

Information sheet currently used by IOM as the existing pre-arrival service provider

## Health Protocol

# PRE-ENTRY HEALTH ASSESSMENTS FOR UK BOUND INDIVIDUALS

### Information sheet

You are invited to take part in a health assessment. It is important for you to understand why the health assessment is being done, what it will involve and what will happen after the assessment. Please take time to read the following information carefully and ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

#### **What the health assessment is**

The United Kingdom (UK) government accepts individuals under various resettlement schemes. Before you travel to the UK, you must have a health assessment, carried out by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which they will do in the country where you have travelled to for protection.

The health assessment will identify health conditions for which you can be treated before or after you travel to the UK. Once you arrive in the UK treatment for any health condition that you might have is provided free of charge by the UK National Health Service (NHS). The main way for you to get health care is by registering with a general practitioner (community doctor, known as a GP) soon after you arrive in the UK. They will then get a copy of your medical assessment form, and you can also give them the paper copy.

You will not be excluded from the UK if the assessment finds that you have a disease, are pregnant, or have another health condition. However, in some situations, your resettlement might have to be postponed. If you need urgent treatment, but if you can't get this where you are now, the UK authorities will work with other services to try get you treated before you travel.

The health assessment is carried out for the following reasons:

- to see if you have any health conditions which need to be treated before or after you travel to the UK. This is to keep you healthy, but will also:
  - help make sure you are settled somewhere that has appropriate facilities to meet your health and social care needs

- help make sure other people around you stay safe if you have certain health conditions, such as tuberculosis
- to offer immunisation, to help keep you and other people healthy and safe
- to check that you are well enough to travel to the UK and to your final destination within the UK. In some cases, you might need a medical escort or other travel arrangements such as oxygen, mobility aids and others, or you might be advised to be treated before you travel.

### **What happens during the health assessment**

You may ask IOM if it is possible to bring a friend or relative to the assessment. If you attend the assessment alone, IOM will provide a chaperone for your physical examination upon your request. Children must be accompanied by a parent or a guardian. In this health assessment you will be interviewed and examined by health professionals (such as nurses and doctors), who will do the following:

- ask you about your past and current physical and mental health, medications you are or have been taking, and history of your healthcare use (for example if you have been in hospital)
- carry out a physical examination, which will be guided by the clinician's clinical judgement, and may include measuring your blood pressure, body temperature, height and weight and review of your body systems and functions
- in some cases they may examine your breasts if you are female. This will only be done only if there are clear clinical indications, following strict standards for intimate examinations, in a proper environment and in which privacy is safeguarded.
- assess how well you can move and how well you can carry out daily tasks by yourself
- if indicated, a chest x-ray, in order to see whether you have tuberculosis
- if needed, a blood test. You will most likely be tested for HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C and syphilis. Other blood tests and urine testing may be carried out if the clinician thinks it is needed

Depending on the results of your health assessment, you might be asked to have some extra examinations, for example with a psychiatrist. The health professional might also recommend that you are treated for a health conditions or vaccinated before you come to the UK. For most health conditions, testing and treatments are recommended rather than required.

You will also be offered vaccinations to ensure that you and people around you are protected against vaccine-preventable diseases, your travel to the UK is not interrupted by outbreaks of these diseases and facilitation of enrolment of your children in schools in the UK. The vaccinations are generally safe and are provided following international standards.

Before the departure to the UK, you will be requested to undergo pre-departure medical procedures, including fitness to travel evaluation and, if necessary, treatment to ensure that you travel safely and with appropriate travel arrangements.

### **Do you have to have the health assessment?**

To be considered for resettlement in the UK, you will need to undergo a health assessment. You will need to be screened for Tuberculosis, unless advised otherwise, but you may choose not to have other tests or vaccinations. If you refuse pre-departure medical procedures, it may be difficult for IOM to organize your travel.

### **Advantages of having the health assessment**

By having the health assessment, health professionals can find out if you have any health conditions and you may be treated for these quicker than if you wait until you enter the UK without the assessment. The assessment will also help to make sure that the accommodation you receive when you arrive in the UK is right for you. You can also get extra support for travelling to the UK if you need it, and be vaccinated against certain diseases, protecting you and the people around you. It will also help your doctor when you arrive in the UK and register with a GP.

### **Possible impacts of having the health assessment**

This health assessment might detect an illness or a condition you are unaware of. If this happens, the health professional will help you to get treatment, but this does not have to be carried out by them. If you would benefit from treatment but it is difficult for you to access it, including for financial reasons, you should talk to the clinician about this, as there may be ways to help you to get treatment.

If you are diagnosed with a disease of public health importance, and this has to be reported in the country that you are currently in, the health professional will need to notify the relevant health authorities about your disease.

You will not be excluded from the UK because of health issues. However, in some circumstances your travel to the UK might need to be postponed, for example if you have tuberculosis of the lung or if you cannot travel due to an unstable health condition.

### **Pregnant women and girls**

It is highly advisable that you tell your doctor that you are, or may be pregnant. This is important because some parts of the health assessment might be a risk to the unborn baby and/or to your health. If your doctor knows that you are pregnant, they will assess your health and the health of the unborn baby. They may then refer you to receive care in pregnancy before you travel, and assess whether you need any other care if your pregnancy is a high risk pregnancy. They will also tell you about any risks associated with what they are doing, and what they could do instead to reduce these risks.

You may be offered some medication against malaria and/or worms. These medications may pose a risk to your unborn baby. Please make sure your doctor knows if you are, or might be, pregnant before you take this medication.

You might be asked to do a chest X-ray to check whether you have tuberculosis of the lung. Having an X-ray can be a risk to your unborn baby, particularly in the first 3 months of your pregnancy. It is not recommended to have a chest X-ray during the first 3 months of your pregnancy. If you are pregnant, there are other tests that the health professional can do instead of having an X-ray. Please make sure your doctor knows if you are, or might be, pregnant before you do a chest X-ray.

### **Who will get the information from my health assessment**

The results of your health assessment, including personal information, health records and test results, will be shared with the Home Office. It will also be shared with other organisations such as those providing accommodation and supporting you to resettle in the UK. It will also be shared with your community doctor when you register with them. For some people it might be helpful to share their information so that they can travel safely, and the Home Office will share your information if this is the case.

If you have a condition of public health concern that is required by law to be reported, it will be notified to the health authorities of the country of health assessment.

To help IOM better prepare to your resettlement travel and coordinate with the receiving health providers after arrival, please inform IOM about any significant changes in your health, happening after the health assessment. Your information will be respected and treated as confidential. It will only be shared where there is a clear justification to do so, or where you have directly consented to information sharing, in keeping with UK data protection laws.

You will be given a paper copy of your health assessment. When you arrive in the UK, you should register with a GP soon after arrival, and take your copy of the health assessment and other medical documents, vaccination records and prescriptions with you. This information will also be shared with them when you register. The health assessment will help to identify any

issues that you have which would benefit from further care once you are in the UK. There is no cost for accessing healthcare or receiving treatment in the UK.