

A Guide to Patient Transport

Information and advice for patients

Transport

Patient Transport Services

The Patient Transport Service is a non-emergency ambulance service for Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust. We provide the service for patients who meet the eligibility criteria below. This service is funded by the trust with limited resources that are utilised in the most efficient and cost effective manner.

Who is eligible for patient transport services?

Hospital transport will **only** be made available if you have a **medical need** which satisfies **any** of the following specific criteria:

- You need to travel lying down due to your medical condition.
- You require continuous oxygen or other medical gases.

You will also be considered if you have **no** other means of private or public transport available **and** you also satisfy any of the following criteria:

- You are confined to a wheelchair and you do not have a wheelchair adapted vehicle.
- Have a psychiatric or learning difficulty which prevents you from using public transport.
- Have a medical condition that would compromise your dignity or cause public concern if public transport was used.
- You cannot walk without the continual support of another person or walking aid, such as a zimmer frame or similar.
- You experience side-effects as a result of your medical treatment which prevents you from using private or public transport.

If you do not meet the requirements and there are no other special circumstances, you will need to make your own travel arrangements to and from the hospital.

Can a relative or carer also use the service?

Transport staff will escort you to and from the hospital. Relatives and friends are welcome to meet you at your point of destination, although they will be unable to accompany you on your journey unless you satisfy one of the following criteria:

- You are under 16 years of age.
- You have a psychiatric or learning difficulty, which prevents you travelling alone.
- You are blind or hard of hearing and require assistance (guide dogs are accepted with prior notice).
- Your medical condition is such that you require assistance at all times.

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How do I apply?

If you think you meet the eligibility criteria you will need to fill in a transport booking form. You can obtain one of these by telephoning Patient Transport Services and asking them to send the form to you.

Once you have the transport booking form please read and complete it carefully. It asks questions about your health to see if you have a medical need for hospital transport.

After you have completed the form it is important that you send it back to the hospital, to the address on page 6, at least 2 weeks before your appointment so that suitable arrangements can be made.

Patient Transport Services will then check whether you meet the eligibility criteria for hospital transport and will either telephone you or write to you to let you know whether your application has been accepted or not.

Urgent appointments

If your GP has referred you for an urgent appointment (within 14 days) and you think you may need hospital transport, you should telephone the Patient Transport Services call centre on 0121 507 5444 immediately to see if you are eligible.

If your application is accepted

If your application has been accepted and you have submitted a booking form via the post, a letter will be sent out confirming your booking.

If your application is via telephone the call centre operative will discuss with you whether you meet the criteria.

Patient transport will aim to take you back home within a reasonable time, however you may experience delays due to unforeseen circumstances and pressures on the service.

The staff from Patient Transport who collect you will always be in uniform and wearing the Trust I.D badge. In some cases journeys may be allocated to the hospital contracted taxi service or an external service and they will each have their own form of I.D.

We request that you:

- wear appropriate outdoor clothing when travelling by hospital transport.
- are ready for collection at least 2 hours before your appointment time. For afternoon appointments please be ready for collection from 12pm.

Transport to Sandwell or Rowley Regis Hospitals or outreach clinics

If you are requesting transport to Sandwell Hospital, Rowley Regis Hospital or one of their outreach clinics there are designated time slots for arrivals at the hospital, being 9.30am, 11am and 2pm. You will be expected to be ready for collection 2 hours before these times.

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Transport to City Hospital

If you are requesting transport for any department on the City hospital site you will need to be ready 2 hours before your appointment time. The last journey into City hospital is at 2pm.

After your appointment

Once your appointment has finished please make the clinic aware that you are an ambulance patient and will require transport home, they will notify the ambulance desk that you are ready to travel. Please tell the clinic where you intend to wait for your transport.

You will need to fill in a transport booking form every time you require hospital transport unless you are on a course of treatment i.e. daily/weekly.

If your application is not accepted

If you are refused hospital transport and you do not agree with this decision, you or a relative/carer can appeal by writing to the Patient Transport Manager at the address on the bottom of page 6.

Help with travel costs

If you make your own way to hospital and receive certain benefits you may be able to claim back some or all of your travel costs. Please take proof of your benefits and proof of your appointment to one of the following places:

City Hospital: Cashier's office, off the main hospital corridor between the cashpoint machine and the entrance to MAU.

Sandwell General Hospital: General office (main reception), by the main entrance to all wards and departments.

Rowley Regis Hospital: Main reception

See page 6 for details of where to find more information about help with travel costs.

To cancel transport

If your condition changes and you no longer need patient transport please call Patient Transport Services at least 48 hours before your transport to avoid unnecessary journeys. Please also inform us of any change of address.

If your appointment is cancelled or changed you must contact the call centre on 0121 507 5444 as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary use of resources.

If you need to cancel transport on the day of your appointment please call 0121 507 5530 or 4680. Lines are open from 8am - 5pm, Monday - Friday.

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Contact details

If you need any further information about our service or advice about completing your booking form please contact:

Patient Transport Services Call Centre

0121 507 5444

Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm (closed for lunch 1pm – 2pm)

Please send your completed booking form to:

Patient Transport Services

City Hospital,
Dudley Road,
Birmingham,
B18 7QH

Further information

For more information with help with health and travel costs:

NHS Business Services Authority

www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk

0845 850 1166

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our website:

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust

www.swbh.nhs.uk

Sources used for the information in this leaflet

- Department of Health, 'Eligibility for patient transport services', August 2007
- NHS Business Services Authority, 'Help with health costs', April 2009

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5420 or email: swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net



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