



Deputy Mattie McGrath
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

11th June 2025

PQ 23171/25 - To ask the Minister for Health the hospital transport budget for all hospitals in the south-east and mid-west regions; the qualifying criteria for patients availing of hospital transport; the application process for hospital transport; the way in which a wheelchair user can avail of their own transport; the supports available to a patient who must seek their transport; the way in which they avail of it in a timely fashion, to ensure that no vulnerable patients are left without hospital transport; and if she will make a statement on the matter. -Mattie McGrath

Dear Deputy McGrath,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

HSE Access and Integration contacted colleagues in the Dublin and South East and Mid West Health Regions for information in response to your question.

HSE Regional Health Area Mid West advised as follows:

The Patient Transport Budget for 2025 for all 6 sites in Mid West Acute Services amounts to €5.312m.

- €3.2m of this budget is associated with Renal services which is managed by the Medicine Directorate.
- The remaining €2.1m is mainly associated with Ambulance transport costs.

The renal service provides transport for patients who require dialysis treatment, all patients attending dialysis are offered the service and it is arranged for them by the renal service should they request it.

Ambulance transport is used for patients who are:

- Transferring to another hospital.
- Attending another hospital for an appointment, diagnostic or consult.
- Discharging to residential care, hospice or rehab unit.
- Transfer home of non-ambulant patients.

There is a dedicated transport coordinator who manages transport requests for all departments across the hospitals and they coordinate the transport with both the National Ambulance Service (NAS) and the private ambulance companies.

There are designated wheelchair accessible parking bays for those attending the hospitals in their own transport.



NAS do not support transport requests for patients attending routine appointments, and do not keep a record of such requests.

HSE Regional Health Area Dublin and South East advised as follows:

University Hospital Waterford/Kilcreene Orthopaedic Hospital

Hospital transport budget for all hospitals in the south-east and mid-west regions;

The total budget for non-emergency transport by ambulance is €1,728,502, excluding dialysis patients.

Total budget for Taxis: €20,035

The qualifying criteria for patients availing of hospital transport are;

- The patient is unable to access public or private transport because of their medical condition and/or mobility issues.
- The patient cannot arrange transport for themselves, and/or a third party cannot arrange transport on their behalf.
- Alternative appropriate transport arrangements, including voluntary patient transports, are not available.
- The patient is a holder of a current medical card.
- The journey is undertaken to avail of acute services in a public hospital.
- The patient resides in the counties of Carlow/Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford, or Wexford.

The application process for hospital transport.

GP contacts the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Office (NEPTS) with the completed application.

Fully completed application forms are processed in the NEPTS Office and sent to Area Management for final decision.

How a wheelchair user can avail of their transport:

If a patient is a wheelchair user and approved for NEPTS, wheelchair taxi/transport will be arranged.

The supports available to a patient who must seek their transport.

Patient Transport Services are provided by the HSE on a discretionary basis. As a general rule, patients should make their own transport arrangements, especially where public transport is available.

Transport may be approved for single or ongoing journeys.

Transport for escorts/carers to accompany an individual may be provided in limited circumstances.



Patients who do not qualify for NETPS can contact the Department of Social Protection to apply for an Exceptional Needs Payment (a single payment to help meet essential, exceptional expenditure).

The way in which they avail of it in a timely fashion, to ensure that no vulnerable patients are left without hospital transport:

Completed applications for Non-Emergency Patient Transport must be submitted at least 7 working days prior to the hospital office.

The NEPTS office will advise the service user of the duration of approval. During this time frame, service users are advised to request a booking via the NEPTS Office.

At the end of the approved timeframe and if transport is required, service users can reapply for NEPTS and contact their GP to submit a new application with approval and an updated medical report form.

