

**Overseas Students
Access and Entitlement
to Healthcare**

October 2015

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1. “Executive Summary”

- Healthwatch Manchester investigated the understanding of access and entitlements to healthcare by overseas students.
- 92 overseas students registered with higher education establishments in Manchester responded to our survey during October 2014 - February 2015.
- The majority of respondents reported a good understanding of what the NHS provides as well as the purpose of Accident and Emergency departments, GPs and dentists. This was evidenced by their categorisation of which services could help with a list of specific ailments and conditions.
- The majority of respondents showed good understanding of which healthcare providers require registration before services can be accessed.
- Gaps in awareness include free and urgent need services such as the Walk-in Centres and Dental Hospital.
- There were mixed perceptions regarding services which are free of charge and of what is required to access them.
- Healthwatch Manchester will create stronger relationships with higher educational establishments and work with them to increase awareness of access and entitlement. This will also include work with any counterpart organisations overseas.

2. “Introduction”

- This report aims to provide a picture of overseas’ students’ perception regarding their entitlement and access to statutory health and social care services in Manchester.
- This report makes recommendations regarding improving overseas students’ access to information about the healthcare services available to them while studying in the UK.

3. “Background & Rationale”

- Healthwatch Manchester received a number of complaints and concerns from local overseas students’ who were not aware of their access and entitlement to healthcare services and had therefore used private healthcare for issues such as dental work. Aside from occurring costs, this also took them out of using the NHS and its safety measures.
- There are over approximately 98,000 students in Manchester at any one time. An estimated 17% of students are from overseas¹.
- After some investigation Healthwatch Manchester discovered there is little or no guidance for overseas’ students’ when they arrive in the UK regarding access and entitlement to health and social care services. Healthwatch Manchester has a duty to inform and signpost people regarding local statutory health and care services. Healthwatch Manchester decided that further investigation was required in order to provide a clearer picture regarding access to health and care services for overseas’ students’ in Manchester. For this reason, a survey was designed and formulated and delivered through various networks and distribution channels



¹ Ref: Higher Education Statistics Agency

4. “Methodology”

- Our survey ran online from October 2014 - February 2015 and gathered 92 responses from overseas’ students registered with higher education establishments in Manchester.
- Healthwatch Manchester volunteers visited the University of Manchester in summer 2014 on a number of occasions. Paper versions of the survey were available on request.
- The results from the surveys were collated at the Healthwatch Manchester office.

5. “Key Findings”

- Making contact with overseas students proved difficult and the sample size is low.
- Respondents showed a good understanding of access and entitlement to GPs, Accident & Emergency Services (A&E) and Dentists.
- There is some confusion regarding registration for services particularly A&E and the Dental Hospital.
- Almost 30% of respondents were unaware of which services are free of charge.
- 65% of respondents consider NHS services to be important to them
- The biggest gaps in respondents’ awareness are in the Dental Hospitals and Walk-in-Centres. (See question 10 & 11)
- 20-30% of respondents said that they found access to information regarding NHS services very difficult. A worrying 23% reported that there were barriers to finding out more about the NHS services.
- A significant number of respondents indicated they were more likely to register with an NHS provider after completing this survey. A significant number of respondents’ reported that completing the survey improved their knowledge of their entitlement to free healthcare.

Q16-22 Demographics of where students are from and durations of course.

A table to show students original residency and the duration for the course of study

How long have you lived in the UK?	Full-time course?	Course last longer than 6-months?	From a country in the EEA?	Have health insurance card (EHIC)?	Course fully funded by government? (For Non-EEA students only)	Course fully funded by government? (For EEA students only)
<1 year = 40%	97% = yes	50% - Yes	100%	100% - Yes	0%	0%
1-2 years = 22%	3% - No	50%- No				
2-3 years = 27%						
>3-years = 11%						

This table shows 40% of overseas students who lived in the UK for less than a year were studying a full-time course (97%).

