

NON-EMERGENCY PATIENT TRANSPORT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Title	Non Emergency Patient Transport Policy and Procedures.	
Policy No	TRAN 001	Version 001
Target Audience	All Staff and Members of the Public	
Authors Name	Laurence Harvey, Interim Transport Manager	
Lead Executive	Terry Tonks, Interim Finance Director	
Date Approved	30/03/2010	
Approved By	Executive Board	
Ratified By	Trust Board	
Date Ratified	30/03/2010	
Further Guidance/Information	Laurence Harvey, Interim Transport Manager	

Index

Section		Page
	Executive Summary	3
1	Introduction	4
2	Equality and Diversity Assessment	4
3	Policy Statement	4
4	Policy	4
5	Eligibility Criteria	5
6	Healthcare Transport Cost Scheme	6
7	Booking Procedure	7
8	Responsibilities	8
	Reference Documents	8
	Appendices	9/10

Executive Summary

Title	Non-Emergency Patient Transport Policy and Procedures
Purpose	To ensure all staff and members of the public are aware of the Trusts policy on the provision of Non- Emergency Patient Transport Services (NEPTS) and the application of the Healthcare Transport Costs Scheme.
Applicable to	All DCHFT employees, patients and other health care professionals.
Aim of Policy	To provide clarity and to detail the Trusts responsibility with regard to NEPTS.
Main Features	Define the eligibility criteria for NEPTS provision. To ensure all requests for NEPTS are legitimate and reflect true medical need. To define the booking procedures. To ensure all staff are aware and understand this policy.
Policy Lead	Laurence Harvey – Interim Transport Manager
Development Group	

1 Introduction

1.1 Non-Emergency PTS activity is typified by the non-urgent, planned transportation of patients, with a medical need for transport, to and from a NHS health service provider and between health care providers. This will encompass a wide range of vehicle types and levels of care consistent with the patients needs.

1.2 The policy provides information for all members of staff, members of the public and healthcare professionals who make travel arrangements on behalf of patients. The policy is designed to ensure that DCHFT provides a punctual and professional patient transport service to eligible patients and to provide guidance and support to patients who are not eligible for free transport.

1.3 Dorset County Hospital FT recognises its obligations to provide a non emergency patient transport service (NEPTS) to certain patients who, due to their medical condition, are unable to make their own travel arrangements when attending a DCHFT facility.

1.4 The purpose of this document is to:-

- Define the eligibility criteria for free transport and to ensure Trust staff have clear guidelines as to who is entitled to it.
- To ensure all staff aware of the correct procedure when booking transport.

1.5 The policy also covers the Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme (HTCS) and the procedures applicable to operate the scheme within DCHFT.

2 Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment

2.1 This policy has undergone an equality and diversity impact assessment which is attached as Appendix 2. The policy is in line with Department of Health guidelines.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Patients should make their own way to and from hospital unless there is a clearly defined medical reason why they need NEPTS. Eligibility for the use of NEPTS is based upon a clinical assessment and is only available for patients attending a DCHFT facility for an appointment as an outpatient, inpatient or for the discharge home following a stay in hospital.

4. Policy

4.1 To be eligible for NEPTS a patient must have a clearly defined medical condition that prevents them from using public or private /personal transport.

4.2 The Trust requires that the assessment to establish a patient's medical need for NEPTS is only carried out by qualified medical staff. This assessment should also consider the type of transport required for the patient i.e. stretcher, wheelchair, unaided etc. The distance to be travelled and frequency of travel are also factors to be taken into account.

4.3 The Trust recognises that Patients should be able to travel to and from hospital in a reasonable time and in reasonable comfort without detriment to his or her clinical condition.

4.4 Patients granted NEPTS may only have an escort travelling with them if there is a medical requirement for attention on the journey.

4.5 Patients with their own specially adapted wheelchair may travel in them. Other wheelchair users may be asked to transfer from a wheelchair to a seat for their own comfort and safety.

4.6 Patients who have other forms of specialist equipment can be catered for.

4.7 The process of booking patient transport is centralised and controlled by the Transport Booking office.

4.8 The Trusts transport department are responsible for managing the provision of transport services. The commissioning process will normally consist of a tender process to establish the suitability of all providers.

