

Reimbursement of Patient Travel Costs Policy

From 1st April 2008

All eligible Devon PCT patients attending NHS appointments, referred by a GP or dentist or under the care of a consultant, will receive a standard reimbursement rate in line with other regional trusts, and national guidance. The following rates of reimbursement will apply to patients eligible through the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme. See "Help with Health Costs" HC11 booklet and http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_083704

Eligible patients will receive a refund for the reasonable costs of the cheapest suitable option for their journey, taking into account the distance, the length of time, whether it is a journey done frequently, availability, suitability and accessibility of public transport, the medical condition, including weakened immune system and fatigue and the age of the patient.

New reimbursement rates, updated 1 July 08

Type of transport	Refund rate when used as cheapest suitable option	Refund rate when used as patient choice
Public transport	Lowest concessionary fare	Lowest concessionary fare
Private car	Full estimated cost per mile at regional agreed rate (currently 15p), plus parking and tolls	Lower of regional per mile fuel rate plus costs, or public transport cost
Community transport	Actual cost, up to 45p per mile	Regional agreed rate per mile, currently 23p
Hospital cars, Torbay area only	Actual cost	Partial cost at 60% rate
Taxis	Actual cost, up to £2.50 per mile per mile	23p per mile
Health Service Transport options provided at a charge	Fully refunded	Only available to non medical need patients as last resort
Travel costs to a PCT service, for mileage over 30 miles each way	Full cost	Relevant cost as above only

NB Per mile rates are agreed across the region, and must be at least in line with HM Revenue and Customs advice, updated every 6 months.
http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/cars/fuel_company_cars.htm

Car parking costs paid for relevant periods, using concessions where possible. No fixed penalty or other penalties incurred in the journey are payable.

Eligible journeys

Reimbursement will be made for all patient journeys to appointments held at a Devon PCT community hospital.

Patients will also be eligible for reimbursement for travel to appointments when referred by a GP or dentist or under the care of a consultant as follows

Eligible journeys	Not eligible journeys
Appointments at Devon PCT hospitals	GP, Dentist or their practice staff
Appointments with Devon PCT community staff	Appointments with others at GP surgeries on the same day as referral.
Counselling and primary mental health worker services	Visits to Minor Injuries units, Walk in Centres without an appointment
GP with special interest clinics	National screening service routine appointments
X-ray appointments	Orthodontic services
Services newly provided at community venues which would previously be provided at acute hospitals	Enhanced services open to own GP practice patients only e.g. bladder washouts, blood transfusions
Pre-booked appointments at MIUs or walk in centres	

If patients arrive too late for their appointment, local decisions will be made about validity of reasons for delay and payment of travel costs.

Refund process in Devon Primary Care Trust

Two options will be available to patients at Devon PCT venues and services provided with other contractors.

1. All patients attending an appointment with Devon PCT staff, or within a PCT venue, can complete a Travel Claim form TC1 (08) (appendix 1), provide evidence of eligibility, distance /costs and staff signature to confirm attendance. They can present the form and evidence to a local reimbursement office at the time of attendance or within 2 weeks of their appointment for reimbursement in cash. No additional costs for attending a centre to reclaim only will be paid. A list of venues will be available at GP and dental surgeries. All PCT staff should carry a supply of form TC1 (08) Should cashiers suspect a fraud, it should be reported to the Local Counter Fraud Specialist or to the NHS Fraud and Corruption Reporting Line on 0800 028 40 60. All calls are dealt with in the strictest of confidence by fully trained staff.
2. Patients at other providers or after 2 weeks, can reclaim at the venue if a cash office is available or they can use the national reclaim scheme, completing form HC5(T).

In exceptional circumstances, advance payment can be made to assist patients to attend urgent appointments. Wherever possible, arrangements will be made to make payment direct to the provider of transport. Cash will not be provided direct to patients.

**NB Other trusts' procedures may differ. Patients should check with the hospital or service before travelling.
GP and dental practices will not refund expenses.**

Appeal process Appeals re decisions on refunds made by Devon PCT staff can be made to the cashier's line manager. For further help, patients can contact Devon PCT PALS.

Information for the public

- All hospitals should hold and display required materials for the "Help with Health Costs" scheme i.e. HC11 booklets, HC1 and HC5(T) forms and posters. These can be ordered on **0845 610 1112**
- Patients can have help to claim relevant benefits, fill out HC1 forms for Low Income certificates or bus passes from **Care Direct on 0845 1551 007** or local Citizens Advice bureaux.
Over 60s can contact **The Pensions Service** for help re benefits on **01271 395331 or 395394 or 395337** or local Age Concern offices.
- Advice and help with forms for Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme is available on **0845 8501166**.
- **Advice for staff is available from PALS on 0845 111 0080**

Devon PCT venues with cash offices

Ashburton Hospital
Axminster Hospital
Bovey Tracey Hospital
Budleigh Salterton Hospital
Crediton Hospital
Culm Valley Integrated Centre for Health
Dartmouth Hospital
Dawlish Hospital
Exmouth Hospital
Honiton Hospital
Moretonhampstead Hospital
Newton Abbot Hospital
Okehampton Community Hospital
Ottery St Mary Hospital
Seaton Hospital
Sidmouth Hospital
South Hams Hospital
Tavistock Hospital
Teignmouth Hospital
Tiverton District Hospital
Totnes Hospital
Whipton hospital

Some specialist units run by child services, audiology, joint agency team, GU medicine and reablement are able to refund costs to patients attending their services only. Units without this facility should provide HC5(T) forms to patients.

Patient Travel Costs Cashier's Flow Chart – What do you refund?



If you suspect that a Travel Claim Form (TC1)08 may have been altered, forged, or counterfeited in any way, you should contact your Local Counter Fraud Specialist immediately

Patient Travel Costs

Flow Chart for patients – Who is eligible?



