Advocacy

If you need help to make a complaint about an NHS service, you can access free advocacy to support you.

In East Sussex, this service is provided by The Advocacy People.

Contact The Advocacy People via:

Email: info@theadvocacypeople.org.uk

Website: www.theadvocacypeople.org.uk

Phone: **0330 440 9000**

