

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

If a patient has previously had an escort, will an escort always be approved?

No, each individual case will be dealt with in accordance with the criteria previously highlighted. The authorisation of an escort for a patient on one return journey will not lead to the automatic authorisation of an escort in subsequent journeys. Normally a new application for an escort will need to be made for each appointment, however, in a small number of cases where it is clear the need for an escort will be long term the review group will agree to a long term need for an escort with this to be reviewed on an agreed timescale.

If an escort is not authorised what are my options?

You can request the decision is reviewed by a senior clinician however you will have to provide additional information to support your request. A form to do so can be obtained from Patient Travel. You can also lodge a complaint about a decision using the Complaints procedure. More information on this can be found on our website.

If I want someone to accompany me but do not qualify for an escort what are my options?

If you want someone to travel with you and are medically fit to travel by ferry, someone can be added to your booking at minimal cost. You will be responsible for contacting Northlink to arrange and pay for the additional passenger.

If you are being admitted your family may qualify for a Hospital Visitor Fare. More information is available from Patient Travel.

Further copies of this leaflet are available from:

Patient Travel Department
Shetland NHS Board
Gilbert Bain Hospital
Lerwick
Shetland
ZE1 0TN

Tel: 01595 743305

Do you require assistance to access this leaflet?

If you do please contact 01595 743064 for assistance. An interpreter can be made available or the document can be supplied in your choice of language or print.

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Escorts for Patients

Patient Information Leaflet



Some patients will have to travel out-with Shetland to receive their medical care in hospital. For some patients, it will be necessary for them to be accompanied by an escort on this journey.

This guidance is issued by Shetland NHS Board to provide information about all patient escorts paid for under the Highlands and Islands Travel Scheme.

What is an escort?

An escort has travel costs paid (by the Highlands & Islands Travel Scheme) to accompany a patient who needs support to ensure the safe completion of the journey to or from hospital.

Who can be an escort?

Anyone the patient wishes to nominate to travel with them. This can be a family member, carer or friend. **Escorts must be 18 or over and be able to provide the necessary assistance and support needed by the patient, including transport to/from appointments.**

How do I get an escort authorised?

There are several ways to get an escort authorised.

- For maternity patients the midwives will authorise an escort if required.
- Oncology patients will have escorts authorised by the oncology nurses if required.
- Patients who are being admitted for a procedure and have their pre-assessment in Shetland will be assessed for an escort as part of the pre-assessment process
- All other patients will complete an escort request which will then be submitted to patient travel who can authorise some requests or they will submit it to the review group for a decision.

Does the review group get access to my medical records?

No. The information submitted to the group is the information you disclose in your request

If further information is required the group may request information pertinent to the request for an escort from your GP. The escort form has a section for you to authorise your GP to do so

When can a patient receive an escort?

- All patients aged 16 and below will automatically qualify for an escort. From 16-18 the patient can choose to be accompanied by a parent or guardian. It is not necessary to have an authorisation form completed in this case.
- In all other cases the criterion for authorising an escort is that it should be **medically necessary** for the patient to be escorted.

Examples of who would be entitled to an escort are

- patients who have a significant physical or mental disability who require assistance to travel safely
- patients who are unable to make informed decisions i.e. who have a Guardianship order or Incapacity Certificate.
- patients who are undergoing a procedure or therapy that results in them requiring assistance to travel home or are attending an appointment that involves self-management that a carer or relative will be undertaking on their return home.

This list is not exhaustive and exceptional circumstances will also be considered

Please note that social circumstances, provision of emotional support or anxiety related to travel is not considered a reason for an escort to be authorised.

If an escort is approved to support a patient for the return journey only the travel will be funded. If the escort chooses to travel with the patient and stay while they are undergoing treatment accommodation costs will not be funded.

The Travel Scheme reimburses the costs of **only one escort** per patient, unless the patient's medical condition requires a second escort for the safe completion of the journey.

A second escort will not be authorised to provide emotional support to either the patient or escort.

There is a Hospital Discharge Liaison Nurse for Orkney and Shetland who can advise or be contacted for support via Patient Travel on 01595 743305 or Aberdeen Royal Infirmary on 01224 554352.