

## Patient Transport

### Overview

In an emergency situation, transport to a hospital will be provided by ambulance. Where a patient requires transport to another hospital site from Liverpool Women's in an emergency this will be provided by ambulance.

Outside of an emergency, it is the patient's responsibility to make their own way to and from hospital for patient episodes of all types, including outpatients' appointments, elective admissions, and discharge from hospital. This applies even for long distance travel or if the attendance is urgent.

Where there are patients on low income or in receipt of qualifying benefits or allowances, an application for reimbursement can be made for part or full costs incurred in travelling to receive certain NHS services. This is obtained through the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS).

Where a patient's medical condition means that they cannot make their own travel arrangements, transport will be provided by the Trust. This includes urgent transfer to another hospital where the patient is unable to make their own way and neonatal transport.

If a patient is referred to hospital or other NHS premises for specialist NHS treatment or diagnostic tests by a doctor or another primary care health professional, the patient may be able to claim a refund of reasonable travel costs under the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS). This refund will be given by the receiving hospital not the referring hospital.

The Trust will not reimburse travel costs for children or other dependants, carers and escorts. Applications for reimbursement should be made through the HTCS where appropriate to do so.

### Hospital Travel Costs Scheme

To be eligible for full or partial reimbursement of travel costs, the patient must meet the following three conditions:

- At the time of your appointment, you or your partner (including civil partners) must receive one of the qualifying benefits or allowances (see 4.2 below), or meet the eligibility criteria of the NHS Low Income Scheme
- You must have a referral from a healthcare professional for a specialist or to a hospital for further NHS treatment or tests
- Your appointment must be on a separate visit to when the referral was made. This applies whether your treatment is provided at a different location (hospital or clinic) or on the same premises as where your GP or other health professional issued the referral

Further information is available on the NHS website

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/help-with-health-costs/healthcare-travel-costs-scheme-htcs/>

## **Form of Transport Allowed**

Claims will be based on the basis of what would have been the cheapest suitable mode of transport for their circumstances, which can include the patient's age, medical condition or any other relevant factors.

This means the patient should use the cheapest, most appropriate means of transport, which in most cases will be public transport. If the patient travelled by car and the claim was approved, they will be reimbursed for the cost of fuel at the current mileage rate. Car parking charges (including those at the hospital) should be reimbursed where they are unavoidable, although not penalties incurred through illegal parking.

Mileage claim fuel rates to be used can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advisory-fuel-rates>

When using a taxi for transport, it is recommended that you agree this in advance with the Trust with evidence of necessity from a suitable medic. Otherwise reimbursement of taxi costs will be to the maximum of a "Daysaver" ticket on the bus.

## **Claiming a Refund**

In most cases, the Patient is expected to pay for travel and claim back the costs.

However, HTCS does allow for advance payments to help you attend your healthcare appointments in certain situations – for example, if you do not have the money to get to your hospital appointment and you are on a low income or benefits.

The patient should take their travel receipts, appointment letter or card, and proof that they are receiving one of the qualifying benefits (listed above) to the Trust's main reception who will liaise with the Finance team to claim their travel costs.

If the patient cannot demonstrate that they are in receipt of benefits, they must complete a Trust HC5 Claim form (see link below).

[https://www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/healthcosts/documents/hc5\(t\).pdf](https://www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/healthcosts/documents/hc5(t).pdf)

The Main Reception will contact the cashier/general office that are located within the Finance Department and are open 8am – 4pm Monday to Friday.

Where a patient has attended the hospital but has been unable to claim travelling expenses for which they are entitled, they will forward an HC5 form from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). This will subsequently be forwarded to the hospital if the DWP decide the claim is valid.

When a HC5 form is received at the hospital and the payment due to be made is in excess of £20.00 the finance department should request that a bank transfer is made to the patient.

If the payment is less than £20.00 the form should be kept until the patient's next visit, when they should be reimbursed the outstanding amount from the Cashier/General Office. The HC5 form should be filed. If a patient has no further appointments payment should be sent by bank transfer as above.

In cases 2 and 3 if a letter needs to be sent out, then attach a copy of the HC5 form to the letter.

## **Exceptional Circumstances**

On rare occasions, exceptional circumstances may mean that patients face difficulty in meeting travel costs. For example, in cases of bereavement or for urgent long distance travel.

In these exceptional circumstances, with the support of their healthcare professional, an application can be made to the Liverpool Women's Charity for help. This will be considered on a case by case basis and in exceptional circumstances only. The Trust is unable to cover travel costs for patients other than as outlined above.

**This leaflet can be made available in different formats on request. If you would like to make any suggestions or comments about the content of this leaflet, then please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0151 702 4353 or by email at [pals@lwh.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@lwh.nhs.uk)**

Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust  
Crown Street  
Liverpool  
L8 7SS

Tel: 0151 708 9988

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