

## The Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme - Extract for NHS Choices Website

You may be able to claim a refund under the 'Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme' (HTCS) of the cost of travelling to hospital or other NHS premises for NHS-funded treatment or diagnostic test arranged by a doctor or dentist.

To qualify for help with travel costs under the HTCS, you must meet three conditions:

1. At the time of your appointment, you or your partner (including civil partners) must be receiving one of the qualifying benefits or allowances, or meet the eligibility criteria of the [NHS Low Income Scheme](#).
2. Your journey must be made to receive NHS-funded non-primary medical or non-primary dental care services, to which you have been referred to by a GP, dentist or hospital consultant.
3. For referrals made by a primary practitioner such a GP or dentist, the service must be provided on a different day and in premises other than those occupied by the practitioner who made the referral.

You can claim travel costs for your children if 2 or 3 above applies to them and you are in group 1 above at the time of the appointment. Any young person aged 16 or over may make their own LIS claim – there is more information in [leaflet HC11- Help with health costs](#) (PDF, 420 kb).

**Note:** PCTs will cease to exist from 1 April 2013. Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) will then make payments previously undertaken by PCTs. If you have been referred by a primary care practitioner to a public health organisation other than a trust or foundation trust then claims have to be sent to the relevant CCG.

You can claim travel costs for an escort, if your doctor, dentist or consultant says that for medical reasons you need someone to travel with you.

You **cannot** claim help with travel costs, if

- you are visiting someone in hospital. However, visitors in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits may be able to receive assistance in the form of a Social Fund payment. Further information about this assistance can be obtained from Jobcentre Plus offices
- you are visiting your local GP or dentist for routine primary care services, such as check-ups, vaccinations, cervical cancer screening or minor surgery, as these are excluded from the scheme. Urgent primary care services during the out of hour periods (i.e. between 6.30pm and 8.00pm weekdays, at weekends or on bank holidays) are also excluded.

### What are the qualifying benefits and allowances?

You or your partner (including Civil partners) receive

- Income Support,
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance,

- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit Guarantee Credit, or
- you are named on, or entitled to (use your award notice as evidence), a NHS tax credit exemption certificate, or
- you have a low income and are named on certificate HC2 (full help) or HC3 (limited help). To apply for this certificate, you should complete form HC1 available from your local hospital, Jobcentre Plus offices, or from the DH publications order line on 0300 123 1002.
- you are [awarded Universal Credit](#)

Find out more about the [NHS Low Income Scheme](#) (LIS).

### **What form of transport can I use?**

You should use the cheapest most appropriate means of transport, which in most cases will be public transport. If you travel by car you will be reimbursed the estimated cost of fuel used plus unavoidable car parking and toll charges.

Where you are using a taxi for transport it is recommended that you check with the hospital or PCT before you travel to agree this.

**Note:** PCTs cease to exist from April 1 2013. Instead you'll have to get in touch with the relevant Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

Patients in London may be able to claim congestion charges – You can find here further information on the [Congestion Charge NHS Reimbursement Scheme](#), operated by Transport for London.

### **Help with travel costs before your appointment**

You should be able to receive payments in advance of travel to your appointment. Please contact the hospital or PCT concerned for further information on how to do this.

Note: PCTs will cease to exist from April 1 2013. Instead you'll have to get in touch with the relevant Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

### **How do I claim a refund?**

You should take your travel receipts, appointment letter or card and proof that you are receiving one of the qualifying benefits to a nominated cashier's office to claim your reimbursement.

**Note:** In some hospitals, the name of the office that you need to go to may be different e.g. the General Office or the Patient Affairs Office. If you are not sure, ask reception or [Patient Advice and Liaison Services](#) (PALS) staff where you should go.

Alternatively, you can complete an [HC5 form - claim travel charges](#) (PDF, 35 kb) and post this together with your travel receipts to the address given in the form. You can make a postal claim up to three months after your appointment has taken place.