Patient Travel Information Leaflet

What is this leaflet for?
The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB), 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 when 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 HSCB Patient Travel Team (0300 555 0116) as soon as possible and let them know. They will take your details and contact you 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. This office can be contacted as follows:

Pediatric Patient Experience Officer on 028 9063 9029 (Monday–Friday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm)

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

How will I get there?
The HSCB will assist you to make the necessary travel arrangements. The HSCB **Patient Travel Team** will book and pay for:

- Commercial flights
- Ferry (if clinically appropriate)
- Onward train 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 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 HSCB 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

**Please note** if you decide to book your own accommodation which includes Air BnB, renting or leasing, you do so at your own discretion and financial risk. You will only be able to claim reimbursement for accommodation, up to the Board’s maximum allowance rate, for the treatment episode days which necessitate an overnight stay. If your treatment ends earlier than planned or is cancelled and you incur cancellation fees as part of your personal agreement with the accommodation provider these will not be funded by the Board. Therefore you should take particular note of the cancellation, cleaning and damages fees in any agreement you enter into.

The HSCB will provide a daily **subsistence allowance**. Please note that inpatients do not receive a subsistence allowance while in hospital:

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

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 airport 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.

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.

**Can I make my own travel arrangements?**
You can make and pay for your own travel arrangements but you should contact the patient travel team to find out the maximum reimbursement available before committing to the cost.
When will I receive money?
The HSCB aims to process and pay your travel claim within 30 days. It is your responsibility to keep and submit a clinical appointment letter confirming the date and time of appointment, or a discharge letter confirming inpatient episode as well as your original receipts for travel and accommodation. **If you do not have an appointment letter to validate your claim you should ask your treating team to provide written confirmation of the date and time of your attendance.**

Failure to provide confirmation of attendance and/or valid receipts which include date/time of travel will result in payment being withheld or reduced.

**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.

**Useful Information**
Patients/escorts are responsible for checking all travel documents for accuracy.

Patients/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 HSCB 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 HSCB does not provide cash in advance of travel.

**For travel claim forms email:** [Patient.travel@hscni.net](mailto:Patient.travel@hscni.net)

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

**Tel:** 0300 555 0116 (Monday– Friday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm)

**Emergency Out of Hours:** 028 9044 2062

**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