

Patient Travel Information Leaflet

What is this leaflet for?

The Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) of the Department of Health, on the advice of your consultant, has approved your referral to a hospital outside Northern Ireland for assessment and/or treatment. This leaflet provides information on the financial and other assistance you can expect in travelling.

My referral has been approved, what happens next?

Normally the hospital to which you have been referred will notify you directly with an appointment date. When you have received your appointment offer you should contact the SPPG Patient Travel Team (0300 555 0116) as soon as possible and let them know. They will take your details and contact you 14 days in advance of your appointment date to book travel. Please note that until you contact the Patient Travel Team, they will not be aware of the date or time of your journey.

If you have a child who has been referred by his/her local consultant to a hospital outside Northern Ireland the Patient Experience Office at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children will make the travel arrangements. The Patient Experience Office can be contacted as follows:

Paediatric Patient Experience Officer: 028 95 046012 (Monday - Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm)

RBHSC Patient Flow Team: 07780003016 (outside of Monday - Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm)

How will I get there?

The SPPG will assist you to make the necessary travel arrangements. The SPPG Patient Travel Team will book and pay for:

- **Commercial flights.**
- **Ferry** (if clinically appropriate).
- **Onward train or bus journey** (depending on which hospital you are travelling to).

If your consultant agrees it is clinically necessary you may be able to have someone travel with you (an escort). All aspects of travel are booked following the advice from your referring consultant.

You will need a form of photographic identification to travel outside Northern Ireland. You may require one or other of the following, depending on the airline and airport destination:

- Passport.
- Provisional license/full driving license.
- Photographic electoral card.

What if I need to stay?

Accommodation is not usually funded for a day case appointment/outpatient appointment unless travel times and appointment times mean that you cannot go and return on the same day. If it is necessary for you and/or your escort to stay overnight it is expected that you will use hospital provided accommodation if available. Where hospital accommodation is not available you are expected to book your own accommodation. However, if you have any difficulty in doing this please seek advice from the SPPG Patient Travel Team, and particularly if:

- You are currently on income support.
- You are currently receiving sick pay.
- You will require accommodation for 2 weeks or more.
- There is some other exceptional reason why you cannot book and pay for accommodation.

What reimbursement can I expect?

The SPPG will contribute towards costs incurred as a result of your need to travel for treatment.

Accommodation will be reimbursed at the following maximum rates:

London and Dublin Rates
£125/night single/double room
£145/night for family room

Other places
£85/night for a single room
£95/night for double/twin room
£125/night for family room

Subsistence - The SPPG will provide a daily subsistence allowance for food. **Please note** that inpatients do not receive a subsistence allowance while in hospital as their food needs are met by the hospital.

Subsistence allowance
£15 per full day for adults
£5 per full day for children under 5 years of age

Airport parking will be reimbursed at long stay on line rate.

Baggage will be pre-paid if you are staying longer than 3 nights or if there is a medical reason why you require additional baggage. **Please note:** the requirement for taking baggage must be discussed at the time of booking with the Patient Travel Officer.

If you have to pay for travel by **tube, train or bus** to reach the hospital or clinic you will be reimbursed these costs on submission of original receipts.

Private taxi costs will be reimbursed **only** if your referring consultant has indicated that this is clinically required.

If you choose to use your own transport mileage will be given to and from your home address to the port at a rate of 35p per mile. If you are travelling via ferry mileage will be calculated based on the distance between your home address and the ferry port and between the ferry port and the hospital.

Can I make my own travel arrangements?

You can make and pay for your own travel arrangements but you should contact the SPPG Patient Travel Team to find out the maximum reimbursement available before committing to the cost.

When will I receive money?

The SPPG aims to process and pay the travel claim within 30 days. Please keep and submit with your claim form all relevant documentation including:

- Appointment letter.
- Original receipts for travel and accommodation.

Keep a copy of your claim and receipts as we cannot be held responsible for missing/lost claims when posted. Once your claim is approved and sent to the payments team you will receive a letter and full breakdown detailing the amount you will be reimbursed.

To request a travel claim form email the SPPG Patient Travel Office - Patient.travel@hscni.net

Further Information

- Patients or their escorts are responsible for checking all travel documents for accuracy.
- Patients or their escorts should contact the airline or sea travel operators before travelling to check for delays or changes to travel arrangements and advise the receiving hospital if these will affect attendance as planned.
- The SPPG does not take responsibility for theft or loss of personal belongings whilst a patient travels for treatment.
- Patients and escorts should ensure they leave enough time for the journey to avoid missing flights/ ferries.
- The SPPG does not provide cash in advance of travel.

SPPG Patient Travel Office Contact Details

SPPG Patient Travel Office, 12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BS

Telephone: 0300 555 0116 (Monday - Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm)

Emergency Out of Hours: 028 9044 2062

Useful Check List

- Photographic ID
- Passport
- Driving license
- Photo electoral card
- Flight Reference Number
- Hand luggage/baggage
- Documentation - keep appointment/surgical letter/directions/boarding passes
- Emergency contact numbers
- Discuss with the Patient Travel Team any medication if required
- Purse/wallets - cards/cash