

Your responsibilities as a patient:

Medical and Dental Centre appointment: Appointments need to be made as early in the day as possible. If you need to cancel or rearrange do so as soon as possible, so your time can be used for someone else. Medical and Dental Centres operate policies about non-smoking and zero tolerance to violence or aggression.

Admissions or Outpatients appointments: Please confirm you will be attending by phoning your Medical Centre 7 days in advance. If you need to cancel or rearrange, you should give at least **5 working days** notice before the appointment. Time and money is wasted if you do not attend. If you cancel for personal reasons we cannot guarantee another appointment within Charter waiting times.

If you are admitted to a DGP: Remember some things are bound to be different. The staff will be working hard to make you comfortable in their hospital, and you should respect the efforts they are making. Do not be afraid to ask for what you need, or to refer to these standards. If you find something you think needs changing for other British patients, let the Hospital Operations Manager know, then let us know.

If you are admitted to a non-DGP in an emergency: You have a responsibility to inform your Unit as soon as possible so that support can be provided to you, and BFG Health Service will know to authorise payment of the bill for your treatment. If you incur charges to which you are not entitled (e.g. Private Medicine rates) you may become liable to pay these charges. Please give your Unit address rather than private address to the non-DGP staff. You may receive bills if you do not do this, if you receive any bills, please contact your local Medical Centre promptly. If you do not do so, it is likely that the German hospital may initiate legal action against you. In Germany, late payment automatically triggers legal action.

Bills and Dues: If you are required to contribute to costs, pay on time so that time needed for developing health services is not wasted chasing you.

Representing the British Forces: Remember too, that we are using civilian hospitals and that you are representing the British Forces when you are there. All BFG patients continue to be covered by Status of Forces Agreement whilst in hospital and remain subject to the same disciplinary chain when they are outside hospital.

Courtesy and Respect: Treat us with the same courtesy and respect that you expect to receive from us. Any abuse, whether physical or verbal, against any member of Staff will not be tolerated.

How you can help us improve health services:

Everyone working in BFG Health Service wants to make BFG health care the best possible. The BFG Health Service takes its responsibilities for monitoring and ensuring quality seriously. Medical and Dental Centres and hospitals are visited frequently to see how things are running.

However we need you to tell us your views too. Please write and tell us about your experiences – good as well as bad.

We are running continuous Patient Quality of Care Survey based on the standards described in this booklet. Please complete the questionnaire if you are invited to take part.

If you believe that the service you received is in any way sub-standard, please ask for the "How to complain" leaflet. This is available from your hospital or Medical or Dental Centre manager.

Maximum Waiting Times for Primary Care:

Speciality	Routine Appointment	Urgent Appointment
Access to GP Services for all entitled personnel during medical centre opening hours.	Routine cases to be seen within 3 working days of requesting an appointment.	Urgent cases to be seen within 24 hours of request.
Community Midwifery Service.	Initial appointment with midwife within 5 working days.	Urgent (face to face) appointment within 24 hours.
Specialist Community Public Health Nursing Service.	Antenatal and postnatal contact within 10 working days.	
Community Paediatric Service.	Contact within 5 days of receipt of written referral.	Referral to DGP.
Community Mental Health Services (CMHS).	Routine referrals from a GP to the CMHS within 10 working days. Child and Adolescent Mental Health appointment within 10 working days following an appropriate referral.	Urgent referrals from a GP to the CMHS within 2 working days.
Speech and Language Therapy.	Initial appointment within 8 weeks.	1. Self referral. 2. Referral to DGP.
Genito-Urinary Medicine Service.	Routine appointment within 5 weeks. Colposcopy appointment within 25 working days of new referral.	Urgent appointment within 7 days.
Physiotherapy Service - GP Referrals.	GP referrals – routine referrals to Primary Care Rehabilitation Facility (PCRF) to be seen within 5 working days. Routine referrals - to Regional Rehabilitation Unit (RRU) to be seen within 8 weeks.	Urgent referrals to be seen within 2 working days.
Physiotherapy Service - Self Referral.	Self Referrals – routine referrals to PCRF to be seen within 5 working days.	Urgent referrals to be seen within 2 working days.