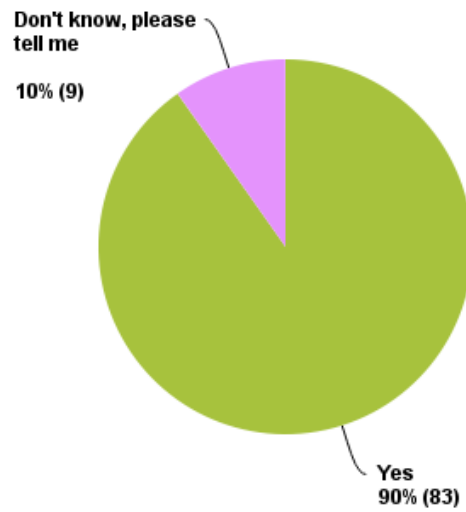
6. “Recommendations”

- Healthwatch Manchester needs to carry out further research in order to provide a clearer picture of overseas students’ perceived access and entitlement to health and care services.
- Work needs to be done to increase awareness around access and entitlement through the Healthwatch Manchester information and sign-posting role.
- Awareness-raising initiatives should include an out-reach service which engages on a face-to-face basis with overseas students. This will require resourcing.
- Healthwatch Manchester will create stronger relationships with local higher education establishments and seek to work collaboratively with them.
- Healthwatch Manchester will seek to support establishments overseas through which awareness raising of access and entitlement to healthcare services is possible before students leave for England.

7. "Full survey results"

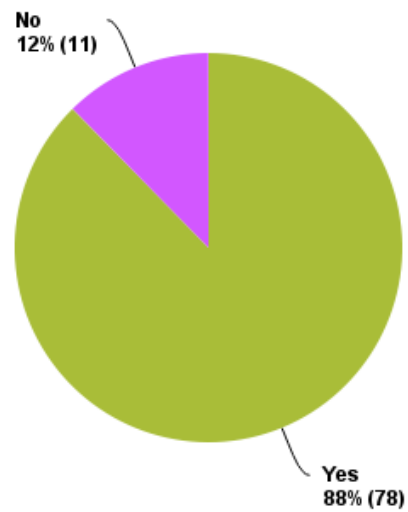
Q1 Do you understand what the NHS is?

Answered: 92 Skipped: 0



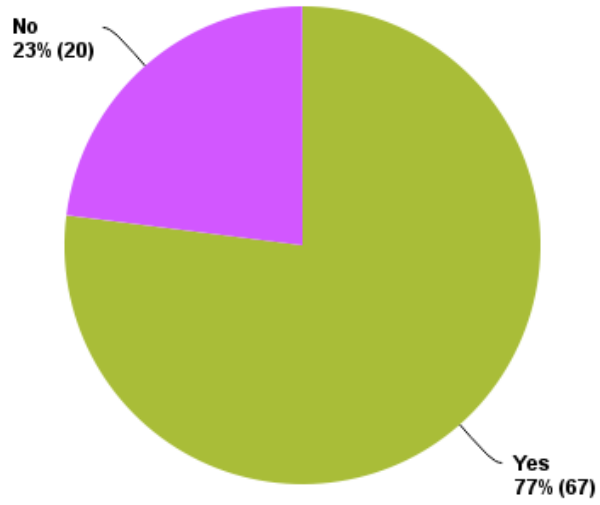
Q2 Do you know what a GP (General Practitioner) does?

Answered: 89 Skipped: 3



Q3 Do you know what an A&E (Accident and emergency service) does?

Answered: 87 Skipped: 5



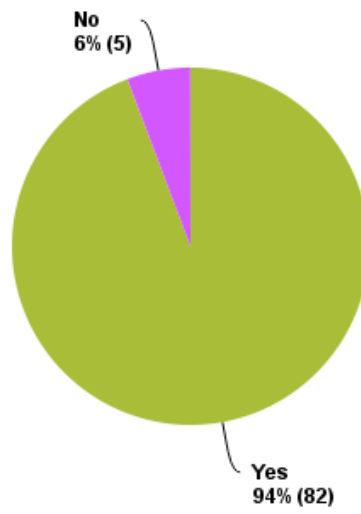
Q4 Do you know what a walk-in centre does?

