

Guide for patients referred to Calais Hospital for NHS 'elective' treatment

What is 'elective' treatment?

Elective treatment is pre-arranged, non-emergency care, including scheduled operations. It is provided by medical specialists in a hospital or another care setting. You will usually be referred by your GP.

This guide is for NHS patients who have chosen to have their elective consultant appointment and subsequent hospital treatment at Calais Hospital (Centre Hospitalier de Calais) in France.

Calais Hospital was built in 2012 and is a French State hospital that is equivalent to a main NHS district general hospital in England – similar to the William Harvey Hospital at Ashford.

On arrival, the hospital itself will feel quite familiar to NHS patients. A patient reports to the main reception desk and then sees a consultant, followed by diagnostic imaging – in the same way you would expect in the UK.

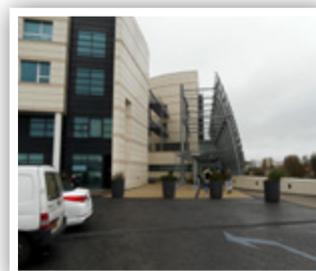
The only real differences is that the hospital will book you in on arrival. UK NHS patients will be asked to show their passports as identification. Another difference is that, depending on the consultant's opinion, the date for surgery is booked with the patient before they leave to go home after the first outpatient appointment.

First outpatient appointment

At Calais your first outpatient appointment will be with a consultant. You'll be able to have any imaging done on the same day, and also get a consultant's opinion as to whether you require surgery. If you do require treatment, this

may be carried out (if it's a minor procedure) on the same day. If it can't be done on the same day, you'll be able to go to the bookings desk after you've seen the consultant and book your surgery on a date to suit you and the hospital.

The hospital will try and carry out all of your pre-surgery hospital visits on the same day. This will include the pre-operative assessment, if the surgery is booked for a date within two weeks of your first outpatient appointment.



Calais Hospital Main Entrance

Arrival for first outpatient appointment – or a follow-up appointment, post-surgery

On your first visit to the hospital you'll need to go to the main reception desk, which is on the left as you walk in.

On the far right-hand side of the desk is a ticket machine. You simply have to take a numbered ticket and sit down in the area pictured below.

Look at the picture on the right and you'll see an illuminated number box that reads 1212. If you look closely, next to each door on each booth is a number.

With the example shown, the single number '2' on the far right-hand side of the illuminated sign is the booth number that ticket number '121' has to go to.



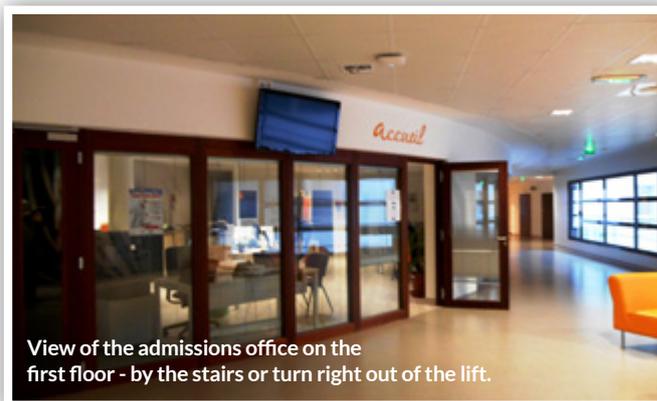
Arrival procedure at Calais Hospital.

Admission to Calais Hospital for surgery/treatment where you expect to stay at least one night

When you arrive at Calais Hospital for your surgery you go in through the main entrance door. Go past the main reception desk to the stairs, or take the lift just beyond the stairs.

Go up to the first floor, and at the top of the stairs you go into the room shown below for your admission to hospital.

The staff in here will book you in and will look after you to see that you get to the ward. When you book your surgery on your first visit, and you know you're coming back, it might be a good idea to check out the first floor location.



View of the admissions office on the first floor - by the stairs or turn right out of the lift.

Attending Calais Hospital for day surgery

If you are attending Calais Hospital for pre-booked day surgery, the entrance is situated just to the left – before the hospital main entrance that you would have used on your first visit (far right-hand side from the main car park).

The sign above the door

reads 'Hôpital de Jour' – 'jour' meaning 'day' in French. Inside, the reception for day surgery is marked 'Accueil'.

