

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 appropriately in accordance with the criteria previously highlighted.

The authorisation of an escort for a patient on one return journey will not necessarily lead to the automatic authorisation of an escort in subsequent journeys where the patient's physical or mental condition may have changed.

If an escort is not authorised what are my options?

If you want someone to travel with you but do not qualify for an escort and are medically fit to travel by ferry, someone can be added to your booking at minimal cost as NHS Shetland will have paid for use of a cabin. You will be responsible for contacting Northlink to arrange and pay for the additional passenger.

If I can't travel by boat what are my options?

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

More information and copies of the forms can be found here:

<http://www.shb.scot.nhs.uk/departments/patienttravel/patientescorts.asp>

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 and 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?

Any person that the patient wishes to nominate to travel with them on their journey. 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.**

What is the role of the GP/ Consultant?

Your GP/consultant will usually be the person who shall be referring you/ family member/relative to hospital and will help decide whether or not an escort is necessary.

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.
- Patients with severely restricted mobility will be entitled to an escort. If the patient is in receipt of higher

level mobility or enhanced PIP it will not be necessary for an escort form to be completed. Simply provide a current award letter to Patient Travel.

- Patients who require a high level of assistance with personal care will be entitled to an escort. If the patient is in receipt of higher level care Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or enhanced Personal Independence Payment (PIP) it will not be necessary for an escort form to be completed. Simply provide a current award letter to Patient Travel.
- 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 are unable to communicate without assistance. This does not include patients whose first language is not English as interpretation services can be provided.
- patients who are unable to make informed decisions or cannot play an active part in their treatment plans.
- patients who have severely restricted vision.

There are 3 elements to be taken into account when deciding whether or not an escort is allowed:

1. Is it necessary that the patient be accompanied on the journey?

The criterion calls for there to be a necessity to be accompanied, not merely that it is desirable to be accompanied.

2. Is the necessity of a medical nature?

Social or emotional grounds are not sufficient to fulfil the criterion. An escort will not be authorised to allow partners to be present at the birth of their child unless the patient satisfies one of the categories stated above.

3. Is the medical necessity only for the safe completion of the journey?

If a patient is medically fit to complete the journey unescorted, an escort will not be authorised in order to allow a relative to be present during treatment or other forms of hospital management unless the patient satisfies one of the categories stated above.

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.