

Hospital Travel Cost Scheme Procedure

Procedure information

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Summary of document:

This document provides a clear process to be followed when eligible patients wish to claim for hospital travel costs.

Scope:

Hywel Dda University Health Board wide.

To be read in conjunction with:

[Standing Orders Hywel Dda University Local Health Board](#) (opens in new tab)

[Standing Financial Instructions](#) (opens in new tab)

[Counter Fraud Bribery and Corruption Policy](#) (opens in new tab)

[Financial Procedures](#) (opens in new tab)

Patient information:

Include links to [Patient Information Library](#)

Owning group:

Finance Directorate

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Executive Director job title:

Huw Thomas – Director of Finance

Reviews and updates:

1.0 – New Procedure

2.0 – Full Review

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Hospital, Travel, Cost, Scheme

Glossary of terms

NHS – National Health Service

FRAUD, BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION

All staff are required to comply with the Health Board's policies and procedures and apply best practice in order to prevent Fraud, Bribery and Corruption. Staff should be made aware of their own responsibilities in protecting the Health Board from these crimes.

All staff have a duty to notify the Local Counter Fraud Department of any suspected fraud or inappropriate actions and are protected by the AW Raising Concerns (Whistleblowing) Policy. Anyone who suspects fraud or has any concerns reference Fraud Bribery and Corruption can make a referral by contacting the Counter Fraud Department by any of the following methods;

- Telephoning the office on 01267 266268,
- Emailing HDUHB.CounterFraudTeam.HDD@wales.nhs.uk ,
- Making an online referral at <https://reportfraud.cfa.nhs.uk> or
- Making an anonymous referral by telephoning Crimestoppers on 0800 028 40 60.

Staff should refer to the [Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy](#) for further information.

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Introduction

The Welsh Government website contains guidance on assistance available to certain NHS patients and visitors under the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme with the cost of travelling to and from hospital.

Scope

This procedure is Hywel Dda University Health Board wide.

Aim

The aim of this document is to:

- Ensure that patients attending appointments at any of Hywel Dda University Health Board's sites understand the process to claim back their travel expenses.

Objectives

The aim of this document will be achieved by the following objectives:

- To ensure there is a clear process for patients who need to reclaim their travel expenses should they be eligible.

Roles and Responsibilities

Procedure	Responsible Party
Obtaining & completing relevant paperwork for application	Patient
Checking for Eligibility	General Office Staff / NHS Business Services Authority
Reimbursement of expenses	General Office Staff / NHS Business Services Authority

Eligibility for full or partial reimbursement

Patients receiving (or who are dependent on someone receiving) Income Support, Disability Working Allowance (income based only), Family Credit, Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance, Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit, Pension Credit, Universal Credit, Employment & Support Allowance (income based only) or War Disablement Pension, may be eligible. (see Appendix II)

Patients who have been assessed as eligible for low-income (see Appendix III) help will hold a current entitlement certificate. There are two forms:

- HC2, eligible for a full refund, and
- HC3, eligible for a partial refund.

The journey undertaken must be made to receive services provided under Parts 1 and 2 of the National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006 in an NHS hospital for which the patient has been referred by a GP or dentist. (see link below).

The appointment must be on a separate visit to when the referral was made. This applies whether the treatment is provided at a different location (hospital or clinic) or on the same premises as where the GP or another health professional issued the referral.

Escorts will have their expenses refunded based on the eligibility of the patient.

Escorts will be funded if this is required for medical reasons, for example:

- Where the patient has a significant physical or mental disability that necessitates the support of another person to travel safely.
- Where the patient is undergoing a procedure or therapy that results in them requiring assistance to travel home.
- Where the patient is attending an appointment that involves self-management that a carer or relative will be undertaking on their return home.
- Where the patient lacks the mental capacity to take decisions or has a legal guardian.

Escorts may be funded in other circumstances where:

- The parent or guardian of a child under 16 years of age accompanies them to the hospital or clinic. Only the travel costs of one escort will be funded, unless a clinician determines a medical reason for the child to be accompanied by two adults. Siblings of the child patient who also travel with parent escort(s) will not be provided for under the terms of the policy.
- The patient is aged between 16 and 18 and requests a parent or guardian to accompany them.

Basis of Payment

Where patients or escorts meet the eligibility criteria as per above the amount of any NHS travel expenses to be reimbursed must be calculated by reference to the cost of the cheapest means of transport, which is reasonable, having regard to the patient's relevant circumstances.

The test of reasonableness is made on the basis that the patient should be able to reach the hospital in a reasonable time and without detriment to their health and well-being. When assessing a patient's claim, the health board should take into account issues such as:

- The distance that the patient has to travel
- How long the journey has taken to complete
- Whether the patient has to make the journey frequently
- The availability, suitability and accessibility of public transport
- The medical condition of the patient
- The age of the patient and
- The time of the appointment.

If the patient has a motor vehicle, and uses it to travel to hospital, the rate of reimbursement will be set by finance and will not be lower than the advisory fuel rates specified by HM Revenue and Customs for company cars, up to 2000cc as at the date of the appointment.

