

27. Transport and Parking

Most of the treatments for cancer require frequent and/or prolonged visits to the hospital or treatment centre. Some people (especially the elderly) may not have readily available access to transport and may find it difficult getting to and from the hospital at all, let alone at the time their treatment has been allocated (early morning start times and late finishes). The cost of so many hospital visits – petrol, parking fees, public transport fares etc can be a considerable worry and financial burden. Hospital parking can be a cause of stress in itself. Many hospitals don't have enough parking spaces for the amount of people using them. Having to worry about whether they will be able to park can be a stress that most people could do without at an already distressing time.

How can I manage my problems with transport and parking?

- Some patients are eligible for hospital transport, for example if they have mobility problems. Find out from the patient transport service if you are eligible (see contact details below).
- Some of the stress associated with transport and parking can be avoided with some planning. It may be beneficial to leave half an hour earlier than usual so you can be sure you will still be in time for your appointment if you have trouble on route or parking the car. Using public transport, such as a bus or taxi, will avoid parking problems.
- The Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS) is for patients who do not have a medical need for ambulance transport and who cannot afford the cost of travel. Contact the Cancer Information and Support Centre for advice on the conditions for reclaiming hospital car parking charges, who is eligible and how you go about doing it.
- If you are awarded the Mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance you will have an automatic entitlement to a Blue Badge parking concession and, if you use a car or one is used for you, to exemption from road tax.
- If you have a disability caused by your cancer or its treatment, you may be able to get help with bus and train concessions too. Disabled Person's Railcard helpline: **0845 6050 525**. Contact your local council for a Concessionary Travel - Bus Pass.
- If you are on a low income you may be entitled to help with NHS costs, including travel for hospital treatment. You can get information about these benefits from your local Social Security office, the Benefit Enquiry Line (**0800 882 200**) or the Department for Work and Pensions website at www.dwp.gov.uk
- If you need additional help you may find your local social services department helpful as they can assist with advice on transport.