



Patient Travel Information Booklet

This booklet is aimed at patients living in the Western Isles who have been told they require treatment or an appointment away from their local hospital. We would encourage you to carry this booklet with you to your appointment as a useful information guide. It contains contact details you may need.

You will be notified by the hospital you are attending with the exact appointment details in due course.

Where will I find patient travel information?

Patient travel information is available from the NHS Western Isles Patient Travel website at: www.patienttravelwi.scot.nhs.uk or your nearest Patient Travel Office (open Monday-Friday 9am-4.30pm and closed for lunch between 1pm-2pm):

Lewis & Harris: Health Board Offices, 37 South Beach, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis HS1 2BB.
Tel. 01851 708021 or email: wi.patienttravelwihb@nhs.scot

Benbecula & Uist: Uist & Barra Hospital, Balivanich, Benbecula, HS7 5LA.
Tel. 01870 603606 or email: wi.patienttraveluist@nhs.scot

Barra: Council Offices, Castlebay, Isle of Barra, HS9 5XD.
Tel. 01871 810431 or email: patient.travel@cne-siar.gov.uk

Urgent travel arrangements

If the Patient Travel Office is closed, please contact Reception at Western Isles Hospital, tel. 01851 704704, stating you require urgent patient travel assistance.

Other NHS Staff, including those based outside the Western Isles, may offer advice on travel arrangements, which may not be an accurate reflection of the NHS Western Isles travel system, entitlement or policy. Therefore any advice received out with the NHS Western Isles Patient Travel Office, should be confirmed directly with the Patient Travel Office before patients undertake travel.

Where will my hospital appointment be?

Where your hospital appointment will be can depend on a number of things. For example:

1. your personal health e.g. what procedure or treatment you need.
2. whether your procedure/treatment can be provided locally (see leaflet titled *Information for Patients: Where will I be referred to?*)
3. potential health complications which may affect your treatment e.g. diabetes, a heart condition or if you are felt to be at a higher risk due to age.

At all times you will be asked for your consent for treatment and whether you have any issues that may be of concern to you (e.g. is treatment really needed, its benefits, side-effects, simpler or safer options, or what would happen if you did nothing).

NHS Western Isles reserves the right to, and will conduct detailed reviews to verify the accuracy and legitimacy of any or all claims made. Users of this service should be aware that NHS Western Isles operates a zero tolerance approach to fraud.

Where assessment, diagnosis and treatment is provided locally, NHSWI expects that patients will receive their hospital treatment here in the Western Isles.

How will my travel be arranged?

Travel tickets

Once you receive your hospital appointment details please contact your nearest Patient Travel Office, where a member of staff will guide you through the process and book your travel. There will be no cost for travel tickets to the patient receiving treatment and patients can choose whether to travel by air or sea.

To ensure you attend your hospital appointment, we encourage you to arrange your travel at the earliest opportunity. It should be noted that morning flights can often be full up to a week in advance. For urgent/unplanned travel, the absolute latest you can book a flight is 3pm the day before travelling – however we cannot guarantee seats will be available at this late stage.

Along with your travel tickets you will also receive a Patient Travel Booking Information Pack which will contain useful information for you about costs of travel and what we can pay for.

Travel tickets are issued under the Highlands & Islands Travel Scheme. Under this scheme you are required to produce your hospital appointment card/letter to the Patient Travel Office. Under exceptional circumstances patients may be able to arrange their travel with the Patient Travel Office electronically; in these circumstances, patients are advised to contact the Patient Travel Office.

Support under the Travel Scheme is available for patients resident (patient/parent of patient on electoral register and registered with a GP) in the Western Isles only. If you are a student you will be eligible for patient travel if you are registered with a GP in the Western Isles.

Patients who require the use of ambulance transport should contact the Scottish Ambulance Service, tel. 0300 123 1236.

Travelling by ferry

If you are travelling by ferry, the Patient Travel Office will provide you with a Travel Warrant which you must change for your ferry ticket at a Caledonian MacBrayne office on the day of travel. You must check-in at least 60 minutes before your departure time.

Return ferry travel can only be cancelled or altered by contacting Caledonian MacBrayne (contact details can be found at the back of this guide).

Travelling by air

If you are travelling by plane, you must check-in at least 60 minutes before your departure time. Ensure that you have the appropriate photographic identification or you will not be permitted to board your flight (this applies to passengers aged 16 or over).

Flights can only be cancelled by contacting the Patient Travel Office at least 60 minutes before the scheduled departure time. Outwith Patient Travel Office opening hours please contact Western Isles Hospital Reception, tel. 01851 704704 for assistance.

