



NHS Western Isles

Patient Travel Policy

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Content Approved By & Date: Insert Group & Date: DOFP 16/09/2021		Owner: Director of Finance & Procurement	

Version/Draft	Date	Latest Changes Made by	Reason for Changes
2019 1.0	14.05.19	Cheryl Martin	New policy template / policy updates administered.
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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The aim of NHS Western Isles is to provide care and services wherever possible within the Western Isles and as close to people's homes as is practicable. The normal expectation is that where the parent board for any given population can safely and effectively provide services for their population, they should do so. However, given the remote and rural geography of the Western Isles, patients may have to travel extensive distances in order to receive care or treatment. Despite the wide and expanding range of quality services available with the Western Isles, the increasing specialisation in medicine and continuing advances in sophisticated equipment and technology have resulted in some services only being available in major cities, hence a need to travel to major population centres in Scotland and in exceptional circumstances outwith Scotland to access these services.
- 1.2. This policy sets out NHS Western Isles objectives and responsibilities in relation to patient / escort travel, clarifying constraints and limits in relation to subsidy. It is based on Scottish Government guidance contained within MEL(1996)70 "Patients' Travelling Expenses Schemes".
- 1.3. There are two schemes in operation in NHS Scotland to assist patients with travel costs associated with these attendances detailed as follows. All other residents in the Western Isles not included in (a) or (b) below must pay their own travel expenses to get to hospital:
 - (a). *Patient Travel Scheme* – All NHS Scotland patients are entitled to help with travel costs if they are in receipt of certain income based benefits. This assistance is not dependent on distance travelled. Appendix 1 gives details of the benefits, which currently apply.
 - (b). *Highlands and Islands Patient Travel Scheme* – This scheme recognises that patients who are resident in the Highlands and Islands may be required to travel significant distances to attend hospital appointments given the geography of the area. Under this scheme, all patients from the former Highlands and Islands Development Board areas are entitled to financial assistance with their travel costs if they live more than thirty miles from the hospital they are attending.
- 1.4. There are restrictions and these are set out in sections four and six of this policy.
- 1.5. Acting outside these guidelines is considered outwith the Board's authority.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1. This policy applies to NHS Western Isles. It is intended for use by all those who are involved in authorising, administering and / or undertaking patient travel, including patients, their carers / escorts, General Practitioners, Specialists and the staff of NHS Western Isles.

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- 2.2 The principles referred to in MEL(1996)70 must be applied, that: “While clinical need remains paramount, there is a need for all staff, to seek to achieve value for money particularly with regard to the need to incur expenses for patient escorts”.
- 2.3 At all times the Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorates (SGHSCD) guidance shall take precedence. At the time of writing, this is MEL(1996)70 and subsequent letters, which this policy is directly based on.
- 2.4 No travel can be authorised outside of SGHSCD guidance and NHS Western Isles Code of Corporate Governance including the Standing Financial Instructions.
- 2.5 The Director of Finance and Procurement is responsible overall for provision of the patient travel service and procurement of travel services and will deal with escalation of non-clinical queries and complaints. It is reasonable to expect that this policy will not cover all eventualities and the Director of Finance and Procurement and if necessary in discussion with the Chief Executive will consider individual circumstances not explicit within the policy.

Patients and their carers should **not** make representation to any Executive or Non Executive Directors of NHS Western Isles other than those mentioned within this Patient Travel Policy. In the event of any query in relation to an individual’s travel this should first be addressed to the Patient Travel Co-ordinator who, if necessary, will escalate the query to the Director of Finance and Procurement.

If the patient is not satisfied with the decision, they should make their complaint in writing in accordance with the NHS Complaints Procedure.

- 2.6 This document supersedes any previous policy or guidance.

