

## **NHS Sheffield: Guidance on Purchasing Transport for Patients Eligible for Continuing Healthcare**

### **1.0 Purpose**

1.1 This guidance clarifies how NHS Sheffield will determine whether to pay for transport costs for patients who are eligible for continuing healthcare. It is a supporting document to NHS Sheffield's Continuing Healthcare policy on the commissioning of care.

### **2.0 Background**

2.1 The Continuing Healthcare (Responsibilities) Directions 2009 states that "NHS Continuing Healthcare" means a package of care arranged and funded solely by the health service for a person aged 18 or over to meet physical or mental health needs which have arisen as a result of illness.

2.2 The National Framework for Continuing Healthcare states, "the package to be provide is that which the PCT assesses is appropriate for the individual's needs." (para 100).

2.3 The Practice Guidance for Continuing Healthcare states where a patient is "found to be eligible for NHS continuing healthcare, the NHS has responsibility for funding the support necessary to meet their assessed health and social care needs." (para 2.4.1). The Guidance also states that "There is a range of everyday household costs that are expected to be covered by personal income or through welfare benefits (i.e. food, rent/mortgage interest, fuel, clothing and other normal household items). In addition, disability-related benefits (e.g. Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance) are intended to cover some disability-related costs." (para 11.8).

2.4 NHS Sheffield approved a policy on the commissioning of care provision for patients eligible for continuing healthcare in December 2011. This policy specifies a range of factors which need to be taken into account when considering the provision of care packages. The policy allows for exceptional circumstances to be considered. The policy assists NHS Sheffield to ensure services funded under continuing healthcare are commensurate with patients' needs.

2.5 NHS Sheffield works in partnership with Sheffield City Council to deliver the Sheffield Mobility Strategy. This guidance reflects NHS Sheffield's commitments under that policy.

### **3.0 Transport Services**

3.1 There are a range of options that patients can use, when they need transport, including those set out below. Different options will be appropriate in different circumstances.

- use of private vehicles, including those driven by family or friends;
- vehicles driven by paid staff or personal assistants who could be volunteers or paid;
- use of public transport, such as buses, trains and trams.
- use of taxis
- use of commissioned transport services, managed by the NHS, Local Authorities, independent companies or social enterprises.
- use of NHS Transport, which is available in defined circumstances.
- use of emergency ambulances, for people who are seriously ill and in need of immediate emergency medical care.

3.2 Transport can be required by service users for a variety of reasons, from accessing routine activities to requiring urgent health interventions.

#### **4.0 Providing transport as a part of continuing healthcare funding**

4.1 Under the directions and guidance for continuing healthcare it is not possible to state definitively that the NHS would or would not fund transport costs, as part of a package of care. NHS Sheffield recognises that some patients will need support to access services. However, transport is not of itself to be a health or social care service. Rather it is a service that can facilitate access to health or social care services.

4.2 Routine transport costs would usually be considered to be an everyday household cost by NHS Sheffield. Therefore they would not usually be funded as a part of a package of continuing healthcare, apart from in exceptional circumstances.

4.3 Routine transport costs are defined as transport costs incurred when:

- accessing services that can be used by the general public (such as buses, trains, trams and taxis); or
- travelling in privately-owned vehicles, regardless of who the owner is; or
- travelling to and from regular activities, such as those identified on a patient's care plan.

4.4 Where transport is provided the provider will be determined by NHS Sheffield, apart from in exceptional circumstances. The rate to be paid will be agreed with the provider direct. NHS Sheffield will not be liable for any additional costs that arise, eg as a result of waiting times.

4.5 Transport costs should be disaggregated from the costs of services. This will ensure that they not paid for by NHS Sheffield, apart from in exceptional circumstances.

#### **5.0 Process**

5.1 Where NHS Sheffield is arranging a taxi for a patient, this will be done through the Business Support Team. NHS Sheffield will use taxi companies under contract to the PCT or under any other contract to which the PCT is party.

5.2 NHS Sheffield may arrange transport for patients using the Patient Transport Service, where the patient's needs warrant this.

5.3 Transport Services will only be arranged by NHS Sheffield where this is agreed on the patient's care plan.

5.4 Transport Services will only be funded by NHS Sheffield where this is agreed on the patient's care plan.

#### **5.0 Escorts**

5.1 NHS Sheffield recognises that some patients may require assistance during the journey, as a consequence of their assessed health and social care needs. Where such a need is identified during their assessment, NHS Sheffield will pay escort costs.