What if I want to change my travel details?

Unless there is a medical justification or your appointment has been changed, cancelled or the passenger is too unwell to travel, NHS Western Isles reserves the right to decline and/or charge the cost of changing the travel arrangements. All permitted changes must be made through your local Patient Travel Office. Open return flights are only issued for clinical uncertainty cases.

What if I need overnight accommodation on the mainland?

For certain appointments, patients may need an overnight stay - either before or after their appointment. Although the Patient Travel Office will make your travel booking, you are responsible for arranging your own accommodation. Bed and breakfast costs only are reimbursable (lunch and evening meals will not be reimbursed).

The Patient Travel Office may be able to offer you suggestions on suitable accommodation. Addresses of suitable accommodation may also be obtained from the Scottish Tourist Board, and sometimes from the hospital you are travelling to. Some hospitals offer accommodation within their hospital grounds.

Please note that booking of non-refundable accommodation is not recommended as cancellation charges will not be refunded by NHS Western Isles.

Car parking charges

If travelling from Stornoway Airport to attend a mainland NHS appointment, you will be exempt from car parking fees. In order to qualify for free parking, you will have to present either your appointment card, letter or NHS travel warrant at the Information desk at Stornoway Airport on your return. You are unable to claim airport parking fees on your expenses.

If attending a mainland hospital and taking a car, you are advised to check with the hospital you are attending on whether parking fees are applicable. Please retain all hospital parking tickets to redeem your expenses.

Before you go

Make sure you have packed all the essentials required for your stay. This includes:

- your travel documents and appointment information
- a form of photographic identification e.g. passport, driving licence, council bus pass
- your usual medication
- money, including change for the phone
- mobile phone and charger
- relatives' contact details (if wished)
- overnight bag (if required) with essentials such as night wear, slippers, toiletries and a change of clothes
- this information guide for useful reference.

Identification and baggage allowance

Identification

If travelling by plane, you must travel with photographic identification. It is the airlines policy that all travellers must present photographic identification at check-in. Suitable identification includes a valid passport, photographic driving licence, Council issued bus pass (senior citizens only) and Young Scot Card.

Baggage allowance

Please note the following rules and regulations regarding your free baggage allowance (please check to confirm baggage weights before travelling):

- hold baggage - weighing up to 16kg
- hand baggage - weighing up to 6kg. Maximum dimension (including handles and wheels) is 40x35x18cm.

If you have baggage in excess of your free allowance, baggage will only be accepted if space is available, at an additional charge of £10, with a further £10 charge for any additional items of luggage. This charge cannot be reimbursed by NHS Western Isles.

Prohibited goods

A number of items cannot be taken onboard a plane in hand luggage and will be confiscated at Security before you travel. Please note that these items are not returnable.

Items which cannot be taken within your hand luggage includes knives, scissors, metal nailfiles, batteries, flammable liquids and matches. Any liquids (e.g. drinks, make-up or perfumes) over 100ml will also be confiscated.

Support while travelling

If travelling without a travel escort and you feel you require support e.g. a wheelchair, airport lift, assistance with luggage, travelling with medical equipment, if you have reduced mobility or a cognitive impairment, please inform the Patient Travel Office that you require additional support during your journey.

The Patient Travel Office will notify and book assistance for you through the airport Special Assistance Point. On arrival at check-in for both your outgoing and returning journey, please advise airport staff that this has been booked and they will assist you.

Travel escorts

In certain cases, patients travelling off island require a travel escort to accompany them. The NHS Western Isles Patient Travel Policy sets out the criteria on how funding of travel escorts is approved - which is strictly based on clinical need. These include:

- a patient under 16 years of age (or under 18 and require overnight accommodation).
- having a Welfare Power of Attorney, or a Guardianship Order, or have an Incapacity Certificate, or are a young person under 26 who is Looked After.
- undergoing a procedure that will require assistance during travel.
- having a significant physical or mental disability that requires assistance during travel.
- attending an appointment for training in self-management where your relative/carer will also receive training.

If you feel you require a travel escort, tell the Patient Travel staff and you will be asked to complete a 'Travel Escort Application Form' in the first instance. Should your application be declined, you can appeal this decision by completing the 'Travel Escort Review Form'.

All these forms can be found at Patient Travel Offices or online at: www.patienttravelwi.scot.nhs.uk

Onward travel

Public transport regularly leaves all airport and ferry routes for city centres and there are regular transport services to each of the hospitals. Please note however, on certain routes you may be required to change transport - please check with local transport authorities prior to travel.