3. Policy Principles

- 3.1 The following principles apply when reimbursing travel expenses claims. The rates of reimbursement can be found in Appendix 2:
- A. Patient Travel Schemes do not reimburse patients for the full cost of travelling to attend an appointment but provide a contribution towards the cost.
 - B. Patients qualifying for financial assistance towards travel expenses under the Highlands and Islands Travel Scheme as per section 1.3(b) are required to pay the first £10.00 of any claim. Patients on benefits as noted in Appendix 1 are exempt from the £10.00 patient travel contribution on presentation of evidence of their eligibility.
 - C. Patients and their carers / escorts (hereafter referred to as escorts) must use the most cost effective means of transport suitable to their needs, taking into account the overall cost of the trip.

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- D. Final judgement as to the cheapest and reasonable means rests with NHS Western Isles. It is the patient's responsibility to check in advance of travel if they are in any doubt.
- E. NHS Western Isles Patient Travel Offices should book all flights and ferries. The patient pays accommodation and other travel expenses and the costs reclaimed where eligible.
- F. Car mileage expenses can be reclaimed if a patient uses their own vehicle.
- G. Only journeys where the patient is in the vehicle are refundable, unless an authorised escort is travelling home following the patient's admission or travelling to hospital to collect the patient on discharge.. Claiming journeys that have not been made is fraud and action will be taken against anyone submitting fraudulent claims.
- H. If an overnight stay is required patients and escorts are encouraged to stay with family and friends where possible.

4. Entitlement To Claim Expenses

NHS Western Isles is committed to ensuring that patients travel to and from hospital by the most appropriate, cost effective mode of transport and that any potential inconvenience, and disruption is minimised. Entitlement to claim for travel and subsistence costs under Highlands and Islands Travel Scheme is as follows:

4.1 Patients

An individual referred and / or admitted as a non emergency to a hospital or clinic by a responsible clinician. Patients must be permanently resident or work within the Board area to be eligible for patient travel subsidy.

4.2 Authorised Escorts

4.2.1 These are adults regarded as being appropriate, necessary and responsible and are **not** restricted in their the abilities to support the patient during their travel between the home address and hospital, during the period of transport and / or accommodation, and / or during treatment. In general, an escort is approved where it is not possible for the patient to travel alone safely. Further guidance on eligibility of escorts is provided in Appendix 3.

4.2.2 Where a medical intervention, where the patient has an identified health need which requires specialist and regular attention during transfer, but does not necessitate an ambulance transfer is required, NHS staff are allocated to act as an escort. . Staff escorts are a rare occurrence for planned appointments. The Scottish Ambulance Service has a medical team available with their vehicles and aircraft where this mode of transport is considered necessary.

4.2.3 If a conventional escort (not staff) is required, then a family member or friend may travel with the patient. The escort must be an adult who is fit to travel and able to provide the necessary support to the patient.

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Escorts will have their expenses refunded based on the eligibility of the patient. Escorts must fulfil the purpose for which their travel was authorised. Expenses for any escort who does not accompany the patient completely as planned will not be reimbursed, and they may be required to repay any costs incurred on their behalf by the Health Board. Guidance on eligibility for escorts is provided at Appendix 3.

4.2.4 The decision to fund a patient escort is taken by the Medical Director's office and **not** by the patient's GP or Consultant (Appendix 4). If a request is declined, patients have the option of arranging to take an escort independently. The Patient Travel office can advise of any local schemes to help reduce costs in these circumstances.

4.2.5 If the patient disagrees with a decision, they can submit additional information to the Medical Director's office. The Patient Travel Office can provide the relevant additional information. The patient's GP or Consultant are **not** involved in this decision.

4.3 Maternity Patients

4.3.1 Maternity patients who are medically required to stay close to hospital from thirty eight weeks until birth are entitled to reimbursement of accommodation costs as per the overnight accommodation rates (see Appendix 2).

4.3.2 The Highlands & Islands Patient Travel Scheme is unable to reimburse the travel and accommodation costs of partners who wish to be present at the birth of their child.

4.3.3 The Scottish Government's Neonatal Expenses Fund (NEF) was set up to contribute to the costs of parents of premature and sick newborn babies travel and accommodation during the early days of their baby's life in order to bond as a family. In the Western Isles the mother is the baby's escort and is covered under the Highlands & Islands Patient Travel Scheme therefore, the NEF will apply to the baby's father. NEF scheme claims must be made at the hospital where the infant is being treated and not from NHS Western Isles.