If the patient does not have a motor vehicle, the patient needs to consider public transport, community transport, a family member who could transport them. Please see travel line cymru link and other helpful links in Appendix I.

Only in exceptional cases taxi fares may be reimbursed where all other options have been exhausted as per above and evidence provided to the nearest bus stop or train station or for the whole journey if necessary. To be eligible the patient must be in receipt of a GP letter stating that they are unable to travel via Public Transport on health grounds, or they must provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that an alternative form of travel would not have been reasonably practicable given their personal circumstances. Please see workflow in Appendix I.

Payment of Fares

Patients will need to complete a [Claim Refund Travel Costs Form HC5WT](#) (opens in new tab) to be reimbursed.

These can either be collected from the General Office on the Hywel Dda site that is being visited or printed out from the below link or at the following web address

[Claim a refund for travel costs to receive NHS treatment: form HC5W\(T\) | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales/claim-refund-travel-costs-receive-nhs-treatment-form-hc5wt) (opens in new tab). <https://gov.wales/claim-refund-travel-costs-receive-nhs-treatment-form-hc5wt>

In addition to the completed form an attendance form completed by the Clinic[s] or an appointment letter from the clinic will be needed for proof of appointment along with receipts relating to the travel cost.

These will need to be posted to the relevant address see Appendix IV to claim the refund. Once approved reimbursement will be issued via cheque.

Alternatively, patients could be reimbursed in cash from the General Office petty cash. To do this, they will also need in addition to the HC5WT form and proof of attendance form the following proof of entitlement:

a) Patients on Income Support, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance (*income based only*), Universal Credit, Disability Working Allowance (*income based only*), Pension Credit or War Disablement Pension, will be in receipt of an **award letter** as proof of entitlement, which is issued by their Jobcentre Plus Office.

or

b) Patients on Working Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit will be in receipt of an NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate, or in the case of dependants an **award letter** listing their dependants.

or

- c) Patients on low income can also apply for payment of fares by applying for a Low-Income Exemption Certificate from the Department of Social Security. If successful in this application, the patient will be given an HC2 (full refund) or HC3 (partial refund) **certificate** as proof of entitlement

The deadline for claiming reimbursement is 3 months following the date of appointment and can take up to 30 days to process the claim.

It is the responsibility of the designated officer in the General Office to ensure that payment is only processed where the above criteria have been met and that the patient has signed for the cash on the Proof of Payment form. This form is used to support Cash Imprest reimbursement.

The patients travel cash imprest is reimbursed in line with the [Cash Financial Procedure](#) (opens in new tab).

Supporting Information for patients

[National Health Service in Wales | Law Wales](#)

[Traveline Cymru - Journey Planning Wales](#)

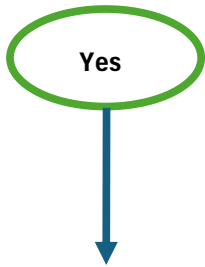
Additional information in respect of public transport or community transport availability can be found on the Health Board's internet site on the following link [Patient transport - Hywel Dda University Health Board](#)

Monitoring and Review

The monitoring and review of this procedure is the responsibility of the Deputy Head of Core Accounting Team. Reviews will be undertaken in line with the Health Board's review policy, which is every 3 years, or when changes are identified prior to the required review date.

Appendix I

Patients who have been assessed as eligible for low-income help who has been referred by a GP or dentist (as per Parts 1 & 2 of the National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006 can claim cost of travel
[NHS Wales](#)



Unable to Claim Costs

Do I have a vehicle where I drive myself?



Yes



Complete HC5 form (14p per mile) for reimbursement



No

Can family or friend drive me to appointment?



Yes



Complete HC5 form (14p per mile) for reimbursement



No

Can I go by public Transport see link:

[Traveline Cymru](#)



Yes



Complete HC5 form for fare reimbursement



No

Can I go by Community or voluntary transport?

<https://hduhb.nhs.wales/patien>



Yes



Complete HC5 form for community transport fare for reimbursement



No

Can I go via a taxi? (see taxi operators) see link:

<https://hduhb.nhs.wales/patien>



Yes



Complete HC5 form to receive full refund of taxi the patient must have a Doctor's letter stating this or provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that an alternative form of travel would not have been reasonably practicable given their personal circumstances otherwise only 14p per mile will be re-imbursed

14p per mile effective from 1st December 2025

Useful Links:

[National Health Service in Wales | Law Wales](#)

[Traveline Cymru - Journey Planning Wales](#)

[Patient transport - Hywel Dda University Health Board](#)

