

## Non-emergency patient transport services

### What is this all about?

We want to understand the public point of view about changes to patient transport services which we are proposing. We would like as many people as possible to make comments or feed their view back to us.

### What are non-emergency patient transport services?

They are services which are provided to enable patients to get to appointments in outpatient departments or for minor treatments or investigations. It is available for patients registered within NHS Oxfordshire travelling within the areas of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire.

This service is currently used by a wide range of patients many of whom could travel by bus or car. The patient transport service costs the NHS in Oxfordshire over £3 million a year and in the last financial year we spent £350,000 of this on patients who were able to use 'walk on' transport. That is patients who could travel by car and need no assistance in getting in and out of a vehicle. We think that we can save as much as £200,000 by tightening up on who can use this service.

**"Eligible patients for PTS are those who have a medical condition requiring support during or after the journey and or when it would be detrimental to the patient's condition or recovery if they were to travel by other means."** Department of Health 2007 - Eligibility Criteria for Patient Transport Services

### Who can use non-emergency patient transport services?

In Oxfordshire the current criteria for patients to be eligible for this service are:

- you require continuous oxygen.
- you require a stretcher.
- you have a disability that prevents you from travelling by private or public transport.
- you have a medical condition that may deteriorate if you were to travel by private or public transport.
- you are having certain types of on going treatment i.e. chemotherapy, radiology or renal dialysis. These are called "essential" journeys.

In addition if you meet any of the above criteria, you may be able to travel with an escort, if one or more of the following apply:

- you are under 16 years of age
- you have significant communication difficulties, including learning difficulties, impaired sight or are hard of hearing
- you have a mental health problem that prevents you from travelling alone
- you have a medical condition that requires constant supervision for your own safety
- you require a carer at your destination.

***None of this will change***

### What will change?

In addition to patients who meet these criteria we have continued to agree transport for those who do not but believe they need the transport for their appointments.

In future we plan to ask a set of questions before a booking is made and the patient's needs will be given a score. Patients who do not meet the score will not be able to access this service and will be asked to make their own way to their appointments.

The patient eligibility for the service will be assessed by either ambulance staff via a patient booking line or healthcare staff in treatment centres / GP surgeries / secondary care. In addition some of the questions asked will also allow the ambulance service to identify what kind of vehicle is needed – e.g. patient can walk on to the vehicle, patient needs a vehicle suitable for a wheelchair, patient needs stretcher transport.

### **What will happen if I am refused transport?**

You will be directed to the Oxfordshire Travel Advice Line (OxTail) who can advise you about the options available to you. These include bus services and voluntary transport services. If you are on a low income there may be financial support available for you.

### **Why are we making these changes now?**

The NHS needs to save money so that we can go on meeting the increasing demands for services. This means that even though our budgets have not been cut and our funding will increase in the next three years there are more demands being made on the pot of money we have.

These demands are increasing because:

- the population is getting older;
- more new medicines are being developed;
- there have been advances in technology;
- patients have higher expectations.

We have to make sure that we use the money we do have to the best effect to help our patients.

### **Where to get more information**

**NHS leaflet HC11 Help with health costs** – available in your GP surgery or at the hospital you are attending

**Oxfordshire Travel Advice Line (OxTAIL)** Mon-Fri 9.00am-5.00pm  
01865 323738 email: [oxtail@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:oxtail@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

### **How to get involved**

Take a look at the **Talking Health** pages on our website <http://bitly.com/Patienttransport>. You will be asked to register before you can get all the information.

Complete our questionnaire either on our webpage or available as a hard copy by contacting us as shown below.

### **How to find out more**

**Email:** [talking.health@oxfordshirepct.nhs.uk](mailto:talking.health@oxfordshirepct.nhs.uk)

**Phone** 01865 334641

### **You can also write to us with your views at:**

Communications & Engagement,  
**FREEPOST RRRKBZBTASXU**  
NHS Oxfordshire, Jubilee House, 5510 John Smith Drive  
Oxford Business Park South, OXFORD OX4 2LH