Maximum Waiting Times for Secondary Care:

Speciality	From GP to Outpatient	From Outpatient to Inpatient
All, except those shown below: Paediatric Surgery Neurology/Neurosurgery Rheumatology Urology ENT Dermatology	4 weeks 12 weeks 8 weeks 8 weeks 8 weeks 4 weeks 4 weeks	6 weeks 12 weeks 8 weeks 8 weeks 8 weeks 8 weeks 8 weeks
BFG HS Retained Services: Genito-Urinary Medicine Colposcopy	Nil (same day appointment) Urgent: 7 days Routine: 4-5 weeks depending on clinical need	
Visiting Services by UK based consultants: Neurology Plastic Surgery Rheumatology & Rehabilitation	12 weeks 24 weeks 12 weeks	

The standards listed in the tables above will be monitored by recording monthly and reporting annually on the number of patients not offered an appointment at the appropriate time, and the average wait for those in excess of specified times.

Times will be measured from the day you are seen by your GP.



BFG Health Service is committed to working continuously to improve the quality of health care available whilst you are living and working in Germany. This leaflet sets out entitled patients rights to health services¹, and describes the standard of care you are entitled to receive.

Copies should be available in your Medical and Dental Centre waiting room, with your inpatient or outpatient information and, on request, in all Designated German Provider (DGP) hospitals routinely used in BFG.

¹) As defined in SIBAG 3303.

Health services in Germany is provided for military personnel based in Germany, the civilian support, their dependants and other entitled personnel as determined from time to time by UKSC(G). Currently the health care is provided through a partnership comprising, SSAFA Forces Help and Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Hospital trust.

Hospital care is mainly provided by the main DGP hospitals at:

- AKH Viersen and St Cornelius, Dülken.
- Evangelisches Krankenhaus Bielefeld (the Gilead)
- Henriettenstiftung in Hannover.
- Klinikum Osnabrück.
- St Vincenz Krankenhaus GmbH in Paderborn.

When it is required, we use other hospitals in Germany, Centre for Defence Medicine in Birmingham and other Defence Medical Services Facilities in the UK and the NHS.

Primary and community care services are broadly similar to that provided in the UK with health professionals offering a range of care from local Medical and Dental Centres. Services include occupational health and a full range of child and adult health screening and immunisation programmes. Standards are set that form part of the standing objectives for BFG Health Service upon which performance is judged.

Your Rights:

When you are in Germany, you and your family are entitled to similar standards of health care as applicable to you when you are based in the UK. Clinical care within a DGP is not the same as the UK but is of an equivalent standard.

Your rights are:

1. To receive health care at no personal cost at the time you receive it in primary care and to secondary care on referral from your General or Dental Practitioner, or in a genuine emergency (although you may later have to pay charges as in the UK e.g. for dental treatment or appliances).
2. To be registered with a General and Dental Practice near where you live or work.
3. To receive urgent or emergency medical care at any time.
4. To be referred to a specialist when your GP thinks it is necessary, and have ready access to a second opinion acceptable to you if considered necessary either at one of the German hospitals or at a hospital in the UK.
5. To be given a clear explanation by your specialist of any treatment proposed for you, including the risks involved and possible alternative treatments.
6. To proceed with any procedure or treatment only with your consent. Consent forms will normally be available in English and you will have access to a Hospital Liaison Officer.
7. To have access to information about your treatment, and to know that staff involved in your care are required to keep information about you confidential.
8. To have any relative or friend you consent to be kept informed about your condition.
9. At Primary Care, you may be asked to take part in medical research or medical student training. You can choose whether to take part without it affecting your treatment in any way.
10. To be treated by all members of Staff as individuals and given courtesy and respect at all times, irrespective of rank, ethnic origin, religious belief, personal attributes or the nature of patient health problems.

Our Standards:

BFG Health Service Standards describe the quality of care to be provided and which you should expect. Let us know if the care you receive fall below these expectations and we will do our best to ensure things improve.

