



South Essex Area Eligibility Criteria

For

Non Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS)

Refreshed February 2018



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Patient Assessment & Booking Service
All Healthcare providers ie:
Acute, Community Hospitals, Tier 2 services and Mental Health Services

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All clinical and administrative staff responsible for assessing and booking patient transport

Communication processes:

Healthcare Providers
Patient Transport Providers
Clinical Commissioning Group
GPs

Manager responsible for reviewing policy:

CCG Non-Emergency Patient Transport and contract lead

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Contents

| | Page |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Introduction | 4 |
| What is Non Emergency transport (NEPTS)? | 4 |
| Who is eligible for PTS? | 4 |
| 'Medical Need Criteria' | 5 |
| Who assesses the patient against the 'Medical Need Criteria'? | 5 |
| Escorts / Carers | 6 |
| PTS Providers | 6 |
| Patients who do not meet the eligibility criteria | 6 |
| Appeals Process | 7 |
| Help with Travel Costs | 7 |
| Appendix 1 | |
| • Booking Process | 8 |
| • Contact details | 8 |
| • Mobility Definitions | 8 |



Introduction

This paper outlines the arrangements for Non - Emergency Patient Transport Services (NEPTS) in accordance with the Department of Health Guidance 'Eligibility Criteria for Patient Transport Services (PTS) Gateway Reference 8705' issued in August 2007.

The underlying principle is that it is the patient's responsibility to make their own way to and from hospital for patient episodes of care of all types, including outpatients' appointments, elective admissions and discharges from hospital. The only exception should be patients who require medical support during their journey, due to a medical need or severely impaired mobility. This document sets out the criteria for assessing eligibility for the service and will be used to determine whether NHS patients are entitled to NEPTS.

CCG's are not required to provide transport based on a patient's financial or social need. Financial help is available to patients on low incomes who do not have a medical need and do not qualify for NHS funded transport. Details are available in the Department of Health Guidance 'Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme, Gateway Reference 9602', dated 2nd April 2009.

This document has been produced to ensure a common eligibility criteria is used across patients registered with a GP practice within the 4 South Essex CCGs will be applied from 1st April 2014 and will replace any other eligibility criteria in existence.

The 4 South Essex CCGs are:

NHS Southend CCG
NHS Castle Point and Rochford CCG
NHS Thurrock CCG
NHS Basildon and Brentwood CCG

This policy covers all journey requests to/from acute, community hospitals, Tier 2 clinics, and mental health providers.

What is Non Emergency transport (NEPTS)?

Non-emergency patient transport services (PTS) are typically the non-urgent, planned, transportation of patients with a medical need from their place of residence to and from premises providing NHS funded healthcare or between providers of care commissioned by the NHS (including treatment, outpatient appointments, A&E post treats or diagnostic services), but excludes GP, dental appointments or A&E attendances including walk-in centres or minor injuries units.

This policy only applies to transport for patients receiving NHS treatment who are registered with a GP in South Essex. The place of residence is defined as any address specified at the time of booking the transport, e.g. home, nursing/residential home, or hospice. Patients will be transported in a timeframe and manner that will not be detrimental to their medical condition.

Who is eligible for PTS?

- Where a medical condition of the patient is such that they require the skills or support of PTS staff on/after the journey and/or where it would be detrimental to the patient's condition or recovery if they were to travel by any other means.
- Where the patient's medical condition impacts on their mobility to such an extent that they would be unable to access healthcare and/or it would be detrimental to the patient's condition or recovery to travel by other means.



Medical Need Criteria

Guidance dictates that only patients who have a medical need should access NHS funded transport services.

Patients who will automatically be eligible for transport are:

- Patients who need to be transported on a stretcher
- Inpatients who are being medically transferred to another hospital for specialist treatment and who have a medical need during the journey
- Patients who require continuous oxygen or other medical gases
- Patients who require continuous intravenous support.

Individual consideration will also be given to patients who have no other alternative means of private/public transport and who also satisfy any of the following supplementary conditions:

- Patients requiring a wheelchair who have a medical need during the journey
- Patients with confused state of mind, or learning / communication difficulties who are unable to use public transport, and who do not have a carer who is able to transport them
- Patients with a medical condition or disability, infirmity or illness that would compromise their dignity or make it impossible for them to be conveyed by public transport
- Patients who cannot walk without the continual support of a walking aid (eg. walking frame or crutches)
- Patients who could experience considerable side-effects as a result of the treatment they receive
- Patients who require skilled medical assistance to transfer them to and from the vehicle.
- Patients who are a danger to themselves or others

The following are **NOT** in themselves reasons for the provision of a non-emergency transport:

- The age of the patient
- The distance the patient needs to travel
- The availability or otherwise of alternative (public) transport options
- The cost of other ways of travelling to an appointment
- Patients who are undergoing specific treatment regimes eg. Chemotherapy

Patients who have been assessed and allocated the use of a Motability vehicle, will not be entitled to non emergency NHS funded transport unless there is an additional medical need that prevents them from using their own vehicle.

