

# Non-Urgent Patient Transport Service

What you need to know about the service and if you are eligible to use it



If you would like to receive this document in large print, Braille, on CD or in any other languages please contact the Patient Transport Bureau on 0300 111 21 31.

# Non-Urgent Patient Transport Service

## Who can use the Non Urgent Transport Service?

The non-urgent patient transport service is only provided for patients who have a clinical need. The need is assessed by the patient transport bureau who will determine eligibility. To be eligible for free non-urgent patient transport to hospital or to other NHS healthcare providers you must have a clinical need.

### **This typically means:**

- High dependency patients who require a qualified clinical crew.
- Patient requires the support of trained transport staff to assist with the lifting in and out of the vehicle by mechanical means.
- Patients who are wheelchair users requiring lifting in and out and mechanical clamping of their chair within the vehicle or can only be conveyed on a stretcher.
- Where the patient's cognitive state or clinical condition impacts on their mobility to such an extent that they would be unable to access healthcare and/or it would be detrimental to the patient's condition or recovery to travel by other means.

### **You cannot use Non Urgent Transport if:**

- You do not have a clinical need.
- You are visiting your GP surgery, dentist, pharmacist or optician.

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## Can I bring someone with me?

You can only bring someone with you if this has been pre-authorized and:

- You are under 16 years old
- Your condition requires constant attention of an escort throughout your journey.
- You have difficulty in communicating e.g. hard of hearing, have a speech difficulty, or are partially sighted, or blind and need a guide dog.
- You have a condition that prevents you from travelling unaccompanied e.g. dementia or Alzheimer's.

## How do I book my hospital transport?

Your transport can be booked by contacting the Patient Transport Bureau on **0300 111 21 31**.

You will speak with a member of staff who will ask you a few questions to see if you are eligible. They will then either book patient transport for you or signpost you to alternative transport providers, in the case that you do not meet the eligibility criteria. You can phone the bureau between 0800 - 1700 Monday to Friday.

## When would I be collected by the transport service?

If you have an appointment, your transport will be with you in plenty of time so that you arrive promptly for your appointment.

If you are being discharged from hospital you will be advised when transport will be available to take you home.

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## **If I am not eligible for Non-Urgent Transport can I claim the cost of travelling to my hospital appointment?**

The Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme may be able to provide financial help. As with non-urgent patient transport there are very strict rules to ensure only patients eligible for help can claim travel costs. To claim assistance with travel costs for a hospital appointment you must be receiving either:

- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Pension Credit - Guarantee Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Or be in receipt of an HC2 or HC3 certificate (Low Income Support Scheme).

For further information please see the 'Help with travel costs leaflet' which is available at [www.sussex.nhs.uk](http://www.sussex.nhs.uk)

## **How to claim**

The amount of reimbursement is based on the most reasonable and cheapest form of public transport available and will nearly always be the equivalent of a bus fare.

To claim you will need evidence that you meet the above criteria and have evidence of your attendance at the hospital. Claims are processed at the hospital/ unit cash office. Please ask your care coordinator where it is. You will normally be paid in cash.

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## Other Ways to Help with Transport

- The non-urgent Patient Transport Service and The Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme are both schemes governed by the Department of Health and funded by the local NHS.
- The cost of providing transport is a major factor within NHS finances so it is important that the eligibility rules are strictly applied.
- The local NHS recognises that due to the rural nature of Sussex, some patients who are not eligible for non-urgent patient transport services or the Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme may still require some form of travel advice.
- Local councils operate and support a number of travel schemes within the county of Sussex.
- Further details of the schemes available and details of community and voluntary car schemes can be found on their websites.
- There are regular local buses to the urban units and hospitals.

## What if I am not happy about the decision that has been made?

If you feel you have a medical need but have been declined free transport you should contact the Patient Transport Bureau (PTB) on 0300 111 21 31 who will advise you of the appeals process.

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## How to get in touch

Our Patient Advice & Liaison Services (PALS) offer free, confidential advice and information to help you find your way through the NHS and get the right service at the right time. We always ask your permission before personal information is discussed with others.

**PALS are available in every hospital and community trust.**

**PALS within NHS Sussex can be contacted as follows:**

### Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex

By phone 01293 600300 x3965  
Email [palsnorth@westsussexpct.nhs.uk](mailto:palsnorth@westsussexpct.nhs.uk)

### Coastal West Sussex

By phone 01903 505456  
Email [palsouth@westsussexpct.nhs.uk](mailto:palsouth@westsussexpct.nhs.uk)

### East Sussex

By phone 0300 1000 891  
Email [esdw-pct.pals@nhs.net](mailto:esdw-pct.pals@nhs.net)

### Brighton and Hove

By phone 0800 0130 251  
Email [brightonandhovepals@nhs.net](mailto:brightonandhovepals@nhs.net)