

for same day or planned appointments

Patient transport services (PTS) provides free transport to and from hospital or NHS provider for

- patients with a **medical need** for transport
- escorts for patients who have a **medical need for an escort**

How are these national criteria applied?

The service which books the transport asks a short set of questions to determine whether or not a patient has a genuine need to use the NHS Patient Transport Service (PTS). Recent evidence has demonstrated that more than 10% of journeys undertaken by PTS are by patients who do not have a medical need for transport, amounting to £1.8 million and causing unnecessary delays for patients with a genuine need.

Will every patient be asked these questions?

Yes, every booking that is made will be assessed for eligibility although some patients may only have to answer one or two questions.

What type of questions will I be asked?

The questions asked relate to how you usually get out and about. In many cases, if you have a car or are able to make shopping trips out on public transport independently it is unlikely you will qualify for PTS. If you are normally housebound due to ill health and poor mobility you would qualify for transport as it is unlikely you would be able to attend for any medical treatment without the support of the Patient Transport Service.

What happens if I have access to a car but the treatment I am having means I will be unable to drive?

If the nature of the treatment means you will be unable to travel home independently then you may qualify for PTS if you have no friends or relatives who can assist you.

Can I have an escort?

You must have a medical need for an escort. If you request an escort during the booking then further questions will be asked to find out if the escort is required on the transport vehicle or can meet you at the treatment location. An example would be someone who requires ongoing treatment during a journey.

Patients on low income – ‘Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme’

If you are on low income, you may be able to claim a refund under the 'Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme' (HTCS). This covers the cost of travelling to hospital or other NHS premises for NHS-funded treatment or diagnostic test arranged by a doctor or dentist. Details of how to do this are contained in a separate leaflet 'HC11 – Help with health costs'. Information is also available from the NHS Choices website:

<http://www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/Healthcosts/pages/Travelcosts.aspx>.

How do I book patient transport?

To book patient transport call 0191 264 8870. The service in your area is run by the North East Ambulance Service.

Please only ask for transport if you have a medical need for transport or a medical need for an escort.

Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)

The local Patient Advice & Liaison Service can give confidential advice and support and will help to sort out any concerns you may have. They are able to provide:

- Advice and support to patients, their families and carers
- Information on NHS services
- Help to sort out problems quickly on behalf of patients and carers and listens to their concerns, suggestions or queries.

Freephone: 0800 0320202
Text: 01670 511098
Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

PALS is available Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 4.30 pm. Outside of these hours you can leave a message on an answer-machine and you will be contacted the next working day.

Information on alternative forms of transport are included in the local information sheet.

What happens if I am unhappy or feel unfairly treated?

The principle of medical need for patient transport is a national one, put in place by NHS England.

If a patient wishes to express concerns, or make a complaint about the process, then they can do so. This will be through

- The relevant PTS call centre number (see the section on 'How do I book patient transport').
- The Patient Advice & Liaison Service (contact details above).

Your NHS, use it wisely