Answered: 87 Skipped: 5



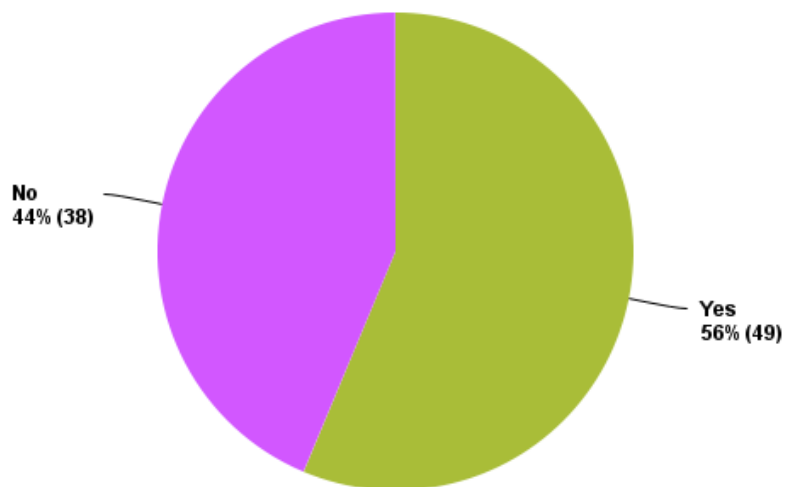
Q5 Do you know what a dentist does?

Answered: 87 Skipped: 5

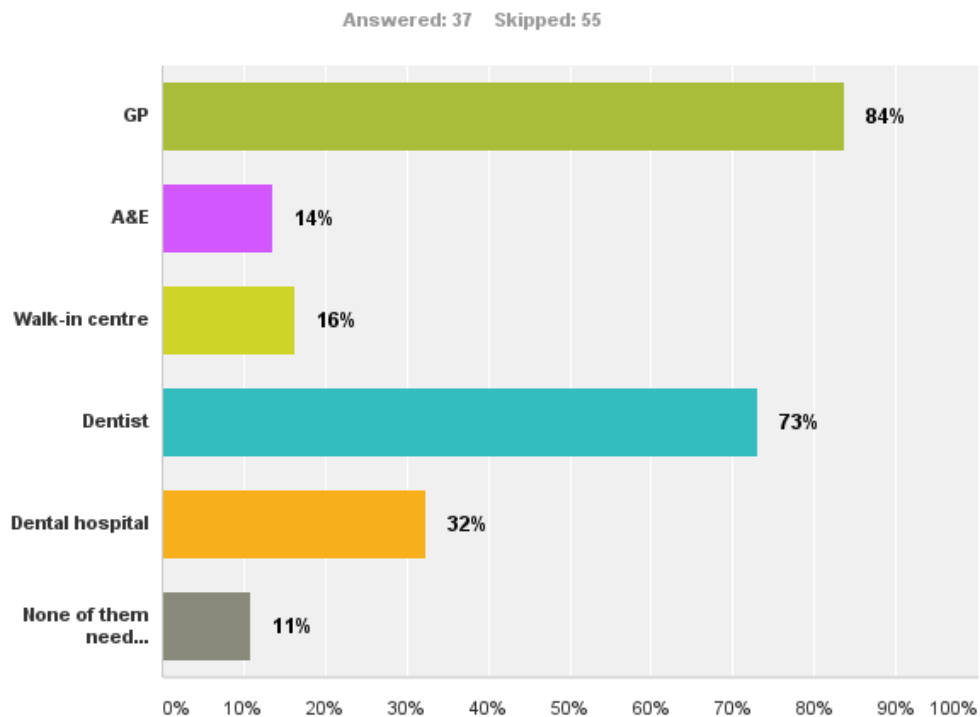


Q6 Do you know what a dental hospital does?

