
Patients Travel and Expenses Schemes – Guidance Notes

Patients can claim for reasonable expenses for attendance at hospital under 3 main Schemes all of which are based upon the guidance contained within NHS MEL(1996)70. The following information can also be accessed via our NHS Ayrshire and Arran website using the following web link:

<http://www.nhsaaa.net/services-index/f-finance.aspx>

Scheme No 1 - Non - Discretionary Statutory Scheme

This scheme is a means tested scheme. Enclosed under Appendix A is Ayrshire And Arran Health Board's updated guidance as to the use and access to this scheme. It can be applied to patients attending hospitals in NHS Scotland. Patients will in most cases be able to reclaim travel costs direct from the hospital attended.

Scheme No 2 – Highlands and Islands Non Discretionary Scheme

This scheme is in relation to patients whose normal place of residence is on an Island, attending Hospital. In Ayrshire this refers principally to patients living on Arran. This is payable without recourse to means based tests. Patients are entitled to expenses in excess of £10. The distance from the patient's home to hospital must be 30 miles or more or involve a journey by sea of more than 5 miles. Patients who are on the range of benefit supports detailed in Scheme No 1 above are however entitled to a full reimbursement of costs. The claim form "Highlands & Islands Patient Travelling Expenses Form" can be accessed at any hospital cashier department.

Scheme No 3 - Discretionary Scheme

The discretionary scheme for patients travelling expenses is available to Ayrshire & Arran residents who are undertaking/receiving planned treatment and care within an NHS facility in the UK, who need to travel outwith the West of Scotland to receive this treatment and care, and who do not qualify for reimbursement of travel costs under the means-tested patients travel expenses scheme.

It is important to note that this is a Discretionary Scheme and Scottish Health Boards are not obliged to implement payment under these circumstances but Ayrshire and Arran Health Board has decided historically to reimburse reasonable expenses incurred by patients. Payment will be made on completion of the Out of Area Patient Travel Expenses Claim Form ET1 enclosed.

Responsibility for Travel and Accommodation

Patients will be responsible for arranging travel and accommodation to treatment centres external to Ayrshire and Arran Health Board.

When patients receive their appointment time, they should plan their journey and overnight stay as economically as possible taking into account the appointment time and their expected length of stay.

Patients are encouraged to directly contact the external treatment centre to enquire if appointment times can be amended to facilitate their own travel and accommodation arrangements.

In exceptional circumstances where patients have no bank account, credit card or are unable to seek help from relatives or friends, Ayrshire and Arran Health Board will assist in arranging travel and accommodation.

Guidance on reasonable expenses for all schemes:

Travel Costs:

The Board will reimburse the costs of travel to an NHS facility on the basis of the most appropriate and cost effective mode of transport for the patient. The main anticipated modes of transport will be an appropriate form of public transport (bus or train) or the use of a private car. Assistance with travel costs will be made available by the Board on the following basis:

Rail fares – travel by standard class using APEX fares is considered to be the most cost effective option. Where available, claimants should take advantage of any “saver” options.

Bus fares – travel by standard class on a recognised public transport carrier. Citylink fares are considered to be the most cost effective option when travelling longer distances.

Private car – a mileage allowance of 18p per mile will be paid where a private car is used. The mileage claimed for the journey distance will be reviewed and verified by the Board, using appropriate route planning information and software.

Air fares – the use of air travel to travel to an NHS facility would only be anticipated and supported by the Board in very exceptional circumstances. The age, health status and mobility of the patient would be taken into account when determining if air travel was the most appropriate form of transport for the patient. Where air travel is necessary, the cheapest available economy or tourist rates should be used. Fares booked in advance usually secure a more cost effective rate. Notification of appointments should be such that bookings should be able to be made at least 4 weeks in advance of appointment.

Notwithstanding the above, where an economy or tourist rate air fare can be purchased at a comparable cost to an APEX rail fare, the costs of air travel would be supported. Where travel by air also enables a same-day return then the cost of an APEX rail fare and overnight accommodation would be taken into account when determining the level of air fare that would be supported.

