

Patient Travel and Related Costs Policy

Approved 17th January 2017

DOCUMENT PROFILE

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale

The Health & Social Services Department (HSSD) has made arrangements with health services in the UK* to provide certain specialised treatments that are not available in Jersey. The treatment of patients outside Jersey results in travel and other costs being incurred. (*For the purposes of this policy, the term 'UK' also covers Guernsey as appropriate.)

1.2 Scope

This Policy applies to all users of services provided by HSSD.

This Policy may be subject to change at any time. Individual eligibility is assessed under the policy in force at the time that treatment or care is provided.

2. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

This Policy establishes arrangements for covering the cost of patient travel to the UK as well as detailing policy on related matters such as accommodation and patient escorts.

3. QUALIFYING FOR HSSD-FUNDED TRAVEL

HSSD will pay for flights and certain travel-related costs for those patients who would ordinarily qualify for free hospital care in Jersey in accordance with the terms of the Residents and Non-Residents Charging Policy.

Eligible patients must be referred by a Jersey Hospital Consultant to travel to the UK for publicly-funded treatment that **cannot** be provided in Jersey.

All requests for travel must be accompanied by a valid hospital appointment letter.

Where travel-related costs are to be incurred in relation to the onward referral of a patient to a second mainland centre for treatment or further investigation, authorisation must be provided by the Jersey Hospital Consultant who originally referred the patient to the UK.

Travel and other related costs will **not** be met by HSSD for those patients pursuing treatment in the UK where local provision exists or where a patient has been referred directly to a facility in the UK by a General Practitioner.

HSSD is not able to provide assistance to patients undergoing procedures of limited clinical value (such as cosmetic treatment) in the UK, which would not be provided to public patients in Jersey.

Travel costs relating to participation in medical trials will not routinely be met, but may be funded on a discretionary basis if requested by the patient's consultant.

Patients who do not meet the criteria set out in this Policy will be liable for all travel and related costs incurred.

4. TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

It is a requirement of this Policy that ALL travel is booked through the HSSD Travel Office in order to ensure that HSSD obtains best value for money for taxpayers by booking the most economical rate while maintaining a record of all travel undertaken and funded.

Patients who have been referred to a hospital in the UK should contact the HSSD Travel Office as soon as they are advised of the date/time of their appointment and/or admission. The HSSD Travel Office is situated in the Gwyneth Huelin Wing of the General Hospital or can be contacted as follows:

Telephone: 442323/442310
Fax: 442898
Email: hss.travelservice@health.gov.je

Patients who decide to make their own travel arrangements will NOT have their travel costs reimbursed. This applies in all cases, including when a medical appointment is cancelled.

In most cases, travel to the UK will be by air and by the most direct route possible.

Where travel by sea is necessary for clinical reasons, the full cost of the patient's travel will be borne by HSSD. If travel by sea is the patient's preferred option but is not clinically necessary, HSSD will contribute an amount up to the cost of the comparable air fare with the difference to be met by the patient.

Where a contract is in place with a UK provider covering onward travel arrangements from the airport to their place of temporary residence whilst in the UK or from the airport or temporary residence in the UK to the hospital where they are being treated, patients will be expected to make use of such services.

In the absence of such a contract, patients should use available public transport facilities. Patients should pay for this at the point of use and claim back eligible expenses from the HSSD Travel Office upon their return to Jersey. **Valid receipts will be required in all circumstances.**

Where it is not possible for patients to make use of contracted or public transport services, the HSSD Travel Office can consider and, if necessary, authorise the use of a taxi or hire car as appropriate. This should be agreed prior to the commencement of travel.

The department reserves the right not to reimburse any expense claims it considers excessive or unwarranted.

5. PATIENT ESCORTS

Subject to the patient qualifying for HSSD-funded travel, HSSD will meet the travel costs of a friend or relative escorting a patient in certain circumstances.

5.1 Children

Where the patient is a child under the age of 18 at the date of travel, HSSD will meet the travel and related costs (as defined under this policy) of an appropriate adult. as escort.

