

How to reclaim costs for off-island medical travel

From 1st May 2017, patients who are travelling from an off-island to a mainland appointment will be able to reclaim the cost of the inter-island leg of their journey.

The cost of inter-island travel is covered by NHS funding for IOS medical travel under the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme. This scheme covers travel to the mainland, therefore the new off-island funding arrangements do not cover trips for appointments on St Marys.

The Council of the Isles of Scilly runs a concessionary fare scheme which supports eligible off-island residents and includes four Health Special Passes per year.

These passes are only to be used for medical appointments on St Marys, when travel is outside of scheduled boat times.

Patients should arrange their inter-island travel and claim a repayment as follows:

1. When off-island residents call RCHT Patient Transport to book their travel from St Mary's to the mainland they can request a reference code for the off-island element of their travel.
 - a) Patients travelling to the mainland and back over two days or more will receive a reference code that will entitle them to the reimbursement of a Scheduled boat fare only.
 - b) Patients travelling to the mainland and back in the same day will receive a reference code that will entitle them to the reimbursement of either a Scheduled boat fare or a Special boat fare dependant on the time of their travel.
2. The patient will pay for their own off island transport and submit a claim to the CCG for reimbursement of travel costs:
 - a) The claim will be made using a standard claim form and must include the **reference code** issued by RCHT and the **receipt** for expenses incurred.
 - b) Claims can be made up to three months after the date of travel but will not be back dated to earlier than 1 May 2017.
3. Payment will be made by cheque and will take up to 6 weeks.

Healthwatch has pointed out some complications regarding boat and flight schedules, especially in winter, and have received assurances that the system will be kept under review. We will monitor progress of the scheme and welcome your feedback.