Wexford General Hospital

The hospital transport budget for all hospitals in the south-east and mid-west regions:

Budget for Patient Transport WGH: €1,559,782

The qualifying criteria for patients availing of hospital transport are;

For non-emergency, there is the criterion by the NAS (example of the application form attached)

The application process for hospital transport, Non-emergency, as above, inpatient, the hospital arranges, will check if the patient has private insurance first, and if not, the hospital will arrange and fund transport.

How a wheelchair user can avail of their transport;

This should not be an issue, the difficulty may be if the person is having a procedure and unable to drive post-procedure. Disabled and age-friendly parking is available on-site.

When using your wheelchair in transport provided by NAS or the hospital, the wheelchair must be able to fit securely into the vehicle and have a headrest.

The supports available to a patient who must seek their transport.

We would refer the person to their GP and the NEPTS office. We try to accommodate everyone.

How they avail of it in a timely fashion, to ensure that no vulnerable patients are left without hospital transport;

The NEPTS office asks for a 2-week notice of appointments. However, will always attempt to accommodate short-notice requests.

The qualifying criteria for patients availing of hospital transport are;

For non-emergency situations, there is a criterion by the NAS (example of the application form attached)



The application process for hospital transport.

Non-emergency, as above, inpatient, the hospital arranges, we will check if the patient has private insurance first, and if not, the hospital will arrange and fund transport.

St Luke's General Hospital, Carlow/Kilkenny

Hospital transport budget for all hospitals in the south-east and mid-west regions:

Non-Emergency Transport	€101,201.00
Taxis	€174,266.00
Ambulance	€840,861.00

An allocation of funding is received for the GP transport service. We do not have a budget for taxis or private Ambulances, and this is funded from our revenue non-pay.

Transport is arranged by the transport office in St Luke's Hospital, Kilkenny, for the transfer of inpatients for transfer to Nursing homes, home or OPD appointments, or transfer to another hospital.

We have two Private ambulances on site, which were established as a proof of concept project in conjunction with IEHG to provide the service previously supported by the NAS Intermediate Care Vehicle. Additionally, we arrange private ambulance transfers for clinical appointments for inpatients as required. NAS is always contacted in the first instance for transfers as part of the SOP. If they are not available for non-emergency transfers, we utilise the on-site ambulance.

We arrange taxi transfers for inpatients where this is required and appropriate. This is closely monitored, and approval is only given via the Site Manager.

A GP referral system is supported for patients in the Carlow/Kilkenny catchment area to allow access to appointments where alternative or public transport is not available or suitable. This is coordinated by the Patient Transport Wexford office.

What are the criteria for you to arrange transport for non-emergency patients to attend their appointments, ie, NASP002 Criteria

A GP referral system is supported by the hospital and coordinated by the Patient Transport Office in Wexford. Please see the attached guidelines for providing patient transport. This Transport is only for patients at home who live in the Carlow/Kilkenny area. Transport for inpatients is arranged via our Transport office on site.

Inpatients are transported for Chemotherapy and Radiotherapy appointments as required.

Each GP request is evaluated on its own merits as per the Guidelines for the provision of patient transfers and coordinated through the Wexford Office.



Tipperary University Hospital

Hospital transport budget for all hospitals in the south-east and mid-west regions;

The Non-Emergency Patient Transport Scheme: €142,541.00

On-site ambulances (x2 private contract) for the transfer of
All patients to other acute hospitals, CNUS, Nursing homes, etc. €1,211,407.00

The qualifying criteria for patients availing of hospital transport are;

Criteria 1

Exceptional medical need and/or greater than 75 years. The patient is unable to access public or private transport because of their medical condition and/or mobility issues.

Examples could include:

- Advanced neurological conditions
- High dependency care needs
- Severely restricted mobility

Criteria 2

In the context of 1 above, the patient cannot arrange transport for themselves, and/or a third party cannot arrange transport on their behalf.

Criteria 3

Alternative appropriate transport arrangements, including voluntary patient transport, are not available.