A Fast Service:

- You will be seen within 24 hours by a health professional if you attend the Medical or Dental Centre as an urgent case.
- You will be seen within 20 minutes of a routine appointment time at the Medical or Dental Centre, or told why there is a delay.
- Under normal circumstances, you will receive details of any further appointment you may need for inpatient or outpatient treatment within 5 days of seeing your doctor or dentist. Usually you will receive your outpatient appointment when you see your General or Dental Practitioner. The 5 day time-frame is sometimes exceeded for specialities such as paediatrics or when UK referrals are sent directly to patients.
- You will receive an initial outpatient appointment within the times shown in the table over. If the next routine appointment time is outside the standard, then individual arrangements will be made if you wish and it is feasible to do so.
- You will be seen within 30 minutes of your appointment time in the Outpatients Department, or be told why there is a delay.
- You will receive an admission date within the times shown in the table over. If the next routine admission is outside these standards, then individual arrangements will be made if you wish and it is feasible. (If you are referred to a NHS hospital, the waiting times on their waiting list apply to you).
- If your admission is cancelled by the hospital, you will normally be admitted within 4 weeks.

A service for Authorised Personnel:

If you go to one of the five designated German Hospitals:

- You will receive full information in English about the hospital you are attending.
- There will either be signs in English showing you where to go or you will be provided with written instructions in English.
- If you are admitted during normal working hours, you will be assisted through the admission process either by an English speaking member of the hospital staff or with the assistance of a Hospital Liaison Officer.
- You will have access to an English speaking Hospital Liaison Officer to explain what is going on, assist you in understanding the consent to treatment forms and to assist in communications with medical and nursing staff. This service is available routinely during normal hours, and when necessary out of hours.
- You will be able to choose British-style food.
- You will normally have access to English language television.
- You will be able to obtain English newspapers.
- During investigations and treatment either in departments or on the ward, screens and curtains are available to you on request to protect your privacy and dignity.

A Patient Support Service is also available if you are admitted to a non-designated German hospital. Patients must contact their unit so that BFG Health Service is aware of the admission. A Hospital Liaison Officer will then either visit you if you are within the local garrison area or make telephone contact with you within 24 hours of notification (during normal working hours; Monday to Friday between 0800–1600 hrs).

The contractual standards for the British service apply only to the main DGP hospitals. If you are admitted to another German hospital, perhaps as an emergency, the BFG Health Service and the Garrisons will do what they can to support you.

A Service Sensitive to Your Needs:

Within the UK-based elements of the service, a named health professional will always be in charge of your case, and the staff you meet face to face will wear name badges or identify themselves to you.

You will have the opportunity to discuss your case with the medical, dental or nursing staff. With your consent, your relatives may discuss your case with the staff.

You will be advised on the frequency of dental examinations to meet your particular needs, either military or civilian.

If you are having a baby, you will have access to a British registered midwife in the community. Deliveries are carried out by German hospital health practitioners.

If you need psychiatric help, you will be treated in the community at an in-patient unit with English speaking staff.

Military Fitness

We provide a dental service to all military personnel to promote the highest possible levels of dental health.

We are committed to providing a vaccination and immunisation service which maintains a high level of protection of serving personnel.

The performance of both these services is reported to the chain of command.

We will review the cases of all personnel who are downgraded on a regular basis to determine what (additional) action can be taken to return military personnel to a normal category and combat readiness.

A service with good follow-up:

On discharge from the DGP, you will receive details of any appointments you need for further treatment or follow-up at the out-patients department or within 2 days of your discharge. You will also be advised if your General Practitioner or dentist should provide your follow up. If you have not received details then you should contact your Medical or Dental Centre for further advice.

You will be given a Discharge Note on discharge which has valuable information for your General or Dental Practitioner and should be taken directly to the Medical or Dental Centre. Your doctor or dentist will receive a full summary of your care in English normally within 28 days.

Patients discharged from non-DGPs should contact their General or Dental Practitioner as soon as possible after discharge to arrange follow-up. Follow-up may be in a DGP rather than the non-DGP hospital.

The drugs (normally 5 days supply) you need to continue your treatment will be available without charge either from the DGP or from BFG pharmacies.

Your comments on the care you receive will be welcomed, kept confidential, and considered with care.

If you make a written complaint, it will be acknowledged in 2 working days of receipt, and normally you will receive a full written response within 28 days (21 days at primary care). If the investigation of the complaint involves a larger number of people you will be kept informed of progress.