Who assesses the patient against the Medical need Criteria?

Responsibility for ensuring that a patient meets the 'medical need criteria' lies with the appropriate staff making the transport booking. This will include:

- Patient Assessment and Booking Service Staff
- Acute Hospital staff
- Community Hospital staff
- Commissioner staff
- Mental Health staff

Booking staff can be either clinical or an appropriately trained administration staff, who are able to convey details of the patients medical condition.



Patient eligibility should be assessed regularly, as the patient's condition may have improved / deteriorated since the last request.

Escorts / Carers

Escorts/carers will not normally be able to travel with patients who are approved for transport unless the patient has a medical need for their assistance during the journey.

Approval is not guaranteed and will depend on seat availability and priority will be given to other patients travelling on the same route. A maximum of one fully mobile escort will be allowed per patient. Where an escort is accompanying the patient, and the return journey is not required by the patient, ie. The patient is admitted, then the escort must make their own arrangement to return home.

Escorts will usually only be approved in the following

- Patient has communication or sensory difficulties and would require assistance whilst travelling or at the hospital
- Patient is a minor and with a physical or mental incapacity under 16 years of age
- Clinical escorts who are medically required to accompany the patient.

Consideration will be given to the age of minors and the number of escorts in exceptional circumstances, and approved where medical need determines this as appropriate. This may require approval by the Commissioner.

For all other circumstances, carers, friends or relatives are to make their own way to the hospital/clinic and meet the patient there.

PTS Providers

The majority of NEPTS transport is provided by East of England Ambulance Services NHS Trust (EEAST). If EEAST declare Resource Escalation Action Plan (REAP) level 5 or 6, NEPTS may be compromised and patients may need to rearrange their medical appointments.

There are also a number of private ambulance providers and taxi companies who undertake adhoc journeys. The route for booking these journeys will be included within the local policies.

Patients who do not meet the eligibility criteria

Patients who do not meet the eligibility criteria will be advised to make alternative arrangements to attend their appointment. These can include:

- Public transport (e.g., Bus, Coach or train)
- Taxi
- Community transport or volunteer services.

A full data base of alternative travel arrangements will be maintained by the provider.

Appeals Process

Patients that wish to appeal against a decision regarding their eligibility for patient transport may contact the provider or the appropriate The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) within the relevant Health Watch organisation within the healthcare sites.

Help with Travel Costs



Financial help is available to patients on low incomes who do not have a medical need and do not qualify for NHS funded transport. Details are available within the Department of Health Guidance 'Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme, Gateway Reference 9602', dated 2nd April 2009. <https://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcosts/Pages/Travelcosts.aspx>



Booking Process

Once the medical need has been determined and the patient is eligible for transport, a request can be sent to the provider via the agreed method and booking form ie. Telephone or online.

Transport requests can be block booked for regular journeys eg. Renal Dialysis.

Healthcare journeys cannot be booked more than 3 months in advance.

Patients should be reassessed at 3 monthly intervals to ensure patients remain eligible.

Contact Details

Patient Assessment and Booking Service 03000 134 997

Mobility Definitions

Eligible patients will be defined by one of the following mobility categories:

| Name | Description |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Walker (C) | Car suitable, Patient manages own mobility and requires no lifting or moving. |
| One Person Crew (C1) | minimum assistance required (Patient can walk 2 or 3 steps or is in wheel chair in easily accessible accommodation) |
| Two Person Crew (C2) | Patient that can sit (but not able to manage own mobility), and takes their own wheelchair, or those that need carrying up or down stairs or living in poorly accessible accommodation. |
| Wheelchair (WC) | Patient who for medical reasons require travel in their own wheelchair during the journey and can be wheeled to and from the Vehicle. Vehicle to have wheelchair securing facilities (e.g. approved tracking system) |
| Stretcher (STR) | Patient that needs to lie down in secure position and requires two ambulance Staff who are trained to lift stretchers. |
| Escort (ESC) | Patient who have a medical need to be accompanied to/from their appointment by carer/relative/healthcare professional or guide/aid assistance dogs. |

The Additional Needs may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Oxygen required (intermittent and continuous) at varying levels of concentration.
- Drips, drains or syringe drivers in situ (where possible, these will be disconnected for the journey but some may be required to be continued).
- Patients who require on-going medical monitoring during the journey, for example cardiac or other equipment, which will be provided either by hospital staff, and/or skilled technician ambulance crews.
- Patients who are required to travel alone
- Whether there are any access issues at either the pick-up or destination which require a full risk assessment due to Patient mobility. This includes steps, staircases and narrow corridors.
- Whether the Patient is considered at risk of cardiac or respiratory arrest during the journey and whether any Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (DNACPR) position has been confirmed for the journey.