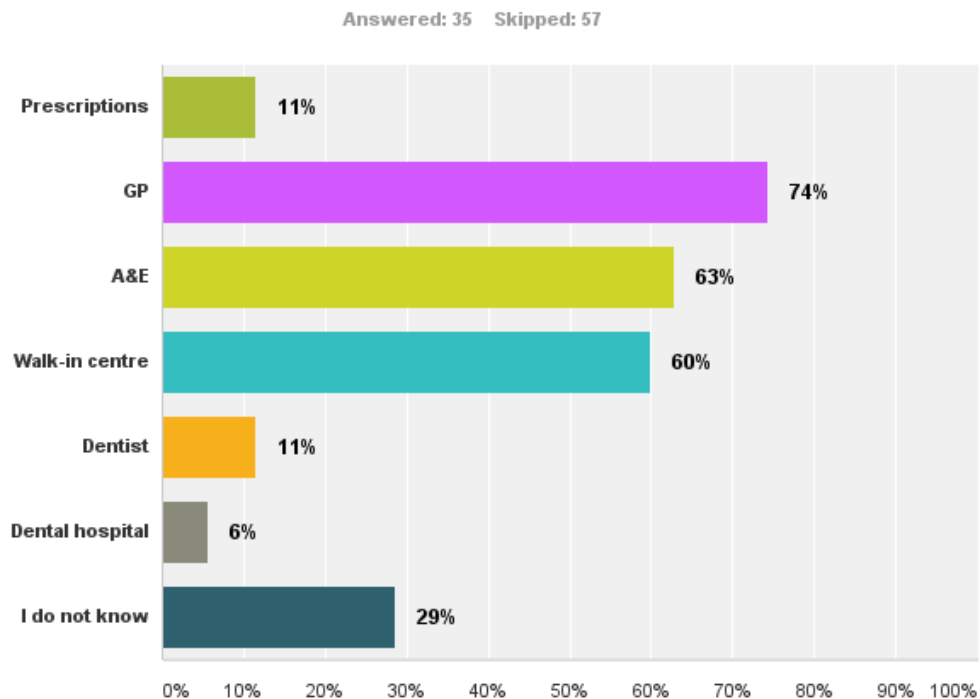
Answered: 87 Skipped: 5



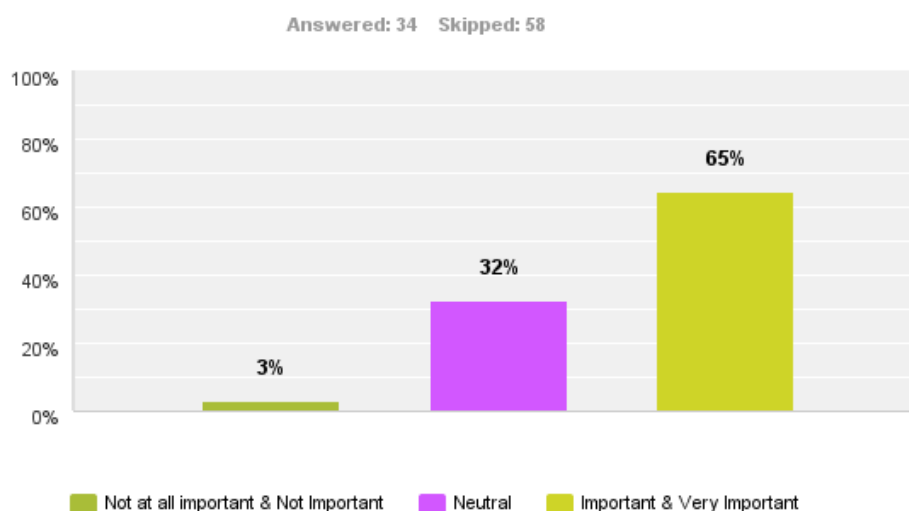
Q7 Which of the following requires registration to receive treatment?
 (registration is the process by which a person is registered into the system and health professionals can have access to patients profiles)



Q8 Which of the following do you think are free of charge?
 (You can tick more than one option)



Q9 How important are health care services (NHS) to you?



Q10 Which of the following are provided by these services (you can tick more than one for each)

