

Getting to healthcare appointments in West Hampshire

How can I get to my appointment?

Most people make their own arrangements for travelling to their NHS appointments. However, not everyone has a car or can walk long distances so many people ask a relative or friend for a lift, use public transport or other options such as community or voluntary transport providers. If you are unable to make your appointment due to the unavailability of friends or family or other alternative transport options and you consider that there is no health risk to you, then often the appointment can be rearranged to a more convenient date.

What if I can't afford to get to my appointment?

The Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme can help those on low incomes. The scheme covers travel costs if you or your partner receives income-related benefits such as:

- Income support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, or you are awarded Universal Credit
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit Guarantee Credit
- You are named on, or entitled to (use your award notice as evidence), a NHS tax credit exemption certificate
- You have a low income and are named on certificate HC2 (full help) or HC3 (limited help). To apply for this certificate, you should complete form HC1 available from your local hospital or Jobcentre Plus offices.

Can I access NHS patient transport?

The patient transport service is available for patients with a medical condition where;

- someone requires the professional support of patient transport staff during their journey or
- a person's health needs impacts on their mobility to the extent that it prevents them from travelling to or from a hospital appointment by any other means.

To access this service you will need to be assessed against strict eligibility criteria based on national guidance issued by the Department of Health. The person making the booking will be asked some questions so that a decision can be taken regarding your eligibility. It is important therefore that all relevant information regarding your medical condition and mobility is provided when transport is being requested.

Patient transport is a vital resource for those that need it and cannot be operated as an alternative to avoid the inconvenience of or the cost of parking. Usually a number of patients are collected and conveyed by minibus to their hospital appointment. This means the journey time to the hospital and the waiting time to return home are much longer than if you were to travel by private or public transport. Hospitals often

provide car parking concessions for patients who attend hospital appointments on a regular basis.

NHS staff will regularly review your eligibility for patient transport. If you have had transport in the past, this does not mean you will always be eligible to receive it; you may have been given transport previously in error or your health needs may have changed over time.

Can I appeal against a 'not eligible' decision?

The eligibility criteria applied is quite clear, but if you feel you have special or exceptional circumstances that are not covered in the eligibility process you may make an appeal via e-mail SOUTHCSU.PTS@nhs.net or Tel: 02380 627615.

Useful sources of support:

- NHS Low Income Scheme Helpline: **0300 330 1343** (including information about the Healthcare Costs Travel Scheme)
www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcosts/Pages/Travelcosts.aspx
- Hampshire County Council passenger transport group: **0300 555 1388** or
www.hants.gov.uk/passengertransport
- Hampshire County Council Community Transport Team: **01962 846 785**,
www.hants.gov.uk/communitytransport
- University Hospital Southampton
www.uhs.nhs.uk/Ourhospitals/GettinghereHome.aspx
- Royal Hampshire County Hospital, North Hampshire and Basingstoke Hospitals and Andover War Memorial Hospital
[www.hampshirehospitals.nhs.uk/about-us/find-us/royal-hampshire-county-hospital-\(rhch\).aspx](http://www.hampshirehospitals.nhs.uk/about-us/find-us/royal-hampshire-county-hospital-(rhch).aspx)
- Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals
www.rbch.nhs.uk/patients_visitors/travelling_to_hospital.php
- Portsmouth Hospitals
- Romsey Community Hospital, Lymington New Forest Hospital, Hythe Hospital, Milford on Sea Community Hospital, Western Community Hospital, Fordingbridge Community Hospital, Moorgreen Hospital, Fareham Community Hospital and Melbury Lodge <http://www.southernhealth.nhs.uk/services/community-health-services/hospitals/>
- Royal South Hants Hospital
<http://www.uhs.nhs.uk/Ourhospitals/RSH/RoyalSouthHants.aspx>