

NHS funded patient transport

A guide for patients



What is the patient transport service?

Patients travelling to NHS non-emergency healthcare are normally expected to make their own way, using their own transport or the range of public, community or voluntary transport available locally.

Some people may be eligible for NHS-funded patient transport on health grounds if they meet the criteria for support or assistance on or after their journey. Eligibility criteria are in place to ensure that anyone with a genuine need can access the services they require.

A person's eligibility for NHS-funded patient transport services will be assessed against medical or financial eligibility criteria. This will ensure that everyone is treated fairly. For more information, visit:

www.kernowccg.nhs.uk/patient-transport

Frequent travellers

NHS Kernow has identified that anyone who is a frequent traveller for a specific medical condition may also need access to a NHS-funded transport service if they need to attend hospital:

- At least three times a week for a sustained course of treatment lasting a minimum of six weeks; or,
- At least six times a month for a sustained course of treatment lasting a minimum of three months.

Who can use the service?

A person's eligibility for NHS-funded patient transport services will be assessed against the following nationally and clinically defined eligibility criteria:

- A medical condition that requires the skills or support of patient transport staff, on or after the journey, to the extent that it would be detrimental to their condition or recovery if they were to travel by any other means.
- A medical condition that impacts on their mobility, to such an extent that they would be unable to access healthcare, and it would be detrimental to the patient's condition or recovery to travel by any other means.

You can't use the NHS-funded patient transport service if:

- You are usually able, for the purpose of daily living, to travel in a private car (eg a relative, friends or neighbour's car) or on public transport (eg a bus, train, volunteer car service or taxi).
- You are travelling for private treatment funded by yourself.
- The transport is for social need (eg because a patient does not have their own car).
- The transport is to primary care services eg GP or dentist; or
- You require an urgent or 999 response.
- You are visiting someone in hospital.



Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust
centralised booking office: **01872 252211**
(open 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday
and 9.30am to 5pm on weekends and bank holidays)

I think I might be eligible, what should I do now?

You should call the centralised booking office on **01872 252211** (open 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9.30am to 5pm on weekends and bank holidays), and someone will be able to arrange transport, subject to eligibility criteria being satisfied.

Anyone travelling from the Isles of Scilly to the mainland for non-emergency appointments for treatment should also call the centralised booking service on **01872 252211**.

*Do you live on the
Isles of Scilly?*



If I am eligible...

When will I be collected by the transport service?

Your transport will be with you in plenty of time so that you arrive promptly. If you're being discharged from hospital, you'll be advised when transport will be available to take you home.



*Your pick-up time might be a lot
earlier than your appointment*





Will I be taken straight there?

You should be aware that your pick-up time could well be in advance of your appointment time as the vehicle may be collecting other people. It's also worth remembering that on the journey home after discharge from hospital, you may not be taken straight to your destination. We will make every effort to minimise journey times wherever possible.

Can I bring someone with me?

You can travel with an escort if one of the following applies:

- Your medical condition is such that you require constant supervision for safety (the escort must be able to meet your medical need and it should be established whether a healthcare professional would not be the preferred option).
- You have mental health problems that prevent you travelling alone.
- You are younger than 16 years.
- You have significant communication difficulties, including learning difficulties, impaired sight or is hard of hearing (where a patient has communication difficulties the escort should be able to provide a positive benefit in ensuring the patient can understand anything being said to them by the ambulance crew; for example, through the use of sign language where the patient is hard of hearing).

If you think any of the criteria apply to you, then you may be eligible to be accompanied.





I'm not eligible for the patient transport service on medical grounds. Can I claim help with my travel costs?

If you receive income-related benefits or if you have a low income, you may be able to get help with all or some of your travel costs under the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme. You must meet three conditions:

1. At the time of their appointment you or your partner (including civil partners) must be in receipt of one of the qualifying allowances or benefits.
2. You must have a referral from a health care professional for a specialist planned appointment or to a hospital for further NHS-funded treatment or tests.
3. Your appointment must be on a separate visit to when the referral was made.

For more information on the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme, please visit bit.ly/NHS-HTCS or use the national health costs advice line on **0845 850 1166** or **0300 330 1343**.

If you are not on the specified benefits but have a low income, you may still be eligible for a full or partial refund through the NHS low income scheme.

 www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-low-income-scheme



How can I get further information?

The hospital where you are receiving treatment can also advise you about making a travel costs claim (at most hospitals, this will be general office or cashier's office) and they will be able to supply the correct forms.

Can I claim if I am visiting someone in hospital?

No. The NHS scheme does not cover visitors.

I live in an area where I can't access public transport easily. Are there any options for me?

There are a number of community transport services within Cornwall that can be accessed. For more information, please visit bit.ly/30X05sT and search for 'community transport schemes'. Please note there is a charge to patients for these services.

What should I do if I am not happy with a decision that has been made?

If you are unhappy with a decision to refuse non-emergency patient transport; the reimbursement of travel costs, or the way the policy has been applied to your individual circumstances, you can appeal to the centralised booking service where it will be reviewed by a senior manager.

Please contact **01872 252211** for further details of the appeals process.

Need more information on patient transport?

Contact the centralised booking office on **01872 252211** (open 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9.30am to 5pm on weekends and bank holidays).

Visit www.kernowccg.nhs.uk/patient-transport



To get this information in another format call:

 **01726 627800**

Contact NHS Kernow:

 01726 627800

 kccg.contactus@nhs.net

 www.kernowccg.nhs.uk