



Patient Travel Claim Form

Highlands & Islands Travel Scheme

The Highlands & Islands Travel Scheme assists patients living in remote and island communities with the cost of travelling to and from hospitals. The Scheme will reimburse patient travel expenses for the distance travelled to attend for treatment.

To qualify for the scheme, patients must be resident or permanently working in the Western Isles, and the distance travelled to the hospital must be at least 30 miles or more (minimum 60 miles return), or involve a journey by sea of more than five miles.

Patients must have been referred to a hospital by a consultant, GP, dentist or be attending an appointment. The scheme excludes any patient transport provided by the ambulance service.

Patients are required to pay the initial £10 of any expense claimed unless they are in receipt of Income Support, Universal Credit, Income-related Employment & Support Allowance, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Pension Credit or do not have a valid NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate.

Children under 16 years and their travel escort and young people aged 16-18 years in full-time education are also included in this scheme, and are not required to pay the initial £10 if their parent/guardian is in receipt of these benefits mentioned above.

Patients on low income may also qualify for all their expenses. They can apply to the Department of Work & Pensions and complete the HC11 Form 'Help with health costs' (<https://bit.ly/2IOSHj8>).

Patients applying for full reimbursement of their expenses must provide evidence of their benefit entitlement e.g. letter from Department of Work & Pensions.

Travelling expenses

Patients must have their Claim Form stamped and signed by the visiting hospital as proof of attendance for treatment.

At all times, patients are expected to use the least expensive form of public transport available e.g. bus, train, etc.

Advanced payment of travel expenses

For those patients who are unable to meet the additional costs for travel or accommodation, they should contact their local Patient Travel Office who may provide an advanced payment. Any advance provided will be deducted from the patient's future claim.

Failure to provide receipts for advanced payment and any remainder owing will result in NHS Western Isles undertaking debt recovery procedures.

Transport and receipts

Travel by bus/train

If travelling by bus/train you should purchase a standard ticket and retain your receipt.

Travel by taxi

Travelling by taxi is permitted only in cases where a public transport service is not available. A blank taxi receipt with an amount only, will not be counted as proof of a taxi journey. If using island taxis, they must be registered with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

Travel with authorised escort

Only fuel expenses where a patient is in the vehicle is refundable (*mileage rate paid at £0.24p per mile*), unless an authorised escort is travelling home following the patient's admission or travelling to hospital to collect the patient on discharge.

Travel by private car with unauthorised escort

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 fuel expenses for the mileage when the patient was in the car (*mileage rate paid at £0.24p per mile*). No payment will be made in respect of any part of the journey without the patient being present.

Accommodation

Patients who need an overnight stay - either before or after their appointment - will be reimbursed for the least expensive, reasonable accommodation up to a maximum of £60 per person per night inclusive of breakfast costs. Where overnight stays are unavoidable, bed and breakfast costs only are reimbursable (lunch and evening meals will not be reimbursed).

Addresses of suitable accommodation may be obtained from the Scottish Tourist Board, and sometimes from the hospital you are travelling to. Some hospitals even offer reasonable accommodation within their hospital grounds.

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

Staying with relatives or friends

If patients or travel escorts are staying with friends or family, they are entitled to reclaim costs of £12 per night.

If you need to stay for longer than two weeks with friends or family whilst you attend treatment e.g. radiotherapy, you will be eligible to receive £6 per night after the first 14 days.

Patients are not required to keep receipts if staying with friends or family.

Children under 5 years

Most commercial accommodation does not charge for children aged under 5 years. However, if this is not the case, then the child will also be entitled to claim the £60 per person per night inclusive of breakfast costs.

Children under 5 years are not entitled to claim for overnight stays with friends or family.

Travel escorts of children under 5 years who are staying with the child in hospital will not be entitled to claim for overnight stays.

Air Ambulance Return

Patients flown by the Air Ambulance Service are entitled to claim accommodation and travel expenses when they are discharged from hospital and require an overnight stay before returning home.

Escorts

Unless the travel escort has been formally authorised by NHSWI, then they are required to pay for their own travel, accommodation and subsistence costs.

Where a travel escort has been authorised, their expenses can be claimed on the **patient's** Claim Form.

Escorts who are 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 then they do so at their own expense.

Escorts who are 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).

If there are any additional costs outwith the above, the travel escort is required to meet these at their own expense.

Travel escorts are advised to contact their local Patient Travel Office to clarify the limits set on the reimbursement of accommodation costs.

Making a claim

Guidance

- Please ensure you take the attached Claim Form with you (to be authorised and stamped). All relevant sections must be fully completed with accompanying receipts and signed to ensure your payment is paid and not delayed.
- Your Claim Form can be completed by you or your representative. For a child aged under 16 years, the Claim Form should be completed by their parent/guardian.
- Where asked to provide your CHI number, you may find it at the top of your appointment letter.
- Ensure your Claim Form lists the dates and times of all your appointments, or the date and time of your admission and discharge - and that the ward number or name is detailed.
- If you are staying in accommodation or with relatives/friends you must enter their address.

Incomplete Claim Forms will be returned to the claimant

How to complete the Claim Form

- If you have booked the travel yourself, enter whether it was by sea or air, the route travelled (e.g. Stornoway to Glasgow) and state whether the journey was a single **(S)** or a return **(R)** and attach your tickets/receipts as proof of purchase.
- If travelling by bus, train, tram or taxi, please state the method of transport, journey details (Glasgow Airport to City Centre) and state whether the journey was a single **(S)** or a return **(R)** and attach your tickets/receipts as proof of purchase.
- If staying with friends/relatives no receipt is required.
- If staying in a B&B/hotel you must provide an invoice/receipt featuring the company details.
- If you have claimed for a taxi, please state the reason for this (i.e. why public transport was not used)
- Claim Forms must be submitted within **three** months of your appointment.

Reclaiming expenses

The following expenses may be reclaimed (*subject to guidance being followed*):

Car mileage (per mile)	£ 0.24 when patient is present in vehicle with authorised escort
Accommodation (hotel/B&B)	£60.00 per person per night inclusive of breakfast costs
Accommodation (friends/family)	£12.00 per person per night inclusive of breakfast costs
Accommodation (after first 14 days)	£ 6.00 per person per night inclusive of breakfast costs

Notes.

- Children under 5 years are not entitled to claim for overnight stays with friends/family.
- Authorised travel escort expenses are claimed on the **patient's** Claim Form. It is the responsibility of the patient to provide payment to the travel escort once they receive their returned expenses.
- Patients undergoing Continuous Treatment will receive a £10 waiver. For further information in relation to Continuous Treatment contact your local Patient Travel Office
- Patients may be able to apply to the Young Patients Family Fund. For further information contact your local Patient Travel Office.

Submitting your claim

Please return your completed Claim Form (including appropriate receipts) to your local Patient Travel Office:

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