

## **Discretionary Cross Solent Travel Scheme Consultation – Questionnaire**

The Isle of Wight Council understand that the costs (time and money) incurred by people who need to travel to the mainland for hospital care is a very real concern for local people. This consultation seeks to obtain views from Island residents about the Isle of Wight Council's current funding of cross Solent travel for people attending mainland hospital appointments for the purposes of chemotherapy, radiotherapy or renal dialysis.

Where people have a low income or are in receipt of specific qualifying benefits or allowances, the NHS has a statutory duty to reimburse their travel costs under the Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme (HTCS). The discretionary council funded scheme goes beyond this and provides non-means tested support to people who would qualify for support from the HTCS. The Isle of Wight Council's decision to provide this funding makes us nationally unique as no other local authority chooses to fund transport for NHS patients and there is no duty or responsibility placed on local authorities to do so.

Adult Social Care currently provides £60,000 per year to fund the cross Solent travel costs incurred by patients attending a mainland hospital for chemotherapy, radiotherapy or renal dialysis. This was a decision taken by Councillors several years ago and it is entirely discretionary.

The council is considering whether or not it should continue to fund this cross Solent travel for two reasons:

First, in such challenging financial times, the council must take very difficult decisions in how it can best meet its duties and responsibilities despite the significant reduction in funding from Government.

Second, the council is also concerned about the inequitable nature of this funding. It only supports those local residents who are travelling for a restricted range of treatments (chemotherapy, radiotherapy or renal dialysis), meaning that those people who have to undergo cross Solent travel to attend a mainland hospital for an equally serious illness or life- saving treatment receive no financial support from the council.

Accordingly, the funding of this scheme was identified as a potential budget saving for 2018/19.

The council, however, recognises the importance of hearing and considering the views of Island residents to inform any decisions about the future funding of this scheme. That is why it has embarked upon this public consultation and is using Healthwatch as an independent partner to administer the consultation and analyse the results.

We would be very grateful if you would complete this short questionnaire. We value your experience, knowledge and comments as someone who either has used the current scheme or as a member of the wider population who may possibly need to travel to the mainland for treatment in the future.

To help you answer the survey questions, additional background information and a link to frequently asked questions can be found [here](#). This consultation will run until the 23 December 2018. This is an anonymous questionnaire and any comments will be reported in a way which protects the identity of the respondent.

**1. Have you at any time in the past 12 years had to travel to the mainland to attend a medical appointment?**

- Yes (please answer next question)
- No (please go to question 8)

**2. Was your mainland medical appointment for chemotherapy, radiotherapy or renal dialysis?**

- Chemotherapy
- Radiotherapy
- Renal dialysis
- No (if no please go to question 8)

**3. Did your level of income and benefits entitle you to claim your travel costs under the means tested statutory Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme (HTCS)?**  
*For more information about the Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme, please click [here](#)*

- Yes (please go to question 9)
- No (please go to question 4)
- I don't know (please go to question 4)

The next six questions relate to the discretionary Cross Solent Travel Scheme operated by the Isle of Wight NHS Trust but funded by the Isle of Wight Council, which is currently being reviewed.

**4. Did you use the discretionary non-means tested Cross Solent Travel Scheme to reclaim your travel expenses?**

- Yes (please go to question 5)
- No, I funded my own transport costs (please go to question 8)

**5. How did you find out about the Cross Solent Travel Scheme? Please tick all the boxes that apply.**

- Hospital (IW)
- Hospital (Mainland)
- GP
- Leaflet
- Word of mouth
- Voluntary sector organisation
- Hospice
- Other (please specify)

**6. How many times have you used the discretionary Cross Solent Travel Scheme to reclaim your travel costs?**

- Once
- 2 - 4 trips
- 5 - 10 trips
- More than 10 trips

**7. Were you accompanied by a carer or a companion who was also funded under the discretionary Cross Solent Travel Scheme?**

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

**8. If you should need to travel to the mainland for chemotherapy, radiotherapy or renal dialysis in the future and this scheme was not available, how would you fund your travel costs?**

- Income
- Savings
- Family
- Loan
- Charity
- I would not be able to fund my travel
- I would qualify for support from the means tested Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme (HTCS)
- Other (please specify)

**9. Please use the space below to share your thoughts about whether or how the Isle of Wight Council should continue to fund this scheme in the future:**

The next two questions relate to discount schemes operated by Isle of Wight ferry companies.