This may look as though you're walking into an office. But this is just a different way of working from having a reception

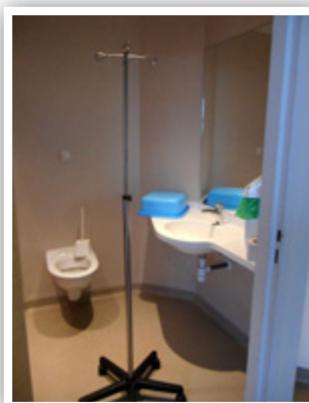
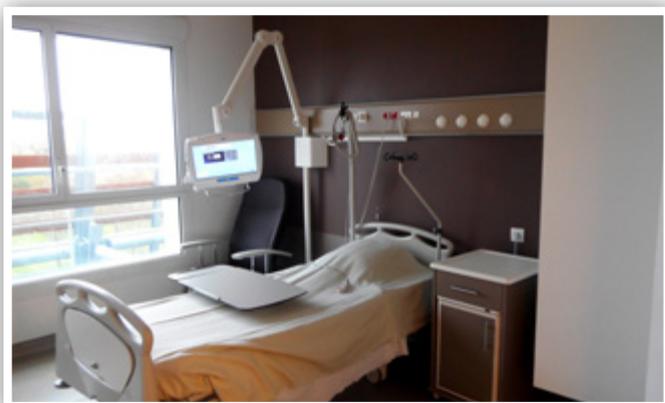
counter – and probably more private.

If you attend Calais for day surgery you are likely to find the whole process from your procedure through to your recovery very similar to what you would experience in a UK NHS hospital.



The patient accommodation if you are in Calais Hospital overnight:

Standard patient bedroom and ensuite bathroom (with shower) at Calais Hospital. Note that the bedside cabinet is a fridge.



Getting to the hospital by car

After leaving the Eurotunnel or ferry at Calais, take the A16 in the direction of Brussels. Take the exit at junction 46 for St Omer. Go around the roundabout, under the bridge and take the very first exit on your right just as you come out from under the bridge.

Note the first sign for the hospital, after you leave the Channel crossing terminals is on the exit from this roundabout, on to the road, to the hospital itself.

When you are on this road, which is the Boulevard des Justes, keep driving straight down to the end of the road and effectively past the hospital which is on your left. At the roundabout past the hospital you double back at the roundabout and then turn right into the hospital car park.

The image marked with a red line below illustrates the route off the motorway roundabout and the double back on the roundabout outside the hospital.

At the time of writing (February 2016) Google satellite view shows the hospital site as not built yet but Google street view does show it at ground level.

View on the roundabout as you come out from under the bridge - take the exit shown here



The main pedestrian entrance to the hospital is here



Viewed from above the roundabout exit pictured above is here

Direction to the ferry terminals

Key facts

One person (family member or friend) can stay with you in your hospital room for around eight euros per night. The ward staff will set up a bed and breakfast is included. This is standard practice in France. If the person staying with you would like to have meals provided by the hospital at the same time as the patient these can be provided at a cost of eight euros per meal.

For those with food allergies or intolerances, special meals can be prepared by the hospital and for this a dietician is sent to see every patient that notifies the hospital that they require special food or special regimes. Patients should email the hospital to notify them at calais.hospital@nhs.net

Television, telephone and WiFi (WiFi is pronounced 'we fee' in France) is a similar system to NHS hospitals where patients can purchase time on the built-in room facilities. Purchasing time on the system can be done at the machines located in the public corridors.

Car parking is free of charge at Calais Hospital but do not park on the verges because the hospital does level charges at those who do not park properly in a car parking space. There is an overground and an underground car park at the hospital.

Disabled parking bays are situated at various points in the car park and are more towards A&E (Urgences). Patients can be dropped off at the entrance to the hospital but the vehicle must be moved to a parking space afterwards. You must display your blue badge if you park in one of these parking bays.

Payment for extras at the hospital (similar things that are extras in an NHS hospital – not your treatment as that is funded by the NHS) will be in euros only.

Toilets in the hospital do not have a separate toilet seat as we would recognise one in the UK. People can though use the disposable toilet rim covers if they wish. This is for infection control as toilet seats are known to be sites of potential infection inside hospitals. This is also the reason that the patient bedrooms and bathrooms are so minimalist in style and why you will not usually see clutter around wards and clinical areas.

European electrical socket adaptors should be used if you intend to take anything that uses a UK 240V plug. The hospital has some but UK patients should be as self-reliant as they can be to make their stay comfortable.

Drinking water – the tap water in all the patient bedrooms and bathrooms is drinkable, the same as in a UK hospital, and is routinely tested for safety separately from the checks the water company might make prior to supply in the pipe.

Staff uniforms look very similar in that they are predominantly white but there are some differences:

White coat: Doctor.

White tunic, white trousers: Nurse, specialist nurse, midwife, physiotherapist

Green-striped tunic, white trousers: Healthcare assistant, caregiver

Blue-striped tunic, white trousers: Hospital cleaner

Grey suits: Medico-administrative assistant. Different colour badges denote the assistant who manages your administrative and medical records during your stay in hospital (orange) as an outpatient (green).