4.4 Long Term Treatment

Return travel will be paid for patients on long term treatment (more than two weeks), who are discharged from hospital on a weekend pass.

4.5 Continuous Treatment Patients

Continuous Treatment Patients claiming travel expenses under the Highlands and Islands travel scheme are not required to pay the first £10.00 towards the cost of each return journey if they are undergoing continuous treatment. Continuous treatment only applies where patients are required to attend as an outpatient for a course of intensive treatment over a short period of time, e.g. a course of chemotherapy or radiotherapy or attendance for regular renal dialysis. Further information on continuous treatment and the procedure for claiming under this provision are noted in Appendix 5.

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5. Non Entitlement To Claim Expenses

Non entitlement to claim for travel and subsistence costs under Highlands and Islands Travel Scheme as follows:

5.1 Emergency Travel

5.1.1 Western Isles patients admitted to a mainland hospital under emergency circumstances or those transported by NHS Ambulance are not eligible for travel and subsistence expenses reimbursement under the Highlands & Islands Travel Scheme. These circumstances are deemed emergency admissions and do not come under the scope of this policy.

5.1.2 For the costs involved with falling ill whilst away from your home, e.g. on holiday, it is advisable to consider the use of personal travel insurance, in advance of travel, to assist should these circumstances arise. Please note that the Board is not responsible for advising on or dealing with holiday insurance.

5.1.3 When a patient is transported by the Scottish Air Ambulance, the crew will decide whether friends or relatives can accompany them. This is not the responsibility of NHS staff. Accompanying a patient via air ambulance does **not** make the individual a medical escort for the purposes of this policy and they will be responsible for their own accommodation and return journey expenses.

5.1.4 Patients transported by the Scottish Air Ambulance are entitled to have their return journey funded and arranged by their local Western Isles Patient Travel Office. If an escort is authorised by the Medical Director to accompany the patient on their return journey, then the costs associated with the return travel for both the patient and escort will be reimbursed.

5.2 Students

5.2.1 Students studying and living outside the NHS Western Isles area are not eligible to claim expenses for the duration of their study period, as they are resident at the location of the academic institution and not at their NHS Western Isles address.

5.2.2 Students resident in a mainland address at the time of Western Isles Hospital appointment (emergency or non emergency) cannot claim travel under the Highland and Islands Travel Scheme.

5.3. Visitors

MEL(1996)70 states that help for visitors to patients in hospital is not available under either of the travel expenses schemes. However, those in receipt of income based benefits may be able to obtain some help with visiting costs. Enquiries should be directed to your local Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) office. Loganair offer a “compassionate fare” to assist members of the public travelling to visit an immediate family member receiving treatment in a mainland hospital.

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- 5.4 Transfers between Treatment Centres
Patient transfer between treatment centres is not covered under the remit of this policy and costs are at the discretion of the acute staff involved in the care and treatment of the patient.
- 5.5 Primary Care and Private Appointments
Patients who are attending private appointments or attending primary care services such as their GP, dentist or pharmacist are not entitled to financial assistance.

