

Travel Grants - Leaflet 58

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What is a Travelling Allowance Grant?

The Travelling Allowance Grant (TAG) provides funding and reimbursement of travel expenses for patients visiting Jersey or the UK when medical treatment is not available in Guernsey or Alderney and also for Alderney patients requiring treatment in Guernsey.

Am I covered?

All residents of Guernsey, Alderney, Herm and Jethou who have been assessed for social security contributions can claim a Travelling Allowance Grant. The children of these residents are also entitled to the grant.

Am I eligible for a Travelling Allowance Grant?

If you satisfy one of the following requirements, then you are eligible to claim a Travelling Allowance Grant:

- You are seeking treatment or a consultation through the NHS recommended by an approved doctor;
- You are seeking private treatment and treatment is not available in Guernsey or Alderney.

Who is not eligible?

You are not eligible to claim a Travelling Allowance Grant if:

- You are an uninsured adult (not been assessed for contributions by SSD);
- You are a visitor to the islands;
- Treatment is available in Guernsey or Alderney;
- You are travelling for cosmetic treatment;
- The journey has not been approved by the Department.

What am I entitled to under the Travelling Allowance Grant?

The Travelling Allowance Grant entitles you to the cost of travelling from Guernsey or Alderney to the airport nearest to the hospital designated by your GP or specialist. A grant towards Jersey or UK public transport fares taking you directly to your designated hospital may also be offered. For patients being treated in Southampton there is a designated taxi service, which will take you to and from the hospital. In Jersey there are frequent buses between the airport and St Helier. If you submit your tickets to SSD on your return the fare will be refunded. For patients travelling to other hospitals in the UK rail tickets will be provided.

If you wish to stay longer than your appointment requires or if you would like to travel by a different route staff at Social Security will be able to advise you how much can be paid towards the cost of your journey.

Am I allowed to take anyone with me?

The Travelling Allowance Grant covers the following costs of escorts:

- If the patient is under 6 years old, the Travelling Allowance Grant provides funds for up to 2 adult escorts to travel with the child;
- If the patient is 6 or over and under 18, the Travelling Allowance Grant provides funds for 1 adult escort to travel with the patient;
- If you might need medical attention on the journey, the Travelling Allowance Grant will cover the transport costs of doctors, nurses or members of St. John

Ambulance and Rescue Service. Your specialist or doctor will make the necessary arrangements where this is required;

- If you require a charter flight family or friends may travel with you free of charge, so long as there is room on the plane. However, they must pay for their flights home themselves. All chartered flights are handled by St. John Ambulance and Rescue Service.

Your specialist or doctor may recommend a non-medical escort to help you with the journey. Funding of this escort can be considered through the Travelling Expenses Assistance Scheme which is a means tested benefit.

How do I arrange travel through the Travelling Allowance Grant scheme?

- When the Specialist or GP decides to refer you to Jersey or the UK he/she will email or fax the Health Benefits Section at Social Security your name, address, date of birth and details of the doctor and hospital you are to visit.
- When this information is received a letter will be sent to you telling you to contact our travel agent when you receive the date of your appointment. Included with the letter will be an information sheet containing useful information about your proposed trip
- At the same time that the letter is sent to you an order will be emailed to our travel agent so that they are expecting your call and can arrange your travel.

How do I arrange travel if I live in Alderney?

- If you live in Alderney and your local GP refers you to Guernsey or a specialist refers you to Jersey or the UK he/she will issue you with a form confirming the need for an off island appointment.
- Take this to the States Office and complete a claim for a Travelling Allowance Grant.
- You will be issued with an order which you should take to the airline of your choice to arrange your travel.

What happens if my appointment is urgent and I do not have time to make a claim before I go?

If you have to travel urgently and there is no time to organise a claim before you go SSD will reimburse your used air and rail tickets (taxi for Southampton) on your return. Please post the ticket stubs/receipts showing the costs to the Social Security Office in Guernsey with a note including your name and address. If you are an

Alderney resident you will need to include the form from your doctor confirming the need for an off-island referral. Surgeries in Guernsey will email or fax the referral form to Social Security.

What is the Travelling Expenses Assistance Scheme?

The Travelling Expenses Assistance Scheme (TEAS) is a non-statutory, means tested benefit which may cover the following:

- Travel expenses of a non-medical escort who has been authorised by your specialist or doctor.
- Accommodation costs.
- Other exceptional expenses that would otherwise have to be met by you.

