

16<sup>th</sup> October 2017  
Jackie Pendleton  
NHS Kernow  
By email

Unit 1, Gleaner House  
Buzza Street  
St Marys  
Isles of Scilly  
TR21 0HW

01720 423037  
[contact@healthwatchislesofscilly.co.uk](mailto:contact@healthwatchislesofscilly.co.uk)

Dear Jackie,

Thank you for your letter of 3<sup>rd</sup> October and response to points we made regarding the Policy for Non-Emergency NHS Funded Patient Transport. I have set out our response in return, below.

**1. Facility for paying the difference to travel to Newquay:**

We thank you for continuing to look into this.

**2. Definition of 'usually resident' regarding seasonal staff:**

We thank you for providing clarification that seasonal staff will be eligible for NHS funded transport.

**3. Travel for unplanned treatment:**

In your letter you say that: 'Where patients attend A&E for any other reason (*than in relation to a pre-existing condition*) they would not be eligible for assistance through HTCS for help with their travel costs. This ensures that all patients across Cornwall and Isles of Scilly have equitable access.'

We do not agree that patients from the Isles of Scilly have equitable access to services which are located in mainland Cornwall.

You acknowledge that there is a need to review the impact of this policy in terms of potential to cause additional demand on other areas of transport. We submit that there is also a need to review the impact of this policy on patients who have limited or no access to urgent care services on the Isles of Scilly, and who are faced with very high transport costs to access this care.

**We note that you have an action to take this forward. However, in light of the potential impact of the current policy on patients, we will refer this matter to the Council of the Isles of Scilly Scrutiny Committee.**

**4. Exclusion of self-referral:**

We acknowledge that this relates to service provision and delivery as much as travel, and will discuss further with relevant services.

**5. Escort criteria:**

We are told that in some cases funding for an escort is refused despite advice from healthcare professionals, for instance in the case of an admission letter stating that a patient should be collected from hospital and/or have someone with them for 24 hours after a general anaesthetic.

The matter of how advice and authorisation is obtained from healthcare professionals has been discussed at the IOS Medical Travel and Transport Group. We understand that the agreed procedure

requires the Centralised Booking Service to seek authorisation from the ward or clinic, referring consultant, or GP. The onus is not on the patient to arrange this.

We request further clarification on how information from healthcare professionals is sought or obtained in the matter of funded travel for escorts.

We have recently obtained some data which is pertinent to this discussion. We asked residents of the Isles of Scilly if they had taken an escort with them on their medical trip, and how this was funded. 184 people responded. About half said they had taken an escort, and of these, over half had funded this themselves. This indicates to us that people's need for support and assistance is not being met through the current policy.

Full results of this straw poll and a summary of accompanying comments will be included in our 2017 Community Survey Report in due course.

#### **6. Escorts: local criteria**

We refer to our original point which is that the Policy for Non- Emergency NHS Funded Patient Transport states that an escort's eligibility for funded transport is based on the patient's eligibility. We maintain that if the patient is eligible for funded transport to an appointment where emotional support may be needed, then their need for an escort should not be subject to further financial eligibility checks.

**In light of the potential impact on patients, we will refer this matter to the Council of the Isles of Scilly Scrutiny Committee.**

#### **7. Previous IOS specific escort scenarios.**

We refer to point 5, above, regarding how clinical advice and authorisation is obtained on a case by case basis, and whether the current policy adequately meets need.

#### **8. Frequent Travellers**

We thank you for providing clarification that patients attending for frequent appointments will be funded for travel to the mainland.

Thank you again for your response and for your continuing attention in these matters.

Yours sincerely,

Carol Clarke  
Manager

For Healthwatch Isles of Scilly

CC: Cllr Avril Mumford, Chairman, Scrutiny Committee, IOS  
Cllr Steve Sims, Vice Chairman, Scrutiny Committee, IOS  
Cllr Harry Legg, Scrutiny Committee, IOS; IOS Medical Travel and Transport Group  
Bob Dawson, Officer, Policy and Scrutiny, IOS