



INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS WHO USE NON-EMERGENCY PATIENT TRANSPORT



North East Ambulance Service provides non-emergency transport for patients who have a medical condition that would prevent them from travelling by any other means, or who require the special skills of an Ambulance Care Assistant for the duration of the journey.

This leaflet tells you about your transport arrangements.

Ambulance staff are here to help you to get to your destination safely and advise you on your transport.

What time should I be ready for collection?

If you have a morning appointment it may be that you can be picked up as early as 8.15 am, and it would be helpful if you could be ready to leave from that time. If you are not ready to travel, you may miss your appointment. If your appointment is in the afternoon, you should be ready by 12.15 pm. We may need to pick you up early depending upon where you live and how many patients are travelling to hospital.

Separate arrangements are in place for patients who have been given 'prompt' appointments - these are day surgery, dialysis and MRI scans. On these occasions you may be picked up one and a half hours before your appointment.

Is my appointment time right for travelling by ambulance?

Patients who are travelling by ambulance should be given 'special' appointment times by their hospital/treatment centre, according to where they live.

- Morning appointment**
- If you live over three miles away from the hospital/treatment centre (but not more than eight miles away) - you should have been given a 9.30 am appointment
 - For patients who live less than three miles (or more than eight miles) from the hospital/treatment centre, a 10.30 am appointment should have been given
- Afternoon appointment**
- No matter where you live, any 'afternoon' appointment should be for 2.00 pm

If your appointment time is different, please contact the hospital/treatment centre staff and tell them you are coming by ambulance.

Running late/breakdowns

In the unlikely event that one of our vehicles is running late or has broken down; we will make every effort to find a replacement vehicle to redirect to continue the planned work. This of course may not always be possible and in these circumstances new appointments would have to be made.

PTS control rarely has contact details for direct contact with patients but would inform the booker/hospital department of the problem with the expectation that they contact the patient.

Can I bring someone with me?

If you need company at the hospital, please arrange to meet that person there.

You may only bring someone with you on the ambulance if:

- You require constant attention
- You have severe communication or sensory difficulties, for example, deafness, speech or language difficulties or visual impairment
- This is your first referral and you need your carer to provide support
- You are under 16 years of age.

Only in special circumstances can more than one carer (ie carer and nurse) be transported. Carers may be appropriate if a patient's mental health condition makes it unsuitable for them to travel unaccompanied.

What type of ambulance/transport do I need?

Hospital and GP surgery staff will work with you to select the best form of transport for your appointment.

They will ask you a number of questions about your mobility and home access. This will help us to send the correct ambulance to transport you to your appointment safely.

The mobility categories are as follows:



Walking Patient - You can walk unaided, or require the assistance of the steadying arm of an Ambulance Care Assistant to the ambulance or a car. You can manage the steps on the vehicle with steadying assistance only. You only require the attention of the driver for your journey.

Tail Lift - You can use our wheelchair and can transfer to the seat in the ambulance with just the aid of a driver. There is easy access at home and destination (e.g. no steps) so you only require the attention of the driver.



Two Person Crew - You cannot walk and require the assistance of two ambulance staff to be moved to and from the ambulance. Your mental and/or your physical condition means that you require the attention of two staff. You require oxygen therapy, or there are steps or difficult access at home.

Own Chair - You are in your own wheelchair and cannot transfer to a seat on the ambulance. There is easy access at home and destination (no steps) and you require the attention of the driver only. Please state at the time of booking if your wheelchair is either electric or manual.



Two Person Crew Own Chair - You have your own wheelchair and cannot transfer to a seat on the ambulance, there are steps at home and/or your condition requires the need for a two person crew. Please state if your wheelchair is electric or manual at the time of booking.

Stretcher Patient - You must need to lie down for the duration of the journey.

Child - If you are making a booking for a baby, infant or child, please state the child's age and weight at the time of booking, and we supply the appropriate car seat.



Information for wheelchair users

NEAS is committed to transporting wheelchair users to their destination in safety and comfort. With regard to the general condition of the wheelchair the priority must of course be safety and it is obviously in the patient's interest to ensure proper maintenance of their chair.

