



**Coventry and  
Warwickshire**  
Integrated Care Board

# Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS)

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Name of reviewer and title:	Madi Parmar, CFO, ICB
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#### VERSION HISTORY

Date	Version	Changes made to previous version	Consulting and Endorsing Stakeholders, Committees / Meetings / Forums etc.

# Coventry and Warwickshire ICB

## Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS)

If you're referred to hospital or other NHS premises for specialist NHS treatment or diagnostic tests by a doctor, dentist, or another primary care health professional, you may be able to claim a refund of reasonable travel costs under the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS).

This page explains who's eligible for the scheme and how to make a claim.

If you have questions about help with health costs, join the [Help with Health Costs team on Facebook](#), where the NHS Business Services Authority will respond to your queries Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm.

### Who can claim for help with travel costs?

To qualify for help with travel costs under the HTCS, you must meet 3 conditions:

- At the time of your appointment, you or your partner (including civil partners) must receive one of the qualifying benefits or allowances listed on this page, or meet the eligibility criteria for the [NHS Low Income Scheme](#).
- You must have a [referral](#) from a healthcare professional to a specialist or a hospital for further NHS treatment or tests (often referred to as secondary care).
- Your appointment must be on a separate visit to when the referral was made. This applies whether your treatment is provided at a different location (hospital or clinic) or on the same premises as where the GP or another health professional issued the referral.

### Children and other dependents

You can claim travel costs for your children if you're eligible for any of the benefits described under condition 1 and your child has been referred for treatment as outlined in condition 2 and condition 3.

If your child is aged 16 or over, they may make their own claim under the Low-Income Scheme.

### Carers and escorts

You can claim travel costs for an escort if your health professional says it's medically necessary for someone to travel with you.

Some Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) may accept claims for help with travel costs if you're the parent or guardian of a child under the age of 16 who you have to bring to your appointment with you.

These payments are made on the basis of the patient's eligibility for the scheme, irrespective of the escort's eligibility.

## Who cannot claim help with travel costs?

You cannot claim help with travel costs if you're visiting someone in hospital.

You also cannot claim if you're visiting a GP, dentist or another primary care service provider for routine check-ups or other services, such as vaccinations or cervical cancer screening, as these are excluded from the scheme.

Urgent primary care services during out-of-hours periods (between 6.30pm and 8pm on weekdays, weekends, or bank holidays) are also excluded.

## What are the qualifying benefits and allowances?

You can claim help with travel costs if you or your partner (including civil partner) receive any of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Working Tax Credit (WTC) with Child Tax Credit (CTC)
- WTC with a disability element or a severe disability element
- CTC but you're not eligible for WTC
- Pension Credit Guarantee Credit
- you receive [Universal Credit](#) and meet the criteria

You can also claim for help with travel costs if:

- you're named on, or entitled to, an NHS tax credit exemption certificate (if you do not have a certificate, you can show your award notice) – you qualify if you get child tax credits, working tax credits with a disability element (or both), and have income for tax credit purposes of £15,276 or less
- 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 the [HC1 form: claim for help with health costs \(PDF, 218kb\)](#), which is available from your local hospital, Job Centre Plus offices or the NHS print contract order line on 0300 123 0849

Patients who are not in receipt of a qualifying benefit, but are on a low income, and whose savings are £16,000 or less (or £23,250 or less if in a care home, or £24,000 or less if residents in Wales) may be eligible for assistance with their NHS travel expenses.

Find out more about the [NHS Low Income Scheme](#).

## What form of transport can I use?

The NHS organisation handling your claim will normally base any refund on the basis of what would have been the cheapest suitable mode of transport for your circumstances.

This can include your age, medical condition, or any other relevant factors, such as the availability of public transport.

This means you should use the cheapest, most appropriate means of transport, which in most cases will be public transport.

If you travelled by car and your claim was approved, you'll be reimbursed for the cost of fuel at the mileage rate of 45p per mile

You'll also be able to claim for unavoidable car parking and toll charges.

If you need to use a taxi, you should agree this in advance with the hospital or ICB before you travel.

[Find your local hospital](#)

## Help with travel costs before your appointment

You're expected to pay for your travel and claim back the costs within 3 months.

In some cases, you may be able to get an advanced payment to help you attend your appointment.

The NHS service providing your treatment should be able to tell you how to apply. Alternatively, contact your local ICB for advice.

## How do I claim a refund?

To claim your travel costs, take your travel receipts, appointment letter or card, plus proof that you're receiving one of the qualifying benefits, to NHS Business Services Authority, Bridge House, 152 Pilgrim Street, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 6SN

If you're not sure, ask reception or [Patient Advice and Liaison Services \(PALS\)](#) staff where you should go.

Some hospitals and clinics do not have cashier facilities. In this case, you can complete an [HC5\(T\) claim travel charges \(PDF, 35kb\)](#) and post it to the address stated on the form.

You can make a postal claim up to 3 months after your appointment took place.

## Can I claim travel expenses for treatment abroad?

If you're travelling abroad for treatment on the NHS, you may claim for travel costs incurred travelling to a port (including an airport, ferry port or international railway station) in Great Britain from where your international journey begins.

The cost of your travel from the port to the place of treatment falls within NHS foreign travel expenses and cannot be claimed through HTCS.

NHS foreign travel expenses are travel expenses that a person incurs travelling abroad from a port in Great Britain to receive services arranged by the NHS.

You're only entitled to have NHS foreign travel expenses paid for when the health service body that made the arrangements for services to be provided overseas agrees the mode and cost of travel, and the necessity or otherwise for a companion.

This all has to happen before the costs are incurred.

Find out more about [going abroad for medical treatment](#).

## Important numbers

- Call 0300 330 1348 for the dental services helpline
- Call 0300 330 1343 for the Low-Income Scheme helpline
- Call 0300 330 1341 for queries about medical exemption certificates
- Call 0300 330 1341 for queries about prescription prepayment certificates (PPCs)
- Call 0300 330 1349 for the prescription services helpline
- Call 0300 330 1347 for queries about tax credit certificates
- Call 0300 123 0849 to order a paper copy of the HC12, HC5 and HC1 (SC) forms
- Call 0300 330 1343 for all other queries

## More in [Help with health costs](#)

- [When you need to pay towards NHS care](#)
- [NHS Low Income Scheme \(LIS\)](#)
- [Help with health costs for people getting Universal Credit](#)
- [Wigs and fabric supports on the NHS](#)
- Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS)
- [What is a personal health budget?](#)