6. Expenses That Can Be Claimed

- 6.1 Transport
- 6.1.1 Patients and their escorts must use the most cost effective means of transport suitable to their needs, taking into account the overall cost of the trip.
- 6.1.2 Patients travelling by car are entitled to reimbursement of fuel expenses at the prevailing mileage rate subject to the following:
- (a). Only fuel expenses where a patient is in the vehicle is refundable, unless an authorised escort is travelling home following the patient's admission or travelling to hospital to collect the patient on discharge.
 - (b). Should two patients living at the same address have hospital appointments on the same day, fuel expenses for one car journey will be refunded. If there are exceptional circumstances, the patient must obtain approval from the Patient Travel Officer before the date of the appointments.
- 6.1.3 Patients travelling by Public Transport can reclaim standard class bus and train fares upon production of receipts.
- 6.1.4 Patients travelling via ferry with a vehicle and require a driver should notify the Patient Travel Office when booking. The driver is not an escort and any expenses incurred by the driver are not reimbursed. Patients requiring an escort for travel must request an escort via the escort authorisation process.
- 6.1.5 Air travel although more expensive is the most frequently used form of travel for accessing mainland hospital services as it limits the time the patient is off island as many trips can be done as a day return. Patients must have photo identification for all flights. NHS passengers are eligible for free parking at Island airports on presentation of the patient's travel warrant at the airport's information desk. Airport fees will not be reimbursed by NHS Western Isles.
- 6.1.6 In exceptional circumstances (and only with the approval of the responsible clinician), a patient may receive treatment at a hospital or facility other than first preference of NHS Western Isles. If this has resulted from a patient preference, the cost of travelling to the Health Boards preferred hospital is refunded, additional travel costs must be met by the patient. Additional accommodation costs are not refunded.

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- 6.1.7 Patients should travel where possible by public transport or private car. NHS Western Isles will only consider reimbursement of taxi costs in certain circumstances, for example:
- (A). There is no public transport available
 - (b). Time restraints prevent the use of public transport
- 6.1.8 Final judgement as to the cheapest and most reasonable form of transportation rests with NHS Western Isles. Should there be any doubt it is the patient's responsibility to check with the Patient Travel Office in advance of travel.
- 6.2 Accommodation
- 6.2.1 Patients and approved escorts are entitled to overnight accommodation at the current rate per person per night, as detailed in Appendix 2, if the stay is unavoidable due to the time of the appointment, admission, or discharge. Patients must book their own accommodation however, the Patient Travel Office can recommend frequently used hotels or guest houses. Booking non refundable accommodation such as Airbnb is not recommended as cancellation charges will not be refunded by NHS Western Isles.
- 6.2.2 Patients must travel to and from appointments on the same day or where appointment or travel schedules do not permit a day return, travel one day either side of the appointment date. Accommodation will be paid if travel schedules do not permit a day return.
- If a patient wishes to travel outwith the policy guidelines, they must book their own travel and accommodation. Patients cannot reclaim these expenses if the appointment is cancelled. Accommodation for travel outwith policy guidelines is not eligible for reimbursement.
- 6.2.3 Escorts authorised to travel with the patient to hospital only must return home at the earliest opportunity, where possible undertaking the journey in one day. If they choose to stay overnight then they do so at their own expense.
- 6.2.4 Escorts required to accompany a patient to and from hospital may either return home and travel back to the hospital on the patient's discharge, or remain near the hospital where the patient has been admitted (provided the cost of accommodation does not exceed that of the cost of the second return journey which would otherwise have been required).
- 6.2.5 Escorts accompanying children under 16 years are provided with hospital accommodation free of charge. If this is not available, accommodation is funded in accordance with the prevailing reimbursement rates.
- 6.2.6 Patients and escorts are encouraged to stay with family and friends where possible. Overnight expenses when staying with family and friends are reimbursed at the family and friends overnight stay rate detailed in Appendix 2.
- 6.2.7 Accommodation costs as described in Appendix 2 will be reimbursed if unexpected delays in air travel, ferry disruptions or road closures occur.

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The transportation provider usually meets accommodation costs for delays due to technical reasons and patients should accept offers of accommodation in these circumstances.

- 6.2.8 The decision regarding reimbursement of overnight expenses rests with the Patient Travel Administrator who processes the form, taking into account the above rules.

7. Expenses That Cannot Be Claimed under the Scheme

- 7.1 The following cannot be claimed:

- A. Loss of earnings;
- B. Meals and refreshments;
- C. Travel costs of patients who have become ill while abroad or away from their home address;
- D. Parking costs or fines;
- E. Childcare Costs;
- F. Car Hire (except where this is a lower cost alternative to public transport).