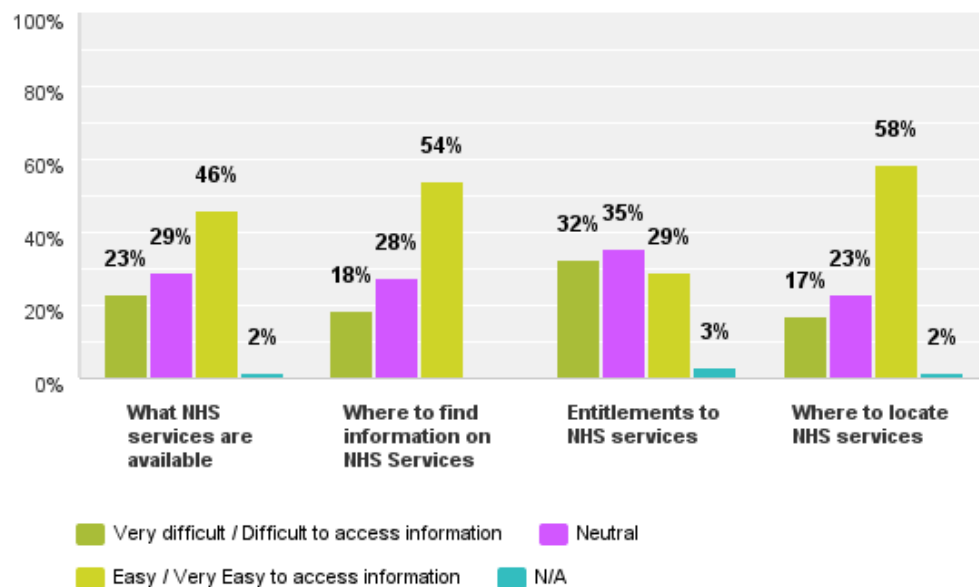
Answer Options	GP %	A&E %	Walk-in centre %	Dentist %	Dental hospital %	I do not know %	Response Count
Severe bleeding that cannot be stopped	9	94	16	2	3	0	64
Vaccinations	95	2	42	0	0	0	62
Scaling and polishing teeth	3	0	0	94	33	0	63
Depression	86	6	22	2	2	8	63
Prescriptions for medicines	89	24	43	24	19	3	63
Replacements of crowns and fillings	3	3	2	69	60	5	62
Acute confused state and fits that are not stopping	23	76	26	2	3	8	62
Slipped disc (severe back pain)	48	77	32	0	0	0	62
Vomiting and diarrhoea	70	43	63	0	0	0	63
Pregnancy testing	87	6	56	0	0	6	62
Mouth inspections	22	2	8	83	33	2	63
Blood pressure checks	95	16	41	2	3	0	61
Minor burns and strains	62	29	65	2	0	0	63
Glandular fever	70	31	34	0	0	7	61
Fractures and lacerations	23	90	20	0	0	0	61
Dental abscess (a mouth bacterial infection)	6	8	2	70	62	2	63
Loss of consciousness	13	89	8	0	2	5	63
<i>answered question</i>							65
<i>skipped question</i>							27
Green indicates correct answer option							
Purple indicates incorrect answer option chosen by at least a third of respondents							

Q11 Where would you go if you had the following problems?
(you can tick more than one for each)

Answer Options	GP	A&E	Walk-in centre	Dentist	Dental hospital	I do not know	Response Count
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Toothache	6	0	3	94	15	2	65
Headache	81	6	47	2	0	3	64
Chest pains	49	58	35	0	0	2	65
Sickness (nausea)	75	20	55	0	0	2	64
A broken arm	11	89	22	0	0	2	64
Dizziness (being light-headed)	63	25	56	0	0	2	63
<i>answered question</i>							65
<i>skipped question</i>							27

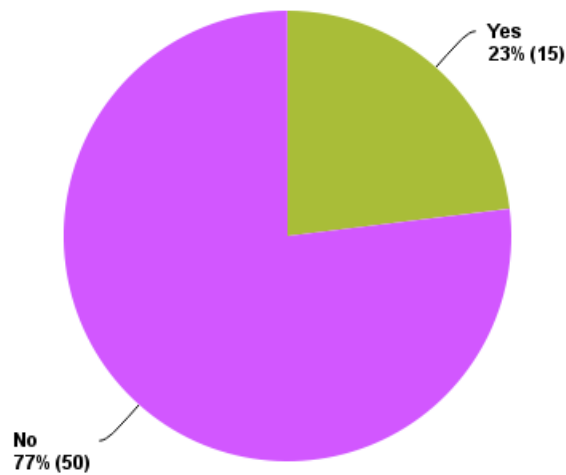
Q12 How accessible is information on the following NHS topics?

Answered: 65 Skipped: 27



Q13 Do you think that there are any barriers to finding out more about NHS services?

Answered: 65 Skipped: 27



Q14 Please give further information about what you think the barriers are to finding out more about NHS services