Your wheelchair

In order to ensure that you can be transported safely our staff will need to satisfy themselves on the following points:

- That your wheelchair is of a type suitable for securing on a vehicle.
- That the wheelchair is in a good, safe condition.
- That the tyres are solid or fully inflated.
- That the brakes function properly.
- That the footplates and armrests are fitted.
- That the wheelchair has adequate tie down points.

If your wheelchair is not suitable for transport on our vehicle the alternative would be to find a chair that the patient can use. This may be the vehicles own wheelchair for the journey (as long as this is not required for transferring other planned patients) and a hospital chair at the other end or travel in some other way e.g. on a stretcher.

Powered wheelchairs

Powered wheelchairs can present particular problems; our staff will need to be satisfied that the battery is safe and that the wheelchair has an adequate braking system.



Not all our vehicles have the capability to transport powered chairs as they require a particular type of restraining system; it would therefore be better to use a manual chair if you have one.

Our vehicles and your wheelchair

If you are unsure whether your wheelchair can be used, you should ask for a transportation plan to be done at the time your transport is booked. If we find the problem on arrival at your home then there is little we can do other than have a new appointment made along with a proper plan; but this is a rare occurrence.

Our vehicles are entered by either a ramp or a passenger lift at the rear.

On this type of vehicle you may be secured in your wheelchair to a specially designed ambulance seat.

This type of seat will normally be rearward facing and it has been designed to give rear impact protection.

How will I travel?

You will be transported to the hospital/treatment centre by either an ambulance driver, ambulance car volunteer or a contractor (who works for the NEAS). They will keep you informed during your journey and direct or take you to the place of your treatment. We will make every effort to get you to your hospital/treatment centre on time.

We have a responsibility to transport patients from a designated pick up point to designated drop off point. Detours will only be authorised by ambulance control.



General

Whilst every attempt will be made to transport you to your destination there may be occasions when, for a variety of reasons, this does not prove possible e.g.:

- Your particular wheelchair (or that of another patient already on the vehicle) is of such a design or size that it restricts space in the vehicle.
- Your wheelchair requires a particular tie down system that is not available on the vehicle attending.
- The information given to us by the person who booked your transport is incorrect.



All our vehicles are designed with due regard to codes of practice laid down by the relevant authorities e.g. Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Authority, Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee.

There are a large number of different designs and adaptations of wheelchairs and it may not be possible to accommodate an unusual type.

The driver of the ambulance is legally responsible for the vehicle and its occupants, and will make the decision on whether or not to transport your wheelchair, and must always err on the side of safety.

You can also assist us greatly by ensuring that the person booking your transport gives as much information as possible about your wheelchair and your needs.

Please remember that all available information shows the safest way to travel is to transfer to an ambulance seat if you can.

What will happen after my treatment?

Between one to two hours after your arrival at the hospital/treatment centre, an ambulance will arrive to take you home. Sometimes, if your treatment takes longer than planned or if you are a dialysis or radiotherapy patient etc. and you are not ready for your return journey, our crews may be unable to wait - to do so would delay other patients' transport.

Do not worry - once we are advised that you are ready, transport will return to take you home as soon as possible.

During busy periods you may need to wait longer; we will always try to keep you advised about any delays through the department at the hospital.



What should I do if I'm unable to keep my appointment?

If you are unable to travel to your appointment, please give as much notice as possible. If the hospital cancels your appointment, please remind them you are an ambulance patient, they will then advise us of the cancellation.

How much notice do I need to give to book ambulance transport?

Please give as much notice as possible if you require ambulance transport. Bookings made the day before transportation is required cannot be guaranteed.

If you have any problems or queries prior to your transport, please contact the hospital or GP who arranged your ambulance. If you want to make a complaint about the service you've received please contact PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) on Freephone number **0800 032 0202** or the NEAS Complaints Officer, North East Ambulance Service, Bernicia House, Goldcrest Way, Newburn Riverside, Newcastle upon Tyne NE15 9RT.

आपके आवेदन करने पर यह जानकारी बड़े प्रिंट, ब्रेल, ऑडियो टेप या दूसरी भाषाओं में भी उपलब्ध करवाई जा सकती है। इसके लिये कृपया पब्लिक रिलेशन्स डिपार्टमेंट को 0191 430 2000 पर फोन करें या 0191 430 2299 पर फैक्स करें।

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Further information on NEAS can be found on the website www.neambulance.nhs.uk