Please remember to retain all receipts for your expenses claim.

Discharge arrangements

If you have been admitted to hospital, you will be informed about your return travel arrangements after your procedure.

In these circumstances, your return travel will be made by the discharging hospital you are attending and if you require return assistance, the hospital will make all necessary arrangements for you. When preparing for discharge, please advise the hospital that you are a Western Isles resident.

Delays or cancellations

On occasion, travel arrangements may be delayed due to weather conditions or technical faults. This may result in a lengthy stay in the airport or ferry terminal. There may also be a requirement for an extended overnight stay.

If you are feeling unwell or have limited mobility, you must inform airport/ferry staff who will take this into consideration when making alternative transport and accommodation arrangements.

If you need any advice or have any concerns about your medical condition or medical supplies while you are waiting to travel home, please advise airport/ferry staff who will contact the hospital you have been discharged from.

Useful hand luggage

When travelling, you may wish to have easy access to useful products in your hand luggage. This includes medication, travel aids, personal hygiene products and phone charger.

For those who are diabetic, a small snack or drink may also be advised.

Airline assistance

Under European Union (EU) regulation 261/2004, you are entitled to care and assistance from the airline. For delays over two hours, the airline must provide vouchers for meals and/or refreshments appropriate to the time of day and in relation to the amount of time you have been waiting. If the delay lasts overnight, hotel accommodation and transfers will be provided.

The airline should keep you informed and do their utmost to reasonably accommodate your needs.

Ferry assistance

When the ferry service is disrupted, Caledonian MacBrayne will tell you as soon as they can and no later than 30 minutes after the ship should have sailed.

If it is expected that your sailing is to be cancelled, or delayed departing by more than 90 minutes, you can, where practicable, travel on the next available sailing on the same or an alternative route on the same ticket. For further information visit Your Guide to Passenger Welfare leaflets at: www.calmac.co.uk/on-board/passenger-assistance.

Travel Grants

Macmillan Patient Grant

Patients with a diagnosis of cancer may qualify for a Macmillan Patient Grant to help with extra costs or financial problems caused by their illness, including additional travel costs. For further information please contact Kay Mackinnon, Macmillan Benefits Adviser, Macmillan Benefits Service (Western Isles), tel. 01851 822644 or email: kay-mackinnon@cne-siar.gov.uk

Other Grants & Hardship Funds

- Social Fund available from Western Isles Cancer Care Initiative. Tel. 01851 706721 or email office@wicci.org.uk
- Hebridean Men's Cancer Group. Email: donvaltos@btinternet.com or visit: www.hebmencancer.com/
- Roald Dahl Marvellous Family Grants. Visit: www.roalddahl.com/charity/family-grants

This list is not exhaustive and other grants may be available for specific health conditions. Information can be found by accessing the web and performing a search for 'patient travel' and your specific health condition.

Patients, escorts and relatives who are experiencing financial difficulties may be able to access funds through the Department of Work & Pensions, Social Work Department or charities. Your local Citizen Advice Bureau may also be able to provide support and help in accessing funds.

Claiming expenses

You will be provided with a Claim Form within your Travel Information Pack. Please note when completing your Claim Form you should adhere to the following guidance:

- ensure that you get your Claim Form stamped and signed by the hospital you are attending before you leave.
- retain all relevant receipts (bus, taxi, B&B, etc). Taxi receipts must be completed by the taxi driver with journey details, date and amount paid - an amount only will not count as proof of a taxi journey. If travelling and returning on the same day, please note food/meals are not covered by the Patient Travel Scheme.
- when submitting your Claim Form, please ensure that all relevant sections are fully completed and signed to ensure your payment is not delayed.
- incomplete forms will be returned to the claimant.

Where overnight stays are unavoidable, the Patient Travel scheme is able to cover bed and breakfast costs only (other meals will not be reimbursed).

The first £10 of any additional expenses (such as bus fares) needs to be paid by you. This will be deducted from your claim received following travel. However, you may be exempt from this if you are receipt of certain benefits (full details will be contained in your Patient Travel Booking Information Pack).

Continuous Treatment

When a patient is undergoing Continuous Treatment and is required to attend as an outpatient for a course of treatment (i.e. more than one attendance per week for treatment for the same condition) e.g. a course of chemotherapy or radiotherapy or attendance for regular renal dialysis, the deduction of £10 from each return journey claimed will not apply.