General FAQs

Q. Will I have to pay for my **own** travel costs?

A. If you are not eligible to claim your travel costs back from the NHS in the UK then you won't be able to claim them back if you choose to go to France. Treatment at a hospital in France is just the same as choosing to go to a hospital in the UK.

The best way of thinking about it is to compare it to, say, choosing to have treatment in a London hospital – although Calais is much closer there is a Channel crossing to make so it is fairly similar in time and money to travel to London.

If you are eligible to have your travel costs refunded you must contact your NHS clinical commissioning group (CCG) to obtain the details of what you can claim for before you go. This is because the rules for overseas travel are different from

claiming for travel to a UK hospital.

Q. Do staff speak English?

A. It is a requirement of the contract with the NHS that patients must be communicated to in English. Calais Hospital has trained at least 70 clinical staff to improve their English. Patients may find that on arrival the hospital will provide an English-speaking member of staff to assist you to navigate your way around the hospital. Look out for the English instructions on the reception desk alongside the NHS logo and various signs throughout the hospital that also carry the NHS logo.

...General FAQs continued

Q. What is the address of the hospital?

A. Centre Hospitalier de Calais, 1601 Boulevard des Justes, 62107 Calais, France.

Q. What is the main hospital telephone number from the UK and from within France?

A. From the UK you dial 0033 3 21 46 33 33. From within France you dial 03 21 46 33 33. The answer you will get on this number will invite you to make a selection to speak to the English-speaking staff.

Q. Who arranges my first appointment with Calais Hospital?

A. Your GP has referred you to Calais Hospital for your consultant opinion and/or procedure just as they would with any other hospital where your treatment is funded by the NHS. Calais Hospital has a secure NHS email account the same as UK NHS hospitals have.

The only difference is that the hospital itself is in France. The hospital may send you a letter but it is likely that they will contact you by phone. The process appears to be much faster in France.

If you become unsure about this can either call the hospital on the number above or email them at calais.hospital@nhs.net

Q. For any extras at the hospital, can I pay in pounds sterling?

A. No – take enough euros with you.

Q. Will I have to go back to Calais for my follow-up appointment?

A. It depends on what your treatment you have carried out but in general, yes. It is the same as if you had chosen to go to a hospital in London for treatment. For some procedures a follow-up phone or Skype call may be all that is needed.

Q. Is there a canteen that can be used by visitors and patients, similar to the ones in a NHS hospital in the UK?

A. No, there is only a coffee, pastry and newspaper kiosk in the main hospital reception. The kiosk has a few tables and is similar to what you would find at a French railway station. Family members who are staying with an inpatient can pay for meals at a cost of eight euros per meal – note though that the overnight charge for a person staying in the room with the patient is eight euros which includes breakfast. Note that meals are only served when the patients get fed and not as a hotel service.

The patient bedrooms do have a fridge built in to the bedside cabinet and so you can take some familiar cold food or non-alcoholic drinks if that will make your stay more comfortable for the short time you will be in hospital.

Q. What should I bring if I am staying overnight?

A. In France, patients tend to be self-reliant and take all their own wash kit and other personal items including pyjamas/clothing normally worn in bed, dressing gown and their own towels and soap to the hospital. Patients should also bring their own toothbrushes and toothpaste and take a pack of tissues.

In general, if you think about what you would take to a basic hotel for a few nights – adding towels and all your own wash kit – you won't go far wrong. If you are a tea/coffee drinker you might also want to think about making your own tea/coffee in the room by taking a travel kettle, plus the ingredients.

Each room has a fridge built in to the bedside locker so that you can chill milk or anything else you might want to take, to make your stay a little more comfortable. Remember to take a European plug adaptor.

Q. Is it better to catch the ferry to France, or travel using Eurotunnel?

A. It depends on what you are having done. On the Eurotunnel, you don't have to get out of the vehicle you're travelling in.

This might be a better thing if you have had a procedure where your mobility may be a little limited immediately after you have been discharged home, particularly if you've had a hip or lower limb operation or had abdominal surgery. These procedures might make you feel uncomfortable on moving for a couple of days afterwards.

On the ferry, passengers in vehicles have to get out and make their way up to the decks. While there are lifts on board from the car decks, passengers can inform the ferry company beforehand if they are likely to need assistance. The ferry companies are well practised in assisting people who have a mobility problem, and patients should consider which option might suit them best.

For patients who may have mobility problems in the days after surgery, the surgeon may advise against returning on a boat if the tunnel option is available.

By foot

If you are using public transport to get to the hospital, you can only travel on foot across the Channel either on P&O Ferries or Eurostar to Calais Frethun. But please be mindful that it may not be suitable for the journey home after surgery, depending on what procedure has been carried out.

For example if you have had hand surgery then you might be alright but if you have had knee surgery you probably won't be capable of making it back on public transport. A way of considering this is to imagine how you would get home if you had chosen to go to a London hospital for your treatment.