

Frequently asked questions

Who is entitled to free health travel?

All patients travelling to the UK after a referral for medical or surgical treatment that is not available in Guernsey

Which travel agent do I have to use?

The Health Benefits Team at Edward T Wheadon House will arrange your medical travel if you have been referred off island for specialist care.

How are the travel arrangements made?

See referral process below

What arrangements are made for people who require special assistance?

The Health Benefits Team and airline will need to be made aware of the type of assistance you require. Please inform the Health Benefits Team at the time of booking so that all necessary arrangements can be made well in advance. Upon checking in at the airport confirm with the airline/ground staff that they are aware of your request for special assistance.

A request for assistance must be made 48 hours in advance. If you think you will need assistance on the return journey this will need to be arranged when booking the outward flight.

Can I extend my stay in the UK?

Yes, you can extend your stay but you will need to pay any extra costs yourself. Please discuss your requirements with the Health Benefits Team before your ticket is issued and don't forget to arrange travel insurance for this period of your trip.

What should I do if my plane is delayed on the outward journey?

Telephone the hospital ward or clinic that you are travelling to, to notify them of the delay. The telephone number will be on your appointment letter. The hospital will then advise you if your appointment will be affected as a result.

What should I do if I am delayed and I need medication, or that because I am delayed I will not be able to get my prescription dispensed?

It is essential that before you leave the hospital that you ask to be given sufficient medication for at least 48 hours in case of flight delays or cancellations. Your medication should always be carried on your person and it should be easily available to you at all times. All prescribed medication that you carry must have the dispensing label attached in order to clear customs.

Will I be charged for drugs and medicines in the UK?

If you are given an NHS prescription and you have it dispensed in the UK you will have to pay the UK prescription charge for each item. Social Security cannot refund the cost of prescriptions dispensed and paid for in the UK. It may be more convenient to bring the prescription back to Guernsey and ask your doctor to write a local prescription and pay the local prescription charge.

The Referral process

When your doctor or consultant decides to refer you to the UK for medical treatment they will contact the Committee for Health and Social Care (HSC) and The Committee for Employment and Social Security (ESS)

Until you receive your appointment or admission date you do not need to do anything.

The Committee for Employment and Social Security – ESS

On receipt of your appointment or admission date please contact either your consultant or his/her secretary at the Medical Specialist Group.

They will then inform Social Security (ESS).

ESS will contact to you to arrange your travel requirements.

Tickets with some flexibility will be issued if your return date is in doubt. However, should the hospital need to change your appointment or admission date, new tickets will be issued. ESS will give you a contact number should you need to change your return booking out of office hours.

Onward travel from the airport to the hospital will be arranged at the same time. If your doctor confirms that due to medical reasons you are unable to use rail, underground or bus then funding of a taxi will be considered. For hospitals in Southampton a taxi is provided.

If you do not have time to apply for funding before you travel, keep all your ticket confirmations and receipts and either contact the Travel Grant Section -**Tel (01481) 732510**, or if you prefer call into their office at Edward T Wheadon House on your return to claim a refund. The Travel Grant Section is on Level 2; a lift is available if you are unable to use the stairs.

Travel Agent Details

ESS are situated at:

Edward T Wheadon House
Le Truchot
St Peter Port
Guernsey
GY1 3WH

Tel: (01481) 732402

Email: travel@gov.gg

- Bookings can be made between 8.30am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday.
- Please inform staff at ESS if you require assistance at the airport. This can easily be arranged for you when booking but may be more difficult to secure if it is not booked before your departure.
- Travel can be booked for anyone travelling with you but the normal fee will apply.
- Handicab Taxis who pick up at Southampton operate a shuttle bus service to the hospital. They do not provide child seat/boosters so if necessary you must take your own. If this is the case then please let ESS know so they can tell Handicabs.
- Travel Itinerary details will normally be issued at the time of booking.
- If you are delayed in the UK overnight due to adverse weather conditions or operational aircraft issues reimbursement of reasonable accommodation and UK taxi expenses will be considered on submission of valid receipts. Please ensure that you are able to pay for unexpected expenses whilst you are away.
- Please take your travel confirmation with you in case any changes are necessary whilst you are away. This sheet contains important booking reference information.

Photographic Identification

Photographic identity is required at airport check-in desks including inter-island flights. The name on your travel confirmation and on your identification must be exactly the same. If you do not have photographic identification, application forms for the Guernsey Identification Card are available from the Police Station. Sarnia Mutual, Church Square also produce the cards for a cost of £5 and can be contacted on

Tel: (01481) 723501

For Children Requiring Treatment off Island

The Travelling Allowance Grant covers the following costs.

If the child is under 6 years old, the Travelling Allowance Grant provides funds for up to 2 adult escorts to travel with the child.

If the child is 6 or over and under 18 years old, the Travel Allowance Grant provides funds for 1 adult escort to travel with the child.

Important information concerning the Reciprocal Health Agreement

There is no Reciprocal Health Agreement with the UK. As a patient you will be covered for any unexpected medical treatment you may need in addition to the reason for your referral. But you are only covered for the time it takes to complete the appointment/hospital stay. If you choose to travel early or stay on after your appointment the States of Guernsey will not be responsible for the cost of any medical treatment you need during that time.

If anyone else is travelling with you they will not be covered. All local residents travelling to the UK can access emergency treatment from a GP, A&E or walk in centre but any further care will incur a charge. You are advised to ensure that anyone travelling with you is aware of this and that they obtain the appropriate insurance.

For any support/enquiry relating to UK Hospitals or for clarification of the Reciprocal Health Arrangement with the UK, contact the Off Island Acute Care Office.

Telephone: (01481) 725241 Ext 4711

E-mail: hssdtag@gov.gg

Handy Hints for Health Travel

1. Keep a notebook and pen

At stressful times everything is forgotten - even pin numbers that have been committed to memory for years

Write down phone numbers, names of doctors seen etc.

2. Investigate the health condition

Find out what you can about your condition to enable you to understand more about your possible treatment.

3. Take a list of the questions you want to ask the Doctor

Make a note of the answers afterwards

4. Plan ahead

Think of all the likely pitfalls, and discuss any concerns with a member of the Health Information Guernsey team, as they may be able to assist you or direct you to another service provider.

5. Arrange a team of friends who can help you communicate news

Let friends help. If they have offered to help out it is because they want to, and it will help them as well as you

Checklist of Things to Take With You:

- Tickets & Vouchers (if you have an internet booking remember to take the printout).
- Photo identification.
- Medication (Please be aware that there are restrictions on what medication you are allowed to take on to the aircraft, therefore check with the airline before you travel. Also remember to keep all medications in their original prescribed packaging, preferably in your hand luggage.)
- Hospital Information.
- Accommodation details.
- Notebook and pen.
- Useful telephone numbers.
- Mobile phone/Charger/UK SIM Card.
- English money.

FOR MORE INFORMATION SPECIFIC
TO THE HOSPITAL YOU ARE ATTENDING
PLEASE CONTACT
HEALTH INFORMATION GUERNSEY ON
TEL 707470
OR
EMAIL info@healthtravel.org