Before approving HSE transport, the decision maker must ensure that no appropriate community or voluntary transport service is available locally that could provide the required service.

The application process for hospital transport.

The application is completed by the GP and the patient and sent to the Non-Emergency Patient Transport office for processing. The application is assessed against eligibility criteria and sent to the Senior Manager for approval.

The supports available to a patient who must seek their transport.

Although drivers are not medically trained, we do allow a carer or escort to accompany the patient during travel.

Patients can seek transport through Non-emergency Patient Transport, the Department of Social Protection, South East Radiotherapy Trust (SERT) for oncology patients, and other voluntary transport.

How they avail themselves of it in a timely fashion, to ensure that no vulnerable patients are left without hospital transport.



All applications must be received 7 working days before the appointment date to process applications in order to secure the most cost-effective option.

I trust this is of assistance to you.

Yours Sincerely,

Nessa Lynch
General Manager
Access and Integration

Attached appendix: HSE (South East) Region Application for Patient Transport

HSE (South East) Application for Patient Transport EXPLANATORY NOTES

The provision or arrangement by the HSE of Patient Transport is confined to circumstances where the HSE is satisfied that the patient's medical condition warrants the making of arrangements for transport and is satisfied that that person is not in a position to make or fund his or her own transport arrangements.
(Non Ambulance Patient Transport Services Policy NASPOO2).

Some clients may have financial or social need for transport but this does not qualify them for transport.

There is **no statutory requirement** for the HSE to provide clients with non emergency patient transport to attend healthcare facilities or clinics.

Patients with private medical insurance must contact their insurance provider to arrange transport.

Eligibility Criteria in accordance with NASP002

Clients requesting non-emergency patient transport services in HSE South East must fulfil **all** of the following criteria 1-6:-

1. **The patient is unable to access public or private transport because of their medical condition and/or mobility issues. The category of mobility to be identified within the following categories:**
 - A. Manual wheelchair – requires specialised transport
 - B. Electric wheelchair – requires specialised transport
 - C. Walking with frame – requires specialised transport
 - D. Other (Please specify) and
2. **In the context of 2 above the patient cannot arrange transport for themselves and/or a third party cannot arrange transport on their behalf and**
3. **Alternative appropriate transport arrangements including voluntary patient transport is not available and**
4. **The patient is the holder of a current medical card and**
5. **The journey is undertaken to avail of acute services in a public hospital and**
6. **The patient resides in the counties of Carlow/Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford or Wexford.**

Applications will be reviewed by the General Manager, with appropriate support available from a Medical Officer, as access to the service is based on clinical need.

GP's requiring Ambulance transport for non ambient patients must book transport through NEOC- 0818432999 (press 3 for PTS) or email neoc.ics@hse.ie

Notes regarding criteria

Criteria 2 The patient is unable to access public or private transport because of their medical condition and/or mobility issues. Examples include:

- Advanced neurological conditions
- High dependency care needs
- Severely restricted mobility

Criteria 3. In the context of 2 above the patient cannot arrange transport for themselves and/or a third party cannot arrange transport on their behalf.

Clients in residential facilities (HSE or private), will generally not be eligible for PTS services, unless in exceptional circumstances, as it is expected that their residential facility will provide/arrange patient transportation.

Criteria 4. Alternative appropriate transport arrangements including voluntary patient transport is not available.

Before approving HSE transport the decision maker must ensure that no appropriate community or voluntary transport service is available locally which could provide the required service.

Criteria for escorts to accompany the individual

Transport of an escort to accompany the individual may be provided in limited circumstances including:

- Children under 18 years of age.
- The patient has an intellectual or mental incapacity and requires support.
- The patient has high dependency care needs and requires carer support.
- The patient has an advanced neurological condition and requires carer support.

Transport for escorts will only be accommodated during the Patient's journey. Escorts travelling alone cannot be accommodated on PTS. The HSE does not provide funding for the provision of escorts in any circumstances.

