

How much do you get?

If you are on benefits or allowances you get back the full travel costs. This is based on the cheapest form of public transport available, including any concessions or promotions.

This applies to however you travel. If for example, you use a private car you can claim for petrol instead (and car parking charges where unavoidable) up to the cost of the same journey by public transport. The hospital will tell you what the mileage rates are for private transport.

Taxis are not normally included as forms of public transport and will only be funded in part/full on an exceptional basis.

If public transport is not available or impractical (perhaps you can't get to your appointment on time or your mobility is restricted), you'll need to contact the hospital well before your appointment.

They will check that your travel arrangements are allowed.

If you're on the NHS low income scheme you may get back all or some of your travel costs depending on which certificate you've been given.

How to claim

In most instances, you can claim at the NHS hospital or clinic at the time of your appointment. You'll be paid back immediately in cash, when you show one of the following:

- proof of a qualifying benefit (like an award notice)
- a tax credit exemption certificate (you'll get this automatically if you qualify)
- a certificate showing you qualify for the NHS low income support scheme

The NHS low income support scheme

To apply for the NHS low income support scheme, you'll need to fill in form HC1.

Forms will be available from:

- NHS hospitals
- Jobcentre Plus offices
- some GP surgeries, dentists and opticians

You can also order form HC1 online or by phone. Call the **NHS Help with Health Costs** on **0845 850 1166** (8.00 am to 6.00 pm Monday to Friday or 9.00 am to 3.00 pm Saturday - calls are charged at the local rate) or visit www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/HelpWithHealthCosts.aspx.

If you're entitled to help you'll get a certificate that confirms whether you receive full or partial help with your healthcare travel costs.

Backdated claims

You can claim help with travel costs up to three months after your appointment, as long as you can prove you were eligible to claim at the time. To do this, you'll need to fill in a refund claim form (HC5), which you can get from:

- NHS hospitals
- Jobcentre Plus offices
- the **NHS Help with Health Costs** on **0845 850 1166** (8.00 am to 6.00 pm Monday to Friday or 9.00 am to 3.00 pm Saturday - calls are charged at the local rate) or visit www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/HelpWithHealthCosts.aspx

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Patient Transport Service

How to find out if you are eligible



Information on patient transport services in Somerset

This leaflet can also be provided in other formats or languages by phoning 01935 385020

Having problems getting to your hospital appointment?

If you are unable to get to your hospital appointment because you have a medical need for transport, the NHS Patient Transport Service can help.

To be eligible for free NHS transport to hospital you must have a medical need.

This means:

- You need prescribed oxygen to help you breathe
- You need intravenous (IV) support
- You can only be moved by stretcher
- You can't stand or walk more than a few steps and cannot use a car or public transport
- You depend upon medical equipment or aids that cannot fit within a bus or taxi
- The treatment you are receiving leaves you so debilitated that you cannot use a car, bus or taxi
- You have an illness, condition or disability which stops you using a car, bus or taxi unaided

Who is not eligible for the service?

You cannot use the Patient Transport Service if:

- you do not have a medical need
- you are visiting your GP surgery, dentist, pharmacist or optician

The service is not available to transport a relative or friend - unless they meet the criteria as your medical escort.

How do I book my hospital transport?

If you have a medical need for transport to get to hospital call the **Patient Transport Advice Centre** on **01278 727444** between 9.30 am and 4.30 pm, Monday to Friday, or email transport@somerset.nhs.uk.

What can I do if I am not happy with the decision that has been made?

If you have been declined free NHS Transport but you feel that you have a medical need that means you should be eligible please contact the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** on **0800 0851 067** or by email: pals@somerset.nhs.uk.

I don't have a medical need for transport. What else can I do?

If you do not have a medical need for transport and do not meet the eligibility criteria but still require assistance with your

transport, you can contact **Somerset County Council's Transporting Somerset Team** directly on **01823 357688** or **01823 357713** for further transport information.

Can I claim the cost of travelling to my hospital appointment?

If you are on low income or in receipt of certain benefits and have had to pay a bus, train or taxi fare to attend a hospital appointment you may be eligible to have your transport costs refunded under the Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme (HTCS).

Claiming travel costs

You may be able to get financial help from the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme if you:

- are on a low income
- need NHS treatment at a hospital, other NHS centre or private clinic
- have been referred by a healthcare professional

HTCS does not apply if you are:

- visiting a GP or dentist for routine appointments
- visiting others in hospital
- visiting A&E or Minor Injury Units

Who can claim?

You can claim from the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme if you (or those you depend on) get at least one of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit - Guarantee Credit

You also qualify if your income is £15,050 per year or less and you also get one of the following:

- Child Tax Credit (with or without Working Tax Credit)
- Working Tax Credit with the disability element or severe disability element

If an adult or your dependent child has to travel to your treatment with you for medical reasons, you can claim their travel costs too.

If you're on a low income, with savings of less than £16,000, but don't get any of these benefits or allowances, you can still claim travel costs through the NHS low income scheme (see details overleaf).