Where the child is referred suffering from a serious medical condition or requiring major surgery, HSSD will consider requests for both parents to accompany the patient for the initial consultation or inpatient stay. HSSD would not ordinarily expect that both parents will need to continue to accompany the child on subsequent care episodes and will use its discretion in assessing whether HSSD continues to fund travel costs for both parents on an ongoing basis. Travel costs relating to other siblings, relatives or friends accompanying the patient and his/her parents will not be met by HSSD.

5.2 Patients Over 75 Years

Where the patient is aged 75 years or over at the date of travel, HSSD will meet the travel and related costs (as defined under this policy) of a relative or friend as escort (but see below).

5.3 Clinical Requirements

Where a patient (aged 18 or over) is unable to travel unescorted due to clinical and/or psychiatric conditions, as assessed by the referring Jersey Hospital Consultant, HSSD will meet the travel and related costs (as defined in this policy) of a relative or friend as escort.

When a patient's clinical and/or psychiatric condition **requires** that a medical or nursing escort is provided by HSSD, as assessed by the referring Jersey Hospital Consultant, the full costs in providing this escort will be met by HSSD. In such cases, HSSD will not also meet the additional costs for a friend or relative to accompany the patient.

5.4 Planning/Follow-Up Appointments

The cost of an escort will not routinely be met by HSSD for planning visits prior to radiotherapy or follow-up appointments subsequent to inpatient treatment unless the patient is covered under 5.1 above.

5.5 Assessments

The advice of directorate managers and clinicians will be sought as appropriate in the definition of a serious medical condition and/or major surgery in relation to paragraph 5.1 above and in assessing a patient's clinical and/or psychiatric condition in relation to paragraph 5.3 above.

6. PATIENTS RECEIVING LONG-TERM TREATMENT

Where a patient is required to receive treatment in a UK hospital for more than four consecutive weeks, additional return flights and associated travel costs will be covered by HSSD for the patient to return to Jersey or for a friend/relative to visit the patient in the UK every four weeks, subject to a maximum of four visits in any calendar year.

In circumstances where the patient is a child under the age of 18, HSSD will consider return flights every two weeks subject to a maximum of eight visits in any calendar year.

7. INTERPRETERS

If an interpreter is necessary, arrangements would normally be made at the hospital to which the patient is travelling. Patient escorts, with the exception of a nurse or doctor accompanying the patient for medical reasons, will be expected to act as an interpreter. The patient will be expected to pay for any further interpreting services required.

8. PATIENT ACCOMMODATION

Patients receiving inpatient treatment at a UK hospital will normally be accommodated free of charge within the hospital. Patients receiving outpatient treatment or attending an outpatient appointment will be expected to travel on a day return basis for which accommodation will not be necessary.

When day return travel is not practical (e.g. due to scheduling of medical appointments), overnight accommodation may be required. Patients will be expected to use accommodation available under existing arrangements between HSSD and providers in certain locations (such as Southampton and Cambridge). If they choose not to do so, they will be responsible for their own accommodation costs which will not be reimbursed by HSSD.

In the absence of such arrangements, patients and their escort should, where possible, make use of accommodation within the UK hospital. When this is not possible, patients (and their escort) will be expected to accept accommodation of a standard provided by a reasonable guest house. Except in exceptional circumstances agreed in advance by the HSSD Travel Office, patients and their escorts will be expected to share a room.

The HSSD Travel Office is able to book appropriate accommodation. If the patient/escort chooses to make their own arrangements, HSSD will reimburse costs up to a maximum total of £75 per night or £100 per night in Central London upon production of a valid receipt. This cost does not include breakfast unless it is an all-inclusive rate.

9. NON-REIMBURSABLE COSTS

HSSD will not pay or reimburse the following claims:

- Relatives' accommodation (other than as provided for in Section 5)
- Food and meals (other than as provided for below)
- Private arrangements
- Care of animals
- Maintenance of property and vehicles
- Loss of earnings
- Personal possessions and baggage
- Personal money

Where a patient is required to stay in the UK for seven or more consecutive nights outside of a hospital environment for ongoing care, HSSD will make a contribution of £10 per day towards the general living expenses of the patient (ie where they are expected to buy their own food and it is not provided as part of their accommodation). The HSSD Travel Office will identify patients that fall into this category and issue them in advance with a claim form which they then submit on their return.

