

Government Response: The National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) (Amendment) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2022

Merit Scrutiny point 1: The Welsh Government's policy was to attain broad consistency with the policy position adopted by the UK Government, to ensure equality of access to healthcare for Ukrainian refugees across the two nations. Accordingly, it was necessary to see the UK Government's draft regulations before proceeding with ours. Following our review of the UK Government's draft regulations, Welsh Government officials were then better placed to prepare a set of regulations which achieved the policy objective, subject to some minor differences which were required to align with the existing legal landscape for healthcare charges in Wales.

It should also be noted that whilst our regulations were implemented a little later than in England, they applied from the same date, that is, the start of the conflict (24 February 2022). Therefore, any person arriving lawfully from the Ukraine to the UK in that period would still be exempt from charges and therefore not disadvantaged compared to the position in England.