8. Claims

8.1 Making a Claim

- 8.1.1 The Claim form is included with the patient's travel documentation. The form should be signed and certified as detailed on the back of the form. This includes certification of attendance on the dates shown on the form. The completed form should be sent to the patient's local Patient Travel Office.

- 8.1.2 Proof of entitlement dated within the previous twelve months must be provided on each claim before expenses are reimbursed. NHS Western Isles reserves the right to contact the Department for Work and Pensions to confirm eligibility.

- 8.1.3 NHS Western isles will deduct the patient travel contribution (Appendix 1) from expense reimbursements in instances where the patient cannot prove that they are eligible for the 100% subsidy.

- 8.1.4 Patients who are unable to pay the initial cost of their travel should contact their local Patient Travel Office (Appendix 6) to request an advance of travelling expenses. Completed expense forms and receipts must be returned promptly to the Patient Travel Office after attendance, or an invoice will be raised for the full amount of the advance. Failure to repay an advance may result in debt recovery procedures.

- 8.1.5 Claims must be submitted within three months of attendance at hospital. Claims outside this timescale will not be reimbursed.

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8.2 Validation of Claims

- 8.2.1 To ensure reimbursement of expenses, the travel claim form must be stamped and signed by a staff member at the place of treatment.
- 8.2.2 Appropriate receipts must be included with all claims, bank statements cannot be accepted as a receipt. All taxi receipts must contain the date, travel pick up point and destination and signed by the driver. Hotel accommodation must be on a valid hotel receipt. Any receipts deliberately altered will result in the full claim being invalidated. The fraudulent claim form will be passed onto the NHS Counter Fraud Services.
- 8.2.3 Where a patient has deliberately applied for assistance with travel costs to which they are not entitled the matter will be referred to the NHS Counter Fraud Services. Patient Travel staff will refuse to pay expenses if they suspect a claim is fraudulent until further checks are completed.

8.3 Missed Appointments

- 8.3.1 Patients must ensure they arrive at the hospital in time for their appointment. If the patient arrives late, and misses their appointment they will not be entitled to reclaim their travel costs. Any patient who is unable to attend their appointment should contact their local Patient Travel Office within office hours (appendix 6).

If delays in air or ferry transport means that the patient will not arrive for their appointment on time, the patient should contact the hospital involved and their local Patient Travel Office to inform them of the situation.

9. Equality And Diversity

- 9.1 Fair care is assured to all without any discrimination between persons on grounds of sex, marital status, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language, social origin, other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions, such as religious beliefs or political opinions.

10. Patient Focus Public Involvement

- 10.1 NHS Western Isles is working with patients and members of the public to improve the quality of health service provided.
- 10.2 A patient focused NHS will:
- maintain good communications, including listening and talking to patients, public and communities;
 - have knowledge of those using the service and understand their needs;
 - keep users of the service informed and involved;
 - have clear, explicit standards of service;
 - maintain politeness and mutual respect;

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- have the ability to respond flexibly to an individual's specific needs;
- ensure effective action is taken to improve services; and
- talk with users, the wider public and communities.

10.3 Effective public involvement can:

- act as a catalyst for change;
- help achieve a major improvement in the health of the public; and
- help strengthen public confidence in the NHS.

11. Accountability And Responsibilities

This section describes the responsibilities of the various parties involved in patient travel.

11.1 Patients and Escorts

Patients and escorts are responsible for their own expenses incurred during their travel and need to be aware of limitations to entitlements.

Patients must familiarise themselves with the policy and eligible expenses.

11.2 For all non emergency transfers patients and escorts are reminded to take sufficient means of payment for the planned journey and any unforeseen delays that might occur. Patients must inform NHS Western Isles of any mobility problems as soon as possible.

11.3 Patient's Responsibility

It is the patient's / patient's representative's responsibility to clarify their rights and entitlement directly with their local Patient Travel Office, before incurring expense. Other NHS staff, including those based outside the Western Isles, may offer patients advice on travel arrangements, which may not be an accurate reflection of the NHS Western Isles travel system, entitlement and policy. Therefore any advice received outwith the NHS Western Isles Patient Travel Office, should be confirmed directly with the Patient Travel Office before patients undertake travel.