To receive this waiver of the £10 deduction, patients must ensure that staff mark their Claim Form appropriately as Continuous Treatment. For further information in relation to Continuous Treatment contact your local Patient Travel Office

Neonatal Expenses Scheme Eligibility

Having a baby in neonatal care can be extremely stressful for parents. For some people the cost of attending hospital to be with their baby can be an additional stress at a difficult time, for others this can mean they are unable to see their baby purely due to financial pressures.

The Neonatal Expenses Scheme Eligibility Fund is designed to ease those pressures and ensure parents are integral to their baby's care during their time in hospital. The Fund is designed to provide a contribution towards the cost of having a baby within neonatal care and may not meet the full cost of all travel and subsistence during this time. For further information contact your local Patient Travel Office.

Please ensure you check the guidance on what you are eligible to claim for within your Claim Form, before incurring any costs.

Travel to airport or ferry

If no public transport is available or inappropriate, the patient may travel by private car to attend their appointment.

It should be noted that when a patient is a passenger being driven in a private car, payment will be made only in respect of the mileage when the patient was in the car. No payment will be made in respect of any part of the journey without the patient being present.

Private hire costs e.g. taxi or Uber, must not be incurred when suitable public transport is available. NHS Western Isles has the right to decline inappropriate claims.

Frequently asked questions

Q. What if I am attending hospital for private treatment?

A. There is no entitlement to reimbursement of travel, accommodation or subsistence expenses for patients attending hospital for private treatment. The Patient Travel Scheme applies to NHS care. Private care arrangements are not covered.

Q. Is there any cost for family if I am accompanied?

A. Unless a family member is the recognised approved travel escort, then they are required to pay for their own travel, accommodation and subsistence costs.

Q. What support is available for immediate family members?

A. Loganair may offer Compassionate Fares or Compassionate Flexibility to visit or support an immediate family member who is attending hospital or hospice on the mainland. For further information telephone 0344 800 2855 or visit www.loganair.co.uk/our-fares/compassionate.

Q. Do visitors receive transport costs to visit me whilst I am in hospital?

A. No. NHS Western Isles does not reimburse costs to visit patients in hospital. However, those on certain benefits may be able to claim for visiting a close relative (further information can be obtained from the Department of Work & Pensions)

Useful information

Ferry

Caledonian MacBrayne: www.calmac.co.uk/on-board/passenger-assistance

General enquiries tel. 0800 066 5000

Stornoway Office 01851 307470

Ullapool Office 01854 330304

Tarbert Office 01859 570376

Uig Office, Skye 01470 220116

Airports and flight information

Loganair - www.loganair.co.uk

- tel. 0344 800 2855

Stornoway - www.hial.co.uk/stornoway-airport/visitors/information-for-passengers-with-reduced-mobility

- tel. 01851 702256

Benbecula - www.hial.co.uk/benbecula-airport/visitors/information-for-passengers-with-reduced-mobility

- tel. 01870 602051

- Barra - www.hial.co.uk/barra-airport/airport-information/terminal-facilities
- tel. 01871 890212
- Glasgow - www.glasgowairport.com/media/1979/special-assistance-17911-prm-document-251017.pdf
- tel. 0344 481 5555
- Edinburgh - www.edinburghairport.com/prepare/travelling-with-additional-needs
- www.edinburghairport.com/prepare/special-assistance
- Inverness - www.invernessairport.co.uk/how-we-can-help-you
- tel. 01667 464000
- Dundee - www.hial.co.uk/dundee-airport/airport-information/special-assistance
- tel. 01382 662200
- Aberdeen - www.aberdeenairport.com/aberdeen-airport-guide/special-assistance/travelling-with-additional-support-needs
- tel. 0344 481 6666

Travelling to Hospitals

- Inverness - <https://bit.ly/2k7VwLQ>
- tel. 01463 704000
- Aberdeen - <https://bit.ly/2krQCtt>
- tel. 0345 456 6000
- Edinburgh - <https://bit.ly/2IFSleM>
- 0131 536 9000
- Glasgow - <https://bit.ly/2k3iljl>
- tel. 0141 452 1467
- Beatson West of Scotland Cancer Centre - <https://bit.ly/2kAO6kw>
- tel. 0141 531 3737

We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide. If you would like to tell us about your experience:

- speak to a member of staff
- visit our website: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/feedback or share your story at: www.careopinion.org.uk or tel. 0800 122 31 35
- tel. 01851 708069 Monday-Friday between 9am-5.30pm.

Disclaimer

The content of this factsheet is intended to augment, not replace, information provided by your clinician. It is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Reading this information does not create or replace a doctor-patient relationship or consultation. If required, please contact your doctor or other health care provider to assist you to interpret any of this information, or in applying the information to your individual needs.