

Patient Transport Service

Information for patients in Somerset



Information on NHS-funded patient transport services in Somerset

How much do you get?

If you receive any of the benefits mentioned above, you may get back the full travel costs. Payment is based on the most cost effective form of public transport available, including access to concessionary fares and promotions.

This applies to however you travel. If, for example, you use a private car you can claim for petrol and car parking charges (where unavoidable) up to the cost of the same journey by public transport. You will need to contact the hospital's general office to find out what the mileage rates are for private transport or how much you can claim.

Taxis are not normally included as forms of public transport and will only be funded in part or in full on an exceptional basis.

If you're on the NHS low income scheme you may get back all or some of your travel costs depending on which certificate you've been given.

How to claim travel costs

In most instances, you can claim transport costs at the NHS hospital or clinic at the time of your appointment.

You'll be paid back immediately in cash when you show one of the following:

- Proof of a qualifying benefit (like an award notice)
- A tax credit exemption certificate (you'll get this automatically if you qualify)
- A certificate showing you qualify for the NHS low income support scheme

The NHS low income support scheme

To apply for the NHS low income support scheme, you'll need to fill in form HC1.

Forms are available from:

- NHS hospitals
- Jobcentre Plus offices
- Some GP surgeries, dentists and opticians

You can also order form HC1 online or by phone. Call the **NHS Help with Health Costs** on **0300 330 1343** (8.00am - 6.00pm Monday to Friday or 9.00am - 3.00pm Saturday - calls are charged at the local rate from a landline) or visit www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/1125.aspx

If you're entitled to help you'll get a certificate that confirms whether you receive full or partial help with your healthcare travel costs.

Backdated claims

You can claim help with travel costs up to three months after your appointment, as long as you can prove you were eligible to claim at the time. To do this, you'll need to fill in a refund claim form HC5, which you can get from:

- NHS hospitals
- Jobcentre Plus offices
- The **NHS Help with Health Costs** - call them on **0300 330 1343**

Feedback and queries

If you have an enquiry, comment or complaint about any aspect of the transport services, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on **0800 0851 067** or by email: pals@somersetccg.nhs.uk

For additional copies of this leaflet, or for a copy of this leaflet in an alternative language or format, please contact:

NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group
Wynford House, Lufton Way,
Yeovil BA22 8HR

Phone: 01935 381969

Email: enquiries@somersetccg.nhs.uk

www.somersetccg.nhs.uk

Having problems getting to your medical appointment?

If you have an NHS medical appointment, you are expected to make your own transport arrangements, using family, friends or public transport.

If you are unable to make your own way to your appointment, the NHS may fund the journey if you have a medical or social need.

Medical need means:

- You use prescribed oxygen when mobilising and / or would need the skills of patient transport staff to administer oxygen during the journey
- You can only be moved by stretcher
- You cannot stand or walk more than a few steps, and you depend on medical equipment or aids which cannot fit into a car, bus or taxi
- You have an illness, condition or disability, or have received treatment, which prevents you using a car, bus or taxi unaided

Social need means:

You do not have a medical need, but you still need assistance to get to your medical appointment because you are on a low income.

Who is not eligible for the service?

You cannot use the Patient Transport Service if:

- You do not have a medical or social need
- You are visiting your GP surgery, dentist, pharmacy or optician

Friends or family are not eligible to use the service unless they provide essential support because of your condition.

How do I apply for NHS-funded transport?

If you think you have a medical or social need for NHS-funded transport to get to your medical appointment, call the **Patient Transport Advice Centre** on **01278 727444**. The phone line is open between 8.30am and 6.30pm Monday to Friday. Or you can email transport@somerset.nhs.uk.

You should contact the Patient Transport Advice Centre as soon as your appointment is confirmed, and at least 48 hours before your journey.

We will ask you some simple questions to confirm you are eligible for free transport. Please answer these questions honestly and accurately.

We need to make sure you get the service which best suits your needs and that our limited resources go to patients who really need them.

Can I claim the cost of travelling to my medical appointment?

Under the **Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS)** you may be able to claim financial help for the cost of transport to your medical appointment if you:

- are on a low income
- need NHS treatment at a hospital, other NHS centre or private clinic
- have been referred by a healthcare professional

Further information on this can be found at www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/Healthcosts/pages/Travelcosts.aspx

HTCS does not apply if you are:

- visiting a GP or dentist for routine appointments
- visiting others in hospital
- visiting A&E or minor injury units

Who can claim?

You can claim from the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme if you (or those you depend on) receive at least one of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Universal or Pension Credit Guarantee Credit

Or

- You are named on, or entitled to a NHS tax credit exemption certificate, or
- You are named on certificate HC2 or HC3

If an adult or your dependent child has to travel to your appointment with you because of your medical condition, you can claim their travel costs too.

If you're on a low income, with savings of less than £16,000, but don't get any of these benefits or allowances, you can still claim travel costs through the NHS low income scheme (see details overleaf).