11.4 Patient Travel Team

Have the operational responsibility for patient travel, staff and patient communications, and raising awareness.

11.5 Director of Finance and Procurement / Chief Executive

The Director of Finance and Procurement has the overall responsibility for provision of the patient travel service and procurement of travel services and will deal with escalation of non-clinical queries and complaints. It is reasonable to expect that this policy will not cover all eventualities and the Director of Finance and Procurement and if necessary in discussion with the Chief Executive will consider individual circumstances not explicit within the policy.

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11.6 All staff

Should be familiar with details of the patient travel policy and refer any queries to the Patient Travel Team.

12. Monitoring And Reviewing

The Policy is reviewed every two years. This will include a review of feedback received and associated complaints along with any developments on the regulatory MEL or further advice from Scottish Government.

13. References

- Letter from David Palmer 7.04.03 – Patients Travel Expenses Schemes.
- Letter from David Palmer 8.10.04 – Patients Travel Expenses Schemes.
- MEL (1996)70.
- Letter from David Palmer (SEHD Deputy Director of Finance 7th April 2003).
- Pregnant woman flight permission guidance received 17.05.07 from Chambers Travel Management in conjunction with Loganair.

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Appendix 1 – Entitlement to Subsidy

Partial Subsidy – patient not on income-based support

Partial subsidy is available if the distance travelled from the patient's home (or place of residence) to the hospital is thirty miles or more, or involves a journey by sea of more than five miles.

For patients eligible for partial subsidy NHS Western Isles will fund reasonable travel expenses less the current patient contribution sum, which the patient has to pay (see Appendix 2). Should the journey cost less than the current patient contribution sum then no subsidy will be payable.

Patients holding an HC3 Exemption Certificate may be entitled to pay a lower patient contribution sum.

Full Subsidy – patient on income-based support

NHS Western Isles applies government guidance in determining eligibility for full travel subsidy. At the time of writing, patients in receipt of the following are entitled to a 100% subsidy, irrespective of the thirty mile rule:

1. Universal Credit
2. Income Support;
3. Income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
4. Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
5. Pension Credit Guarantee Credit; and
6. NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate.
7. HC2 Certificate

This is not an exhaustive list and will be subject to any changes in guidance from Scottish Government.

Full Subsidy – children and young people

The following are entitled to full subsidy if their parent or guardian meets the eligibility criteria above:

1. Children under 16;
2. Young people aged 16-18 in full-time education;
3. Young people aged 16-18 and classed as a dependant of someone who meets the eligibility criteria; and

Appendix 2 – Charges and Fees Standard Tariff for Patients and Escorts

. A list of the current standard charges and fees will always be available from Patient Travel Offices and on the Health Board's web site.

Patient travel rates	
Patient Contribution	£10.00
Mileage Rate – island	24p per mile
Mileage Rate – mainland	24p per mile
Overnight rate (maximum) – bed and breakfast	£50 per person per night
Overnight rate – friends & family	£12 per night (first 14 nights) £6 per night (thereafter)

Appendix 3 - Patient Funded Escort Eligibility

The decision on whether NHS Western Isles (NHSWI) will fund an escort is based on clinical need. The information provided in the Patient Escort Request (PER). The Patient Travel Office will be able to provide this form.

This decision is taken by the Medical Director's office at NHSWI and **not** by your GP or Consultant. If a request is declined patients have the option of arranging to take an escort independently. The Patient Travel Office can advise of any local schemes to help reduce costs in these circumstances.

If the patient disagrees with a decision, there will be an opportunity to submit additional information to the Medical Director's office. The Patient Travel Office will be able to provide this form. The patient's GP or Consultant are **not** involved in this decision.