Accommodation

Where travel arrangements and attendance at an NHS facility on an outpatient or daycase basis requires the patient to have an overnight stay (or longer), the Board will support the costs of accommodation as follows:-

Within London – to a maximum of £90 per room per night

Outwith London – to a maximum of £50 per room per night

(note: the above rates are on a per room and not per person basis)

The cost of meals will not be met as part of accommodation costs. If the accommodation booked included breakfast as part of the overnight stay cost, then this will however be reimbursed, provided it is within the maximum limits stated above.

Patients are advised to check with the economy providers of room accommodation such as Travelodge and Premier Inns.

Escort

If it is considered medically necessary for a patient to be accompanied by an escort and the patient (not the escort) is eligible to have his or her travel costs reimbursed, the travel costs of the escort may also be reimbursed. The claim for reimbursement of the escort's expenses should be included by the patient in the claim for reimbursement of their own expenses. Eligibility for an escort may be determined by the patient's GP or by a consultant. If the patient's condition warrants it the expenses of a second escort may also be met.

Retrospective claims

Patients may claim help with travel costs for up to 3 months retrospectively.

Inpatient admissions to out of area treatment centres

In certain circumstances, patients may be sent to other NHS facilities which are outwith the West of Scotland to receive a course of treatment. Under these circumstances a patient may only be entitled to claim for Admission and Discharge.

If a patient elects to leave the facility on an interim basis, any expenses incurred will not be met by Ayrshire & Arran Health Board.

Visitors to patients in Hospital

Help for visitors to patients in hospital is not available under the travel expenses schemes. Some types of benefit recipients visiting someone in hospital may be able to obtain some help from the Scottish Welfare Fund. Patients should make enquiries to their local Council Offices.

Patients being transferred between treatment centres.

The cost of transferring patients from one hospital to another, or to a clinic or a nursing home whilst their treatment remains the responsibility of an NHS hospital clinician, should be regarded as part of treatment costs; as should the travel costs of patients who are sent home either as part of their treatment or to meet a hospital's convenience.

Patients who take leave from hospital at their own request cannot be helped with their travel costs.

Calculation of Travel Costs / Parking / Taxis

Appropriate travel costs should be calculated on the basis of the cheapest form of public transport (including any promotional or concessionary fares) available to the patient. Patients travelling by private car will be reimbursed at the rate of 18p per mile. This rate will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Director of Finance-Financial Services.

Car parking charges (including those at a hospital) may also be taken into account where they are unavoidable, although penalties incurred through illegal parking are not.

In a few cases where there is no alternative (for example, in cases where patients have restricted mobility or in cases where there is little or no public transport), patients may have to use a taxi for the whole or a part of their journey. In such exceptional cases these costs may be reimbursed.

Policy Review Date

This policy was reviewed 1st April 2014 and shall be reviewed annually on the 1st April each year.

Out of Area Patient Travel Expenses Form

Section 1: (To be completed by patient or patient's representative)

Name: _____

Home Address: _____

Contact Telephone Number: _____

Date of Birth: _____

CHI/Hospital Number: _____

Approved Escort: _____
(name if applicable)

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Section 2: (To be completed by the hospital)

Verification of Attendance:

Hospital Attended: _____

Date & Appointment Time: _____

Doctor/Clinic: _____

I confirm that the above patient has attended for treatment/referral from NHS
Ayrshire & Arran.

Signature: _____

Designation: _____

Contact Telephone Number: _____

SECTION 3: (Details of Claim)

Date	Journey Details	Form of Travel	Travel Costs	Cost of Accomodation

(Please continue on a blank sheet if required)

I certify that the above information is true and to the best of my knowledge. I enclose receipts to substantiate my claim.

Signed _____ **Date** _____

**Please forward to:
Out of Area Patient Expenses Travel Claims
Finance Department
Stair Team Base
Ailsa Hospital
Dalmellington Road
Ayr KA6 6AB**

If you should have any questions/queries please telephone 01292 513357.

