

Medical attention in Spain

Health Care

There is a lot of confusion about health care and entitlement in Spain. For people of pensionable age, it isn't much of a problem as they are entitled to free health care as they would be in the UK, however anyone under retirement age in most regions of Spain are required to obtain a social security number and pay into the system in order to be covered for health care.

Good news though for those settling in the Alicante area:

On 13 August 2004 the Consellería de Sanidad of the Valencian Autonomous Community issued fresh and more explicit instructions on the procedures to be adopted by health centres when considering applications for health cover from British citizens who have moved to this part of Spain. Please note that these instructions apply only in the provinces of Castellón, Valencia and Alicante.

British citizens who are neither pensioners nor employed can apply for health care under the Spanish Social Security system as it operates in the Valencian Autonomous Community.

They should apply, referring to "Circular 1/2002" and to the "Instrucciones relativas al derecho a la asistencia sanitaria de los ciudadanos del Reino Unido" dated 13 August 2004, for a "tarjeta sanitaria SIP" at their local health centre, where they will be required to produce the following documentation:

- valid British passport
- valid residence card
- "padrón" certificate (recently-issued)
- document stating that applicant is not entitled to health care in any other country (following consultations with Medical Benefits, Newcastle*, and Consellería de Sanidad, Valencia, this should take the form of Medical Benefits' written notification that a person does not qualify for any of the "E" forms). This letter is now available in the Spanish language; however, if it is sent in the English language, it must be accompanied by a Spanish translation by a sworn translator or a certificate from the Consulate confirming the authenticity of the document).

According to the Consellería de Sanidad, health centres in the Valencian Autonomous Community have been instructed to take in applications and to pass them on to the head offices in Alicante, Valencia or Castellón. The health centre cannot process applications, nor issue temporary SIP cards. (Unfortunately, some health centres are not clear on this point and, in an attempt to process applications themselves, have instructed applicants to visit the Spanish Social Security offices in order to obtain a Social Security identification number.)