
Birmingham, Sandwell and Solihull Non-Emergency Patient Transport Consultation Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)?

Clinical Commissioning Groups are organisations which took over responsibility of commissioning (buying) NHS hospital and community services from the 1st April 2013. They are clinically led organisations made up of a membership, who are your local GPs. Commissioning means that CCGs have to decide what services are needed and make sure that they are provided in our community.

2. When will the new Non-Emergency Patient Transport (NEPT) service start?

It would take over twelve months to buy a new non-emergency patient transport service as CCGs have to follow a strict procurement process. Depending on the outcome of the consultation this could start in September 2015 and the anticipated new service would be fully ready by March 2017. These dates are just a guide and maybe subject to change.

3. Is this about cutting the service or costs?

CCGs are absolutely committed to funding non-emergency patient transport but, we have to make realistic plans given the pressure on NHS budgets, this means balancing 'what people want' with 'what we can afford'. CCGs have already been making a significant investment in NEPT at the NHS Trusts list below:

- Birmingham Women's Hospital NHS Trust
- Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust
(this includes Heartlands Hospital, Good Hope Hospital and Solihull Hospital)
- The Royal Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust.

This cost £8.3 million in 2013/14. CCGs are committed to funding a similar level of service, but we think we can buy a service which will be better value for money.

CCGs are looking to buy a service which is better value for money and so we will expect to achieve some savings, this money will be reinvested into direct patient treatment.

CCGs will use existing funding to buy a service which is at a similar standard, although

there will be some changes by creating one universal service. CCGs are also aiming to see some innovation in the new service particularly to improve patient communication and tracking of vehicles.

CCGs will impose financial penalties for poor performance if the quality of service for patients is not meeting the agreed standards.

4. What will this mean for me if a new service (Provider) takes over the service I use regularly?

It shouldn't affect you as the information about any non-emergency patient transport journeys that you have already booked will be passed on to the new service. You wouldn't need to take any action. If you need to make a new booking, then you will contact the new service using information that will be made available to you. NHS staff will be kept informed of changes and will help you make any bookings as they do now.

5. How will the eligibility criteria be applied?

The service would ask you a set of routine questions to check whether you meet the eligibility criteria and that you have a genuine need to have free NHS funded non-emergency patient transport.

6. Will everyone be asked the same questions?

Yes, everyone requesting non-emergency patient transport will be asked the same questions to assess their eligibility. For regular users, or those accessing some active treatment, they may be granted non-emergency patient transport for an agreed period. This would be no more than 12 weeks and then their eligibility will be reviewed.

CCGs will impose financial penalties for poor performance if the quality of service for patients is not meeting the agreed standards. Please see question 11 about how we intend to monitor services and impose penalties.

7. What is active treatment?

The eligibility criteria state that there are some people that are undergoing 'active treatment' which means due to the nature of this treatment, it would be unsafe or detrimental for their wellbeing. This means that they are unable to travel by private or public transport. Typically, this can be patients that are having renal dialysis or certain cancer treatments. If the new eligibility criteria were introduced, a list of active treatments would be made available through the patient transport service and NHS trusts. Clinical advice from doctors treating those planning or having active treatment on eligibility for transport would be taken into account.

8. How can I get help to get to hospital or other health care service if I am not eligible?

Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme: If you claim certain benefits, you may be able to get help towards your healthcare travel costs. Information on this scheme is available at your local hospital or treatment centre. Information is also available on NHS Choices website: <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcosts/Pages/Travelcosts.aspx>

Public Transport: All hospital and healthcare treatment centres have information about getting to your appointment on their websites, or you can contact local bus or train services for details.

Car Parking: There is car parking available onsite at all hospitals although availability of parking spaces will vary. Car parking charges apply and some hospitals offer free disabled parking for blue badge holders, or discounted tickets for regular visits. Some patients on benefits may qualify for free car parking.

Community transport: There are a number of community transport services available for people living in Birmingham, Sandwell or Solihull. Your local patient transport office can give you details or information is available on various local websites see below:

My Care in Birmingham - <https://www.mycareinbirmingham.org.uk/>

Solihull - <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/socialservicesandhealth/adultsoldersadults/gettingoutabout/outandabout>

Sandwell - <http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/>

9. Why isn't car parking free at hospitals?

Providing car parking at NHS hospitals whether it is free or not to patients, visitors or staff costs a significant amount of money. NHS trusts have to ensure that any onsite car parking is well managed, maintained and safe, this can be very costly. Car parking charges help to fund the availability of car parking and mean that money for clinical care is not diverted. Car parking charges are in place at all NHS hospitals in Birmingham and Solihull which is the same as in other areas, but there are some schemes available that can help patients offset the costs.

The Department of Health published guidance in 2014 on NHS car parking see below;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-patient-visitor-and-staff-car-parking-principles/nhs-patient-visitor-and-staff-car-parking-principles>

10. Why don't CCGs fund community transport for patients who aren't eligible for non-emergency patient transport?

CCGs are fairly new organisations that started on the 1st April 2013 and took over commissioning (buying) hospital and community services from Primary Care Trusts (PCTs). These former PCTs did not fund community transport so this is not something that has been transferred to CCGs. We are now seeking people's views to understand more about the barriers that some people may face in accessing local healthcare services.

11. What will the service be performance monitored against?

CCGs will monitor the Providers performance against the quality standards that are set - these are called Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These KPIs are really important as they help us make sure that the Provider delivers what was agreed and to the agreed standard such as; time spent on vehicles, patients arriving at destinations on time, quality criteria for infection control/ safeguarding which are all outlined in the service specification. If the Provider fails to meet these standards in the future which then impact on the quality of services that patients receive then CCGs are absolutely committed to ensuring that financial penalties are imposed on the Provider for poor performance (non-compliance). Listening to what patients think about services is also an important part of this process. CCGs will expect the Provider to undertake regular patient satisfaction surveys. Patients will also be able to feedback using the Friends and Family test forms.