**10. Are you aware that Red Funnel, Wightlink and Hovertravel all offer specific discounts for people to attend mainland medical appointments? For more information about the ferry company discount schemes, click [here](#)**

- Yes
- No (please go to question 12)

**11. Have you used the discounts offered by the Islands ferry operators to attend mainland medical appointments?**

- Yes
- No

The next three questions are about you. You may feel some of the questions below are a little personal. They are completely optional and you are not obliged to answer them. Please be assured that the information we collect will be treated as confidential and will be used for the purpose of this survey only.

**12. What is your gender?**

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say

**13. What is your age group?**

- Under 18
- 18 - 29
- 30- 49
- 50 - 64
- 65 - 79
- 80 or over
- Prefer not to say

**14. What is your postcode?**

- PO30 (Newport)
- PO31 (Cowes)
- PO32 (East Cowes)
- PO33 (Ryde)
- PO34 (Seaview)
- PO35 (Bembridge)
- PO36 (Sandown)
- PO37 (Shanklin)
- PO38 (Ventnor)
- PO39 (Totland Bay)
- PO40 (Freshwater)
- PO41 (Yarmouth)

## **Public Consultation regarding the Isle of Wight Council's funding of the Cross Solent Travel Scheme**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **1. What is the Cross Solent Travel Scheme?**

It is a discretionary non-means tested scheme which provides financial support for ferry travel costs to mainland appointments for patients travelling to receive chemotherapy, radiotherapy or renal dialysis. The scheme is owned and administered by the Isle of Wight NHS Trust but is funded by the Isle of Wight Council.

#### **2. Who can apply for support from this scheme?**

Patients travelling to Portsmouth or Southampton hospitals for chemotherapy, radiotherapy or renal dialysis treatment or the planning of such treatments.

#### **3. What restrictions apply to this scheme?**

- Patients must not be in receipt of benefits which would entitle them to assistance from the Healthcare Statutory Travel Cost Scheme (HTCS) ★ see more information below
- Patients must travel as foot passengers, i.e. public transport, taxi or car ferry fares cannot be reimbursed.
- Reimbursement is only available where the relevant discount has been claimed from the travel provider.
- Patients must complete a valid claim form and produce receipts for travel payments
- Under these arrangements only the following groups of patients are eligible for assistance:
  - a) Patients who are receiving radiotherapy treatment or are planning such a treatment
  - b) Patients who are receiving chemotherapy treatment or are planning such a treatment
  - c) Patients who are receiving renal dialysis treatment or are planning such a treatment
- We will provide reimbursement for carers or escorts where the patient eligible for assistance is:
  - d) Deemed by a medical professional as unable to travel alone (written evidence required) or
  - e) Is under 18 years of age or 65 years of age or older at the time of travel

**4. Can patients travelling for conditions other than chemotherapy, radiotherapy or renal dialysis apply for support from the scheme?**

No, the scheme is only available for patients travelling for these specific treatments.

**5. Is support under this scheme means tested?**

Support under this discretionary scheme is not means tested. The scheme is available to any patient who would not qualify for support under the statutory Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme (HTCS).

**6. ★ What is the statutory Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme (HTCS)?**

This is a different scheme to the one that is currently funded by the IW Council.

The NHS have a duty to reimburse travel costs to people who have a low income or are in receipt of certain income related benefits. This scheme can refund the cost of travelling to hospital or other NHS premises for any treatment or tests arranged by a doctor or dentist. The scheme is not limited to certain treatments or conditions, however to qualify for the scheme you must meet the eligibility criteria of the NHS Low Income Scheme or be in receipt of specific income related benefits.

To find out more about the HTCS please [click here](#)

**7. What discounts are offered by the Isle of Wight Ferry operators to support patients travelling for health appointments?**

Each of the Isle of Wight ferry operators offers their own discount scheme to support patients attending NHS funded hospital appointments. To find out what each ferry operator offers and how to take advantage of their scheme please refer to the ferry provider's own websites:

[www.redfunnel.co.uk/en/isle-of-wight-ferry/fares/ferry-passenger-fares-to-southampton/healthcare-travel-scheme/](http://www.redfunnel.co.uk/en/isle-of-wight-ferry/fares/ferry-passenger-fares-to-southampton/healthcare-travel-scheme/)

[www.wightlink.co.uk/iow/go/tickets-prices/healthcare](http://www.wightlink.co.uk/iow/go/tickets-prices/healthcare)

[www.hovertravel.co.uk/nhs-healthcare-scheme](http://www.hovertravel.co.uk/nhs-healthcare-scheme)