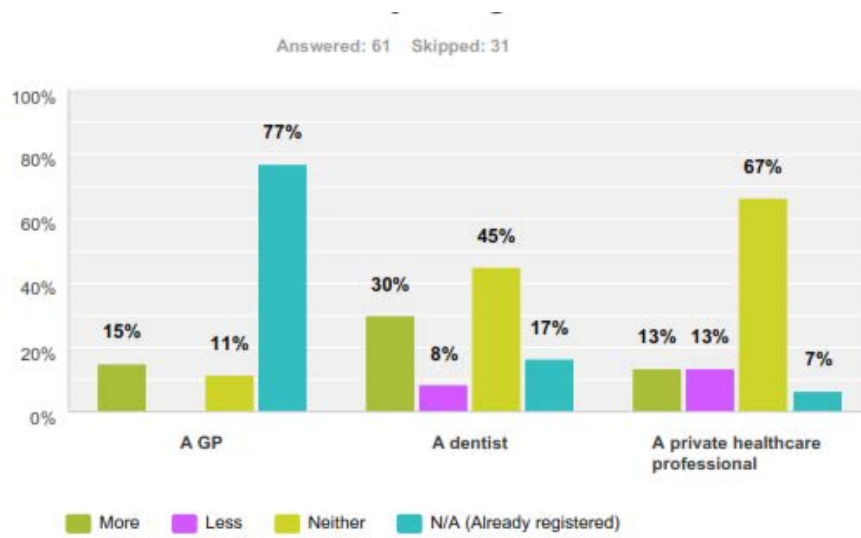
See appendix for comments

Q15 What would be the best way for Healthwatch Manchester to provide you with information about NHS services?

- Respondents expressed a variety of methods for receiving information about the NHS with the most common being E-mail.
- A few respondents had stated that the information should be provided through web communication, printed material and University health talks.

Q16 - 22 are covered in the demographic table on page 4.

Q23 After completing this survey are you more or less likely to register with:



Q24 Has this survey helped you with your knowledge of your entitlements to free healthcare?

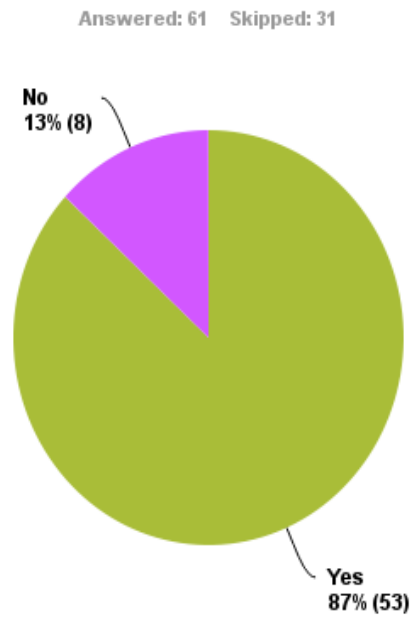


Table showing the demographic and characteristics of respondents
(summary of Q.27 to Q.34)

<i>GENDER</i>	Male Female	36% 64%
<i>RELATIONSHIP STATUS</i>	Single Married Divorced	91% 7% 2%
<i>AGE</i>	18 - 24 25 - 34 35 - 44 45 - 54	72% 23% 2% 3%
<i>DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF DISABLED?</i>	Yes No	3% 97%
<i>RELIGION/BELIEF</i>	Christian Muslim Buddhist Hindu Non-religious	31% 19% 12% 2% 36%
<i>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</i>	Heterosexual/straight Gay man Lesbian/gay woman Bisexual	88% 2% 2% 8%
<i>ETHNIC ORIGIN</i>	White British White Irish White European Other White Black African Pakistani Other Asian Other Mixed Chinese	3% 3% 22% 7% 10% 2% 17% 2% 26%

Appendix

Q.14 Please give further information about what you think the barriers are to finding out more about NHS services.

Responses	
1	With limited knowledge of the NHS prior to arriving in the UK students are unsure of where to look and what they qualify for. More information should be given during orientation.
2	i m not quite sure about the NHS system here in the UK.
3	Nothing to tell you the cost. i personally need to go to the dentist with my teeth but i am put off because i don't know the cost or if there even is a cost
4	Need more helping from Uni
5	i don't know
6	Long time to wait
7	no brochures to give information about services available to international students and how much they would cost
8	You forgot all about pharmacy
9	Should list all service available in GP/A&E/Walking Centre/Dentist/Dental Hospital
10	Not sure
11	Schools need to present a detailed presentation about NHS service
12	One is not sure for what one is entitled to under NHS
13	How to get appointments with GP
14	Website not clear enough. Easy to forget who the registered GP is, since the GP is only assigned to students upon their arrival.

References

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UK council for international student affairs. (2015). Who is entitled to free treatment before 6 April 2015? <http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Study-work--more/Health-and-healthcare/Who-is-entitled-to-free-hospital-treatment-before-6-April-2015/>.

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