Approval

All applications for travel must be approved in advance by the HSE prior to travel date. The HSE will not accept responsibility for the payment of any travel costs that are not pre approved. Any unapproved cost will be the responsibility of the client.

Duration of Approval

When a client has been approved for transportation, the approval can be in respect of:

- A single journey only.
- Ongoing journeys for 3 months.
- Ongoing journeys for 12 months.
- Ongoing journeys for 2 years.

The duration of the approval should be noted and the client advised to reapply after that date.

Budget Constraints

Even if all eligibility criteria are met, as outlined under Section 7.2 of NASP002, the Budget Holder may decide to reject the PTS request. This decision may be taken on the basis of protecting core service delivery functions where the prevailing budgetary situation is not favourable.

Discretion

The General Manager or his/her nominated Officer would have the authority to apply discretion on an exceptional needs basis in relation to any aspect of the criteria for the provision of non emergency patient transport, having regard to the budget allocation.

Completed applications must be received at least 7 working days prior to appointment date.

Application for Patient Transport & Approval

Non Emergency Patient Transport is only available where the patient's medical condition impacts on their mobility to such an extent that they would be unable to access public or private transport to access healthcare and/or it would be detrimental to the patient's condition or recovery to travel by any other means. (Full details are available in the NAS Policy on Non Ambulance Transport Services NASP002.
****Please read Explanatory Notes** Completed applications must be received at least 7 working days prior to appointment.**

Section 1.

Approval for release of medical notes

(A) I give my approval ☐

(B) I do not give my approval ☐

Section 2.

Patient Name: _____ Contact Number: _____

Address: _____ Eircode _____

DOB: _____ Patients GP: _____ GP Tel No. _____

Medical Card Holder: Yes ☐ No ☐ Medical Card No: _____ Expiry _____

Section 3.

(1) Do you use any of the following (please tick as appropriate)

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. Manual wheelchair? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Electric wheelchair? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Walking Frame? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Other? Please specify. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

Transport of an escort (restricted to one per patient) to accompany individual in limited circumstances:

(Children under 18/high dependency care need/advanced neurological condition) Yes ☐ No ☐

(2) Are you entitled to free travel under the National Free Travel Scheme? Yes ☐ No ☐

(3) Please provide details of the medical condition which impacts on your mobility and prevents you from using public or private transport.

Section 4. Appointment Details

Hospital: _____ Treating Consultant _____

Clinic: _____

Appointment Date: _____ Appointment Time: _____

Please attach a copy of your appointment letter. Letter attached Yes ☐ No ☐

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(If signature is not the patient requiring service please specify your name and relationship to patient)

Please return completed application to: Regional Non Emergency Patient Transport Services (NEPTS), Wexford General Hospital, Wexford. E mail patienttransport.wexford@hse.ie Telephone: 0818 499 299 Fax 053 9142283

HSE (South East) Application for Patient Transport

Medical Report

To be completed by patient's Consultant or Doctor

Incomplete application will be returned and no transport will be approved / arranged.

Patient Name: _____ DOB: _____

Address & Eircode: _____

Mobile Number _____ Landline: _____

Please specify the patient's medical condition impacting on their mobility to such an extent that the patient is unable to access healthcare:

Please provide details as to why the patient requires Non Emergency Patient Transport and cannot access public or private transport:

Please give details of any specific or special transport requirements:

Signed _____ Date: _____

Please stamp with clinic stamp:

Please return completed application to:

Regional Non Emergency Patient Transport Services (NEPTS), Wexford General Hospital, Wexford. Email patienttransport.wexford@hse.ie Telephone: 0818 499 299 Fax 053 9142283

Non Emergency Patient Transport is only available to individuals who are unable to access public or private transport because of their medical condition and/or mobility problems associated with their medical condition. (Full details are available in HSE Policy on Non Ambulance Transport Services NASP002 *please read explanatory notes*)