4.9 The Transport Booking office will assist patients who are **not** eligible for NEPTS with guidance and details of other transport options including voluntary organisations.

4.10 The funding for all NEPTS activity rests with PCTs and as such DCHFT adopts a policy of recharging all NEPTS costs as appropriate and in accordance with D of H guidelines.

4.11 The Trust is under no obligation to provide or support a volunteer car scheme. However, it accepts that these schemes provide a vital support and it will therefore work with other bodies, such as Dorset County Council, in the promotion of such schemes. However it accepts no responsibility for their operation or for any costs involved in providing the service.

5 Eligibility Criteria.

5.1 To be eligible for NEPTS a patient must have a clear medical need. Financial or social care grounds are **not** reasons for granting NEPTS. When assessing patients for NEPTS they should be routinely asked about their normal means of travel. If a patient can normally get around without support and assistance they should not be offered transport. (See DH hyperlink for further details and guidance http://www.dh.gov.uk/dr_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_078372.pdf)

5.2 Only clinically qualified staff may authorise the provision of NEPTS, these include:

- Consultants
- Hospital Doctors or GP's
- Registered Nursing Staff
- Registered Physio and Occupational Therapists
- Midwives

5.3 Typical grounds for eligibility include:

- High dependency patients who require a qualified medical crew.
- Patient requires the support of trained transport staff to assist with the lifting in and out of the vehicle by mechanical means.
- Patients who are wheelchair users and travel in their own chair requiring lifting in and out and mechanical clamping of their chair within the vehicle.
- Patients who can only be conveyed on a stretcher.
- Patients who require individual conveyance due to medical condition or status.
- In certain cases a patient's frequency of travel will be taking into account as well as medical condition.

5.4 NEPTS may also be provided to an eligible patients escort or carer where this is deemed necessary. This decision should be made on a medical needs basis and again authorised as detailed above.

5.5 Where a patient has been granted eligibility and is a frequent user, the ongoing eligibility should be re-assessed on a very regular basis, in most cases every 4 weeks.

5.6 There are no exceptions to the eligibility rules. If a patient fails to meet the criteria the request for NEPTS must be refused.

6 Healthcare Transport Cost Scheme (HTCS)

6.1 The Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme provides financial assistance to those patients who do not have a medical need for NEPTS but who require assistance in meeting the cost of travel to and from the hospital.

6.2 Reimbursement of travel costs is available for patients who are currently under the care of a consultant (not a GP), receiving hospital diagnostic tests or treatment and that it is being funded for by the NHS. It does not apply to journeys for primary medical or dental care.

6.3 As with NEPTS, strict eligibility rules apply. Currently patients eligible for full or partial reimbursement include patients (and their dependants) who receive:

- Income Support

- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Pension Credit Guarantee
- Working Family Tax Credit
- NHS Low Income Scheme (certificate HC2 or HC3)
- Other qualifying criteria

The following hyperlink contains further details.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/dr_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_097373.pdf

6.4 Whilst PCTs are ultimately responsible for payment of the scheme in practice patients who are eligible will claim from the cash office located within the hospital. Evidence of both travel costs and the appointment will need to be provided.

6.5 Regulations state that the amount of any NHS travel expenses to be reimbursed must be calculated by reference to the cost of the cheapest means of transport which is reasonable, having regard to the person's relevant circumstances. This would normally equate to the value of a bus fare.

6.6 Patients in receipt of a Mobility Allowance should not be reimbursed monies under the HTCS scheme except in exceptional circumstances. The mobility allowance is paid specifically to assist in travel costs, including hospital visits.

7 Booking Procedures

7.1 DCHFT staff can book travel arrangements via the PAS System. If further detail or clarification of eligibility rules is required staff, GP surgeries and patients, or their representatives, can contact the Transport Booking Office at DCHFT. The office is manned Mon - Fri 0830 - 1700 and can be contacted on 01305 255140. In order to facilitate an efficient service it is imperative that bookings are made at least 48 hours prior to the appointment. In the case of discharge, as much notice as possible is required.

7.2 At the time of making the booking the eligibility criteria will be applied to ensure the patient is entitled to free transport. Staff involved in this activity will be trained in the process and in the application of the rules.