The above list is not exhaustive. Any costs claimed that are not detailed within this Policy will not be reimbursed by HSSD.

10. EMERGENCY CHARTER FLIGHTS

Where for clinical reasons a patient requires emergency transfer to a UK hospital by a charter flight, the charter flight and other associated costs will be met by HSSD providing the patient satisfies the eligibility provisions of Section 3.

HSSD will also meet the costs of emergency charter flights for visitors when the transfer is an integral part of the standard service provision for patients entitled to free emergency treatment under a Reciprocal Health Agreement (RHA). Countries with which Jersey has an RHA are detailed in Appendix A.

The costs of any charter flights provided for visitors not covered under a RHA, including repatriation flights, will remain the responsibility of the patient and/or their insurers. HSSD will invoice patients for any such costs incurred.

When space, cost and clinical conditions permit, one relative/friend may accompany the patient on a charter flight, with the cost borne by HSSD.

Where HSSD has met the costs of a transfer by charter flight for a Jersey patient, HSSD will also meet the costs of the return travel for the patient and the escort who travelled with the patient. If return travel to Jersey requires the use of a charter flight for clinical reasons then the costs will be met by HSSD for qualifying patients.

11. INSURANCE

In relation to patients undergoing treatment in the UK, HSSD will not be held liable for:

- any personal injury claims or personal liabilities;
- any loss or damage to personal possessions or money suffered by a patient and/or escort; or
- the insurance of, and/or damage or repairs to, personal motor vehicles taken to the UK.

HSSD therefore recommends that all referred patients and escorts obtain travel insurance to provide cover for personal possessions, money, personal liability and any insurable incidents or potential additional charges when in the UK.

12. DEATH OF A PATIENT IN THE UK

If a patient referred by HSSD for treatment dies while receiving inpatient or outpatient treatment in the UK, HSSD will contribute to the costs of repatriating the patient's body to Jersey. Payment will only be made on receipt of an itemised account and will be limited to £800 per case subject to any additional necessary costs specifically required for the transportation of the body to Jersey. For the avoidance of doubt, HSSD will not pay for costs that would have been incurred ordinarily when someone dies (eg certification of death or cremation).

13. DISCRETIONARY NATURE OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Nothing in this policy is intended to create a legally binding obligation on HSSD to book travel, pay for travel or other costs, or reimburse expenses incurred by patients and other persons. The financial assistance provided to patients remains entirely discretionary on the part of HSSD.

14. INTERPRETING THIS POLICY

In the event that a patient disagrees with a decision regarding the interpretation of an aspect of this policy then, in the first instance, they should raise the matter with the HSSD Travel Manager. If the issue remains unresolved, they can request that it is submitted to the Divisional Lead – Operational and Support Services for resolution.

15. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- Reciprocal Health Agreements
- Residents and Non-Residents Charging Policy

16. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Policy has been distributed to the travel office and loaded on to the gov.je website, replacing the previous version.

APPENDIX A – Reciprocal Health Agreements

As at the date of the introduction of this Policy, Jersey has Reciprocal Health Agreements with the following jurisdictions:

- Australia
- Austria
- France
- Guernsey and Alderney
- Iceland
- Isle of Man
- New Zealand
- Norway
- Portugal
- Sweden
- United Kingdom of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

Definition of a Visitor for RHA purposes

The definition of a visitor for the purposes of eligibility to receive free healthcare and/or treatment under a RHA may include a person who is visiting Jersey for leisure or business purposes.

The definition of a visitor does not include:

- any person who has registered with the Social Security Department (SSD) and has a Jersey Social Security number. It is deemed that registering with SSD shows “intent to reside in Jersey” as opposed to just “visiting”, even if that intent to reside may be on a short-term basis; or
- any person who is employed in Jersey and paid by a Jersey employer.

Any person who is employed in a country with which Jersey has a RHA, but is temporarily deployed in Jersey will be defined as a visitor providing their period of deployment is less than three months. If their contract of services in Jersey is for more than three months, they fall outside the RHA regardless of whether they return to the UK or other RHA-designated jurisdiction for weekend visits, holidays etc.