5.2 Where a patient requires 1:1 assistance during the journey, as a consequence of their assessed health and social care needs, NHS Sheffield will pay for the cost of an escort

to accompany the patient during the journey. The escort will be paid at an agreed amount per week, specified in the patient's care plan, and charged at an hourly rate.

5.3 Where the patient requires an escort, but the escort can be shared with other patients during the journey, NHS Sheffield will contribute a proportionate amount of the escorts costs. The costs will be specified in the patient's care plan.

5.4 Where the escort is provided by a taxi company, the charge will be at the contracted amount. The cost of any other escorts should be approved by NHS Sheffield in advance of journeys being made.

5.5 Where a shared escort is required, but the number of other passengers is variable, NHS Sheffield will agree a regular contribution as part of care planning.

5.6 Escort costs will only be paid where it is part of an agreed care plan.

## **6.0 Transport to occasional, irregular appointments**

6.1 Patients eligible for continuing healthcare are likely to have occasional and irregular appointments, such as to see health professionals. Where these appointments are required to meet health or social care needs, the patient may be eligible for assistance with the cost of transport.

6.2 Where the patient regularly incurs routine transport costs, as set out in section 4, transport costs to occasional, irregular appointments will be considered everyday household costs. Therefore they would not usually be funded as a part of a package of continuing healthcare, apart from in exceptional circumstances.

6.3 NHS Sheffield provides patient transport in line with national guidelines. Patients eligible for continuing healthcare may be eligible for NHS patient transport, in accordance with the national guidelines. Details of these can be found at the website below, which is hosted by NHS Rotherham.

- <http://www.rotherham.nhs.uk/Ascertaining%20Eligibility%20for%20Patient%20Transport%20Services%20as%20at%20August%202010.pdf>

6.4 Packages of care funded by continuing healthcare cover a patient's assessed health and social care needs. They do not include social needs. Therefore transport costs for social activities that are not part of an agreed care health and social care plan will not be funded.

## **7.0 Carers and family members**

7.1 Under the directions and guidance for continuing healthcare it is not possible to state definitively that the NHS would or would not fund transport costs for carers or family members, as part of a package of care. However, in order for transport costs to be funded it would need to be demonstrated that the transport was required to assist the patient to meet their physical or mental health needs which have arisen as a result of illness.

7.2 Where it can be demonstrated that the transport is required by the carer or family member as set out above, NHS Sheffield will consider meeting the costs of transport.

7.3 Where carers and family members are able to:

- access services that can be used by the general public (such as buses, trains, trams and taxis); or
- use privately-owned vehicles, regardless of who the owner is

these will be considered everyday household costs. Therefore they would not usually be funded as a part of a package of continuing healthcare, apart from in exceptional circumstances.

## **8.0 Exceptional Circumstances**

8.1 Exceptional circumstances will be based on the definition used in NHS Sheffield's CHC policy on the commissioning of care, which are:

- are the patient's needs significantly different to other patients with the same or similar conditions; and
- will the patient benefit significantly more from the additional or alternative services than other patients with the same or similar conditions would.

8.2 Where the patient or their care manager believes exceptional circumstances may apply, they should apply to NHS Sheffield for funding for transport costs. The application should be made using the pro forma for NHS Sheffield's Resource Panel. Decisions on whether to fund such costs will be made by an Director of NHS Sheffield, following a recommendation from Resource Panel.

## **9.0 Further Support**

Sheffield City Council provides a useful travel guide for older and disabled people. Care Managers should consider whether this guide would be useful for the patients whom they support, and whether they need support to use it. The guide can be accessed at the following website:

- <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/caresupport/adults/travel/support.html>

or from

- Travel Solutions, 16 Hallamgate Road, Sheffield, S10 5BT, tel 0114 2685271.

## **10.0 Governance**

10.1 This guidance is issued to support NHS Sheffield to implement its policy on CHC commissioning of care. The guidance is subordinate to this policy.

10.2 This guidance will be reviewed at the same time as NHS Sheffield's policy on CHC commissioning of care.

### Version Control

0.1	22 January 2012	E Harrigan	Initial Draft, circulated internally for consultation.
0.2	16 March 2012	E Harrigan	To Operational Group for comment
0.3 (version approved)	17 April	E Harrigan	Following comments at Operational Group.