Appendix II

Qualifying benefits and allowances

Benefits providing automatic entitlement

Benefit	Eligibility criteria	Entitlement covers
Income Support	All patients in receipt of Income Support are entitled to payment of NHS travel expenses through HTCS.	<p>Recipient, partner, and any dependents for whom the recipient or partner is responsible including children and young people under 20 named in the award. Some children and young people will not be included in the IS award. These will be covered by Child Tax Credit (CTC).</p> <p>Escorts Where deemed medically necessary by a doctor or other health care professional involved in the provision of services to a patient, the travelling expenses of escort(s) may also be claimed as part of the patient's cost. Where children under 16 are travelling for treatment escort costs may be paid for a parent or guardian attending the appointment with the child.</p>
Income Based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA (IB))	All patients in receipt of Income based Employment and Support Allowance	<p>Recipient, partner, and any dependents for whom the recipient or partner is responsible including children and young people under 20 named in the award. Some children and young people will not be included in the award. These will be covered by Child Tax Credit (CTC).</p> <p>Escorts Where deemed medically necessary by a doctor or other health care professional involved in the provision of services to a patient, the travelling expenses of escort(s) may also be claimed as part of the patient's cost. Where children under 16 are travelling for treatment escort costs may be paid for a parent or guardian</p>

Benefit	Eligibility criteria	Entitlement covers
		attending the appointment with the child.
Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (JSA (IB))	All patients in receipt of Income Based Jobseekers Allowance	<p>Recipient, partner, and any dependents for whom the recipient or partner is responsible including children and young people under 20 named in the award. If a child is no longer included, entitlement should be through Child Tax Credit (CTC).</p> <p>Escorts As for IS above.</p>
Working Tax Credit (WTC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC)	<p>Patients who are receiving or are named on an award certificate for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) WTC with CTC; b) WTC with a disability element or a severe disability element, or c) CTC but is not eligible for WTC, provided that the relevant income of the person to whom the tax credit is awarded is not more than £15,276 on their award letter. 	<p>Recipient, partner, and any dependents including children and young people under 20 named in the award letter.</p> <p>Escorts As for IS above</p>
Pension Credit – Guarantee Credit (PCGC)	<p>All patients in receipt of PCGC.</p> <p>Pension Credit Savings Credit awarded on its own does not automatically provide entitlement through HTCS. However, patients in receipt of this benefit may qualify for full or partial payment of their travel expenses via the NHS Low Income Scheme (see below).</p>	<p>Recipient, partner, and dependents.</p> <p>Escorts As for IS above.</p>

Benefit	Eligibility criteria	Entitlement covers
<p>Universal Tax Credit</p>	<p>The roll-out of Universal Credit in Wales is ongoing and will replace some of the means tested benefits noted above. Universal Credit is being introduced in phases depending on where an individual lives and their personal circumstances.</p> <p>The earning thresholds are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A lower threshold of £435 net income per month for households with no dependent child and/or limited capability for work/disability, and ▪ A higher threshold of £935 net income per month for households with a dependent child and/or limited capability for work/disability. 	

Appendix III

Passport to support	Eligibility criteria	Entitlement covers
<p>People claiming on the grounds of low income</p>	<p>Patients who are not in receipt of a qualifying benefit but are on a low income and whose savings are less than £16,000 (or £23,500 if in a care home)² may be eligible for assistance with their NHS travel expenses.</p> <p>The calculation of a patient's entitlement is carried out by the Prescription Pricing Division (PPD).</p> <p>Where patients have not yet made an NHS Low Income Scheme claim they should be provided with the following for completion and forwarding to the Prescription Pricing Division (PPD):</p> <p>HC1 – assessment form</p> <p>HC1(SC) – assessment form if the patient is in a care home or supported by a local authority because they are 16 or 17 and have recently left local authority care.</p> <p>HC5W(T) – refund claim form if the patient has already made a claim but has yet to receive their certificate, they need only complete and forward the HC5W(T).</p>	<p>Recipient, partner and dependent children or young people under 19 whose names are shown on the notice of entitlement (known as a HC2W or HC3W certificate).</p> <p>Escorts Where deemed medically necessary by a doctor or other health care professional involved in the provision of services to a patient, the travelling expenses of escort(s) may also be claimed. Their costs should be added to the patient's costs, and it is the patient's income that will count, not the escorts.</p>

Passport to support	Eligibility criteria	Entitlement covers
	<p>Patients who might not consider themselves to be on a low income should be encouraged to make a claim if their savings are below the current limits.</p> <p>Where successful, they will be sent a certificate showing how much they would be expected to pay for their travel per week and would be entitled to a refund of anything above this amount.</p>	
<p>Persons living permanently in a care home or accommodation provided by a local authority</p>	<p>To qualify the claimant must reside in one of the following and have satisfied the local authority that he is unable to pay for that accommodation at the standard rate or, as the case may be, the full rate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a care home; ▪ residential accommodation provided by a local authority for persons aged 18 or over who by reason of age, illness, disability, or any other circumstances are in need of care and attention which is not otherwise available to them. ▪ residential accommodation for expectant and nursing mothers who are in 	<p>Claimant only.</p>

Passport to support	Eligibility criteria	Entitlement covers
	need of care and attention which is not otherwise available to them.	
Asylum seekers for whom support is provided under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1989	A person who is an asylum seeker for whom support is provided under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.	Recipient and any dependents where a dependent is classified as someone in the UK who is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A spouse; ▪ A child of his, or of his spouse, who is under 18 and dependent upon him.

Appendix IV

NHS Business Authority
Bridge House
152 Pilgrim Street
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE1 6SN

Telephone Number:0300 3301343

www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/healthcosts