7.3 Where transport is declined, transport booking staff will assist the patient in finding an alternative means of transport. This will include providing details of local volunteer car services, bus services or taxi companies that have been approved by the Trust or Dorset County Council and may offer subsidised rates. The following link provides further details:

http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media/pdf/b/c/Dorset_Community_Transport_Directory_2009.pdf

7.4 The PAS system will record all activity and relay the detail through to the providers either via an e-booking system or via manual transmission of the requests. Sufficient records will be maintained to ensure all activity and related costs incurred are recorded and recharged to PCTs as appropriate.

7.5 Transport bookings outside of normal office hours will be controlled by the Site Managers who will authorise and complete a NEPTS/Taxi Requisition Form (Appendix 1). The relevant ward/unit, once in receipt of the authorised requisition form may organise transport as appropriate using one of the Trusts approved suppliers.

7.6 Detailed booking procedures and guidelines will be maintained and published by the Transport department as required.

8 Responsibilities

8.1 The Chief Executive of DCHFT is ultimately responsible for the implementation of this policy. All members of the management team throughout the Trust have a responsibility to ensure the policy is implemented, monitored and disseminated within their areas of responsibility.

8.2 The Transport Manager will operationally manage the NEPTS service in liaison with ward & departmental managers, and the providers of the service.

8.3 The Transport Department will provide all relevant information pertaining to activity and finance and monitor the performance of providers as necessary.

8.4 Dorset PCT is responsible for distributing the policy to the various GP surgeries and other medical practices in order that the policy is implemented at primary care level. Particular reference is made here to the eligibility rules and their application.

Reference Documents

Eligibility Criteria

http://www.dh.gov.uk/dr_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_078372.pdf

Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme

http://www.dh.gov.uk/dr_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_097373.pdf

Community Transport in Dorset (including Volunteer Schemes)


http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media/pdf/b/c/Dorset_Community_Transport_Directory_2009.pdf

Finance Arrangements for Ambulance Services – D of H Guidance.

[http://www.info.doh.gov.uk/doh/finman.nsf/4db79df91d978b6c00256728004f9d6b/c13b0f39ccbfd3fa802568a9005a0c1f/\\$FILE/Ch%2020%20-%20Finance%20arrangements%20for%20ambulance%20services%20\(final%20Jan%2008\).doc](http://www.info.doh.gov.uk/doh/finman.nsf/4db79df91d978b6c00256728004f9d6b/c13b0f39ccbfd3fa802568a9005a0c1f/$FILE/Ch%2020%20-%20Finance%20arrangements%20for%20ambulance%20services%20(final%20Jan%2008).doc)

Appendices

Appendix 1

Dorset County Hospital 	
NHS Foundation Trust	
Patient Transport/Taxi Requisition Form	
Date _____	Requisition No T000001
Reason _____	Patient <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>
Ward/Unit _____	Cost Centre _____
Name _____	NHS No. _____
From _____	To _____
Is this an out of area transfer? Yes/No _____	Patients PCT if yes _____ <small>(PRINT)</small>
Requested by _____	Authorised by _____
Time Requested _____	Directorate _____
Cost Agreed Y/N Amount £ _____	Signature _____
<hr/>	
TRANSPORT COMPANY USE ONLY	
Time Commenced _____	Time Completed _____
Signed _____	
Mileage _____ @ _____	Per Mile = _____
Waiting Time _____ @ _____	Per Minute = _____
	Total _____
Invoices will only be paid if supported by this document.	

APPENDIX 2

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPACT AND COMPLIANCE ASSESSMENT

General title of document	Non Emergency Patient Transport Policy and Procedures (NEPTS)
Purpose of document	To ensure all staff and members of the public are aware of the Trusts policy on the provision of NEPTS
Intended scope	Staff, health professionals and the Public

2. Consultation

Which groups/associations/bodies or individuals were consulted in the formulation of this document?	User group consisting of admissions and discharge staff along with other ward/department staff, Executive Board
What was the impact of any feedback on the document?	Policy amended as necessary.
Who was involved in the approval of the final document?	Executive Board
Any other comments to record?	Document in line with D of H guidelines.