Reasons why a funded travel escort will be provided:

In general, a travel escort will only be provided by NHS Western Isles if the patient has a significant clinical condition that makes independent travel impossible. NHS Western Isles specifically consider the following as reasons to funding for an escort:

- A. Patient is under 16 years of age (or is under 18 and requires overnight hotel accommodation);
- B. Patient has a Guardianship Order or has an Incapacity Certificate or is a young person under the age of 26 who is "Looked After". (An Incapacity Certificate is a certificate provided by a healthcare provider to allow treatment for patients who are unable to make these decisions independently, the patient's main carer should be aware of this.) A copy of the patient's allowance award is required;
- C. Patient is undergoing a procedure that will require assistance on the return journey (e.g. major surgical procedure or joint replacement, medical therapy that causes significant side effects);
- D. Patient has a significant physical or mental disability that would require assistance with travel (e.g. administration of medication by an escort, assistance with baggage, toileting etc. (although please note if a patient is able to travel with the support of airport ground crew/ use of a taxi then an escort is not required);
- E. Patient is attending an appointment that involves training in self-management that a carer or relative will be undertaking on their return home.

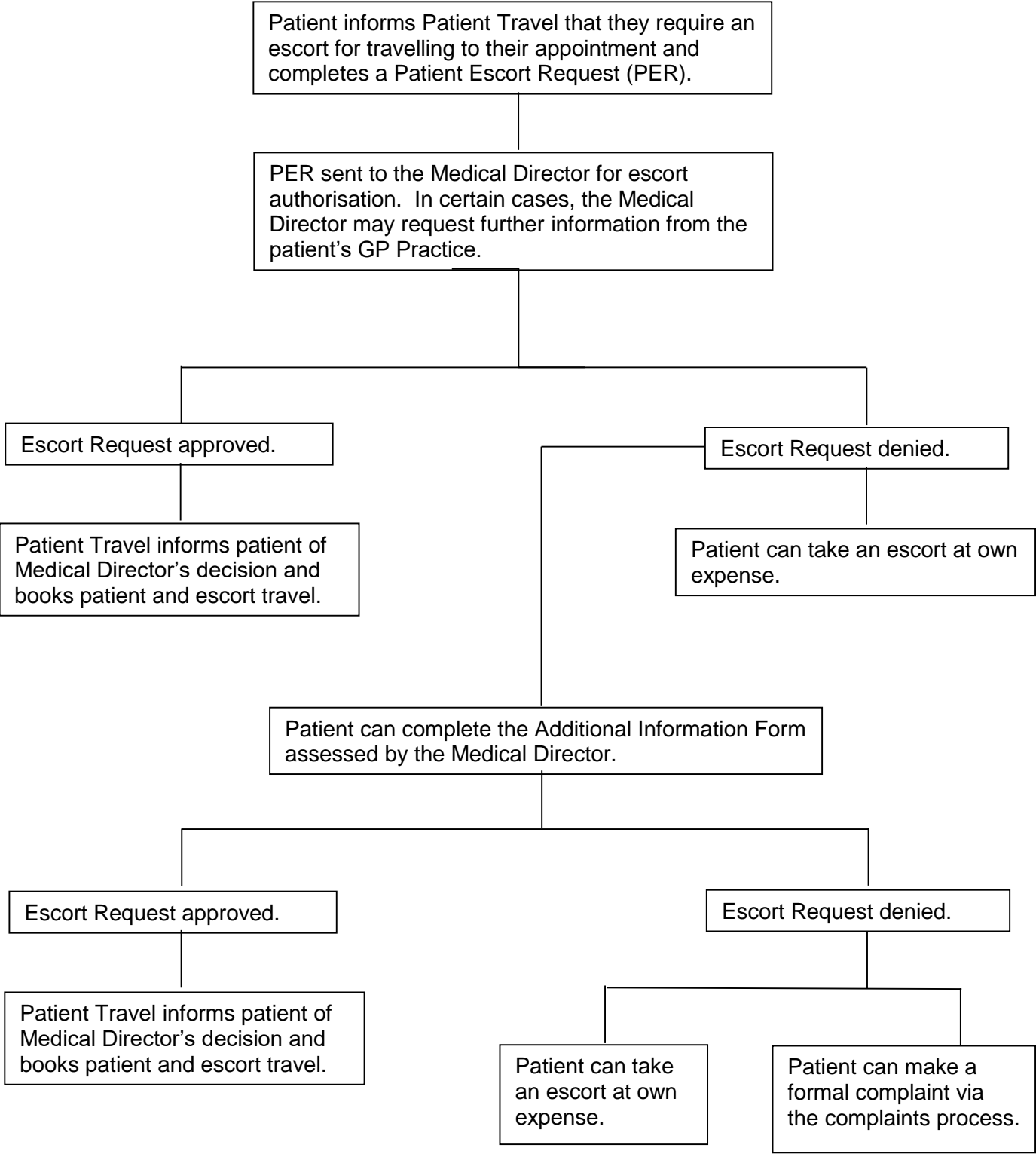
This list is not exhaustive and exceptional circumstances will be considered.