It is the patient's financial circumstances that are considered not the escort's.

If the patient is part of a couple details of the partner's financial circumstances are also required and if the patient is under 18 it is the parents' financial circumstances that are considered.

All arrangements are agreed on a case by case basis, special consideration is given to cases involving children.

How do I make a claim through the Travelling Expenses Assistance Scheme?

If you wish to make a claim through the Travelling Expenses Assistance Scheme you will be asked to complete two forms.

The first gives authorisation to the Health Benefits section to use any records of earned income held by another section at Social Security. This form also allows the Department to reclaim any payments made before the means test has been completed should the means test prove that the patient could afford to fund the expense.

The second form is the means test, which will normally be completed at the Social Security Department's Office in Guernsey or the States Office in Alderney where we will help you complete the form. If you are unable to come into the office the form can be sent to you for completion at home.

We can give a general guide to what level of savings would make a claim unlikely to be approved before you complete the forms. However, each application is considered individually and approval of a claim will also be influenced by the frequency of journeys and other factors. If you have any concerns over any costs you might have you should contact us on 732510 to discuss your worries.

What are SSD's service standards?

The information below is supplied as a guideline.

Travelling Allowance Grant claims (TAG):

- 95% of TAG claims will be processed within 2 working days. 100% within 5 working days.
- 95% of refunds will be processed within 5 working days of arrival in the office. 100% within 10 working days.

Travelling Expenses Assistance Scheme (TEAS):

- 95% of the claims will be processed within 2 working days. 100% will be processed within 5 working days.

The times quoted exclude any postal time.

Frequently asked questions

The following are typical questions asked by patients or relatives applying for a Travelling Allowance Grant or making a claim under the Travelling Expenses Assistance Scheme:

Q: How do I make special arrangements if I cannot use public transport?

A: If you have confirmation from your specialist or doctor stating that you are unable to use public transport, let the staff at Social Security know and they will authorise the necessary arrangements (e.g. taxi hire). Special arrangements at the airport, such as wheelchair access, should be made through the travel agent who will confirm these with the airline.

Q: What happens if my appointment or flights are cancelled?

A: In the case of a flight or appointment cancellation please notify Social Security and our travel agent as soon as possible.

If your appointment is cancelled after arrival at the hospital, you are still eligible for a TAG for that trip as well as a new one.

If your journey home is cancelled due to technical reasons or bad weather it is unlikely that the ferry or airline will cover accommodation costs. You should keep receipts of travel and accommodation expenses and contact us on 732510 on your return to see what financial assistance we can give you.

Q: Do we have E111 forms?

A: No. The E111 form is only applicable to UK residents. It expired on 31 December 2005 and was replaced from 1 January 2006 with the European Health Insurance Card. The card entitles UK residents to assistance with medical costs in countries where there is a reciprocal health agreement in place.

Any queries regarding reciprocal health agreements between the Bailiwick and other countries should be directed to the Health and Social Services Department on 725241 – ask for the Reciprocal Health Section.

Help in Southampton

A Liaison Team is based in Southampton to look after the social/welfare needs of Guernsey and Alderney patients in the Southampton NHS hospitals, they can be contacted on 02381 204515.

Further help in Guernsey

The Health Information Exchange provides information for patients travelling to the UK. They have information packs on the most frequently visited UK hospitals and can also find out information about other hospitals. Please contact them on Tel. 707470 or visit the web site: www.healthtravel.org

Further information

Should you have any further queries please don't hesitate to contact us on 732510 or call into the office at Edward T Wheadon House, Le Truchot, St Peter Port. There is a limited amount of parking in the Truchot for callers to the building, please give your car number to the receptionist upon arrival.

If you live in Alderney you can telephone the States Office on 822811 or call into the office at the Island Hall, Royal Connaught Square, St Annes.

How we collect and use information

The Social Security Department collects personal information for social security purposes in accordance with the six laws which it administers. The information collected will depend on your business with us but will be no more than is required for that purpose and will not be further disclosed except as permitted by law. The Department complies with its legal duty under the Data Protection (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law and is the Data Controller for the purpose of that law. If you wish to know more about the information we have about you or about the way we use it you can ask at the Social Security office.