3. Equality Impact Assessment

Does the document unfairly affect certain staff or groups of staff? If so, please state how this is justified.	No
What measures are proposed to address any inequity?	N/A
Can the document be made available in alternative format or in translation?	Yes

4. Compliance Assessment

Does the document comply with relevant employment legislation? Please specify.	Sex Discrimination Gender reassignment regulations 1999, The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, The employment equality (Sexual orientation) regulations 2003 and The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 The Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003, Disability Discrimination Act 2005, The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
---	--

5. Document assessed by

Name	Laurence Harvey
Post Title/Position	Interim Transport Manager
Date	16th February 2010

Other Ways to Help with Transport

The Non Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS) and The Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme (HTCS) are both schemes governed by the Department of Health and funded by the local Primary Care Trust (PCT).

The cost of providing transport is a major factor within NHS finances and as such the eligibility rules are strictly applied.

Dorset County Hospital Foundation Trust recognises that, due to the rural nature of Dorset, some patients who are not eligible for NEPTS or HTCS may still require some form of travel advice.

Local councils, and in particular Dorset County Council both operate and support a number of travel schemes within the county of Dorset.

Further details on the schemes available can be found on their website www.dorsetforyou.com or via the Dorset Direct telephone line on 01305 221000

There are also regular local buses to Dorset County Hospital which stop outside the main entrance or on Bridport Road. For the latest timetable details you can call the Traveline on 0871 200 22 33 or visit www.travelinesw.com.

Your local GP surgery may also maintain lists of community and voluntary car schemes that may be able to help.

What if I am not happy about the decision that has been made?

If you feel you have a medical need but have been declined free transport you should, in the case of the first appointment, contact your GP. Once a course of treatment has commenced you should raise the issue with the clinician treating you.

Further help and advice can be sought from the Patient Transport Coordinator on 01305 255140

DORSET COUNTY HOSPITAL NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

Williams Avenue

Dorchester DT1 2JY

Phone: 01305 251150

www.dchft.nhs.uk

Produced May 2010 by the Transport Department

Non Emergency Patient Transport Service



What you need to know about the service and if you are eligible to use it.

Who can use the Non Emergency Patient Transport Service?

The Non Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS) is only provided for patients who have a medical need. The need is assessed by a qualified clinician who will determine eligibility.

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

This typically means:

- You need prescribed oxygen to help you breathe.
- You need intravenous (IV) support.
- You can only be moved by stretcher.
- 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.
- Your illness, condition or disability makes it difficult, impossible or undesirable to be conveyed by alternative transport.
- You require the skills of a qualified assistant on the journey.

You cannot use NEPTS if:

You do not have a medical need.

You are visiting your GP surgery, dentist, pharmacist or optician.

Can I bring someone with me?

You can only bring someone with you if this has been pre-authorized and

- You are under 16 years old
- Your condition requires constant attention of an escort throughout your journey
- You have difficulty in communicating e.g. hard of hearing, have a speech difficulty or are partially sighted or blind and need a guide dog
- You have a condition that prevents you from travelling unaccompanied e.g. Alzheimer's or dementia

How do I book my hospital transport?

If you have a medical need for transport to get to hospital this will be authorised by your GP or clinician at the time of the first appointment. The transport will be booked by the central appointments or central admissions team.

When would I be collected by the transport service?

If you have an outpatient appointment, your transport will be with you in plenty of time so that you arrive promptly for your appointment.

If you are being discharged from hospital you will be advised when transport will be available to take you home.

You will not automatically have transport for each follow up appointment. Your needs will be assessed each time you attend.

If I am not eligible for NEPTS can I claim the cost of travelling to my hospital appointment?

The Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS) may be able to provide financial help. As with NEPTS there are very strict rules to ensure only patients eligible for help can claim travel costs. To claim assistance with travel costs for a hospital appointment you must be receiving

- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Pension Credit—Guarantee Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Or be in receipt of an HC2 or HC3 certificate (Low Income Support Scheme).

For further information please see the Dept. of Health Website www.dh.gov.uk and type HTCS in the search option.

How to claim

The amount of reimbursement is based on the most reasonable and cheapest form of public transport available and will nearly always be the equivalent of a bus fare. To claim you will need evidence that you meet the above criteria and have evidence of your attendance at the hospital.

Claims are processed at the hospital Cash Office which is situated on Level 1, North Wing.

You will normally be paid in cash.