Patients Travel/Clinical Appointments (Within NHS Ayrshire and Arran)

General

Where appropriate a poster should be displayed to advise patients/ clients of their right to claim expenses, to and from treatment. This poster should confirm the patient's/client's requirements to confirm their receipt of qualifying benefit/pension.

Hospital Cashier

- (a) Ascertain if the patient is eligible for travel expenses reimbursement through the Organisation i.e. is the patient in receipt of one or more of the following benefits or do they have a current HC2 or HC3

War Pension	The patient/client or partner must be in receipt of War Pension and the treatment currently being received must be for the accepted disablement (why the war pension was awarded)
Income Support/ESA (income related)	The patient/client or their partner is in receipt of one or more of these allowances
Income Based Jobseekers Allowance	
Pension Credit Guarantee Credit	
Working Tax Credit (with child tax credit or disability element)	
NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate	The patient/client or partner has been awarded the tax credit, or is named on a valid tax credit
HC2/3	The patient/client has an HC2/3 certificate, or is named on a Valid HC2/3 certificate

- (b) If the patient states they are in receipt of an appropriate benefit but cannot produce proof of this, they should be given an HC5 to complete then forward to their local Department of Work and Pensions Office (DWP). The patient must also complete an HC1 for submission with this form.
- (c) Where a patient is not on any of the above benefits then an HC1 should be completed.

On receipt of the completed HC5 of the form from the DWP, the cashier (based in Finance, Greenan House, Ailsa Hospital) should make the appropriate reimbursement to the patient.

(Please advise the patient that this can be a lengthy process and any payment authorised will be made once authorisation is received).

- (d)** The patient/client must be able to confirm receipt of the appropriate pension/benefit. If their confirmation is by letter form the Job Centre Plus. It is acceptable to pay expenses on this letter provided the date of issue of the letter is no more than three calendar months previous to the date of the claim. If the date on the letter is outwith this time period then a call to the Job Centre Plus is required to confirm continuing receipt. This call must be made in the presence of the patient/client who will be required to give authority to the Job Centre Plus to release the information required to us. Confirmation in this instance should follow the following timescales.

Date of Letter of Authority	Action Required
Letter dated between 9 months and 12 months from date of claim	One call to the Job Centre Plus within the 9 to 12 month period
Letter dated more than 12 months from the date of the claim	Call the Job Centre Plus

A record of the calls, and outcome of the call, should be kept on (Form CO1), Appendix A, to avoid duplication and confirm appropriate authority has been obtained.

(The Job Centre Plus issues annual letters to their clients confirming eligibility to benefit/pension/Job Seekers Allowance/Income Support etc. Any letters dated more than a year previous to the date of claim should not be accepted as authority to pay expenses).

- (e)** If the patient does satisfy the criteria:

The Cashier:-

Will complete the relevant sections of the Travel Claim Form (Form CO1), ensuring the patient/client's eligibility to claim expenses is up to date in line with the above requirements.

If all criteria are met the payment can be made to the patient/client.

Any travel tickets or other appropriate receipts should be stapled to the claim form.

Mileage rate for private car will be set at a standard rate to be reviewed annually by the Assistant Director of Finance – Governance and Shared Services. This rate is currently 18p per mile.

Backdated Claims:-

Claims for travel costs can be backdated for only 3 months.

Type of Travel:-

Staff should use their discretion regarding the type of transport used, when there is more than one person travelling, i.e. a child clinic when the family have to visit and it is more cost effective to allow a taxi fare rather than 3 or 4 bus/train fares.

Further information on “help with health costs can be found at:-

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0039/00392657.pdf>

and

Highlands and Island Patient Circulars MEL (1996), 70, MEL (1974) 4 and SS1 2006 No 142

HC Forms from:-

Banner Business Supplies Limited

Unit 2 Kingsthorne Park, Nettle Road, Houston Industrial Estate, Livingston, EH54 5DB