Social, emotional, fear of flying or pregnancy is **not** considered a reason for an escort.

Please note:

- All information provided as part of your Escort application will be removed from our system following your hospital visit;
- Sensitive personal information is shared using NHS mail secure email platform;
- You may withdraw your consent to share this information, please contact the Medical Director's Office or your GP.

Appendix 4 – Patient Escort Eligibility Flow Chart



Appendix 5 – Continuous Treatment

When a patient is undergoing Continuous Treatment whereby they are required to attend as an outpatient for a course of intensive treatment over a short period of time, 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.

In these circumstances, the deduction of £10.00 from each return journey claimed will not apply.

Definition

Continuous Treatment is defined as one course of intensive treatment over a short period and rather than being admitted to hospital, the patient is treated on an outpatient basis. Accommodation costs for NHS Western Isles patients treated on the mainland are paid for the duration of their intensive treatment only. Any additional appointments before, during and or after the actual course of intensive treatment cannot be claimed under continuous treatment. A separate claim should be made for these additional appointments.

Procedure

When Continuous Treatment has been established, staff only should clearly mark “continuous treatment” when authorising a travel claim form. Patients should submit these on a regular basis to their local Patient Travel Office for payment. Claims over three months old will not be processed. Finance staff may contact wards to confirm that the claimant is receiving continuous treatment so please ensure that the staff member authorising the claim has clearly printed their name on the form.

Example

A renal patient can claim travel expenses under continuous treatment for attending dialysis appointments three times a week. Any other travel for scans or X-rays would not constitute as continuous treatment and a claim should be made under the normal Patient Travel scheme.

Requirements of Staff

Medical, Nursing and Reception staff should ensure that the above rules are followed and not to assign “continuous treatment” to a claim form inappropriately.

Requirements of Patients

Patients are asked to note the above regulations and not to expect or request additional expenses where the requirements are not fulfilled.

Further information can be provided by the local Patient Travel Office.

Appendix 6 – Patient Travel Office Contact Details

Patient travel offices are open Monday to Friday. Offices are closed to the public and patients should book their travel via telephone or email. Travel warrants are emailed or posted to the patient in time for their appointment.

Outwith Patient Travel Office hours, patients should contact the Western Isles Hospital on 01851 704704 for assistance.

LEWIS AND HARRIS

Patient Travel Office
Health Board Offices
37 South Beach
Stornoway
Isle of Lewis
HS1 2BB
Tel: 01851 708021
Email: wi.patienttravelwihb@nhs.scot
Opening Hours – 9.00am to 4.30pm

BENBECULA AND UISTS

Patient Travel Office
Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh
Balivanich
Isle of Benbecula
HS7 5LA
Tel: 01870 603606
Email: wi.patienttraveluist@nhs.scot
Opening Hours – 9.00am to 4.30pm

BARRA

Patient Travel Office
Council Offices
Castlebay
Isle of Barra
HS9 5XD
Tel: 01871 810431
Email: patient.travel@cnes-siar.gov.uk
Opening Hours – 9.00am to 5.00pm