

Transport Policy – Practice Guidance Note - Taxi Usage - V03		
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<b>Author / Designation</b>	<b>Martin Laing - Facilities Manager (NTW Solutions Ltd)</b>	
<b>Responsible Officer / Designation</b>	<b>Paul McCabe – Head of Estates and Facilities (NTW Solutions Ltd)</b>	
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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Practice Guidance Note (PGN) is intended to standardise the use of taxis across Cumbria Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust/CNTW).
- 1.2 The use of taxis should be kept to a minimum and only used when it is not practicable or possible for an alternative mode of transport to be used or when it is cost effective. However, the Trust will not provide taxis for staff, including bank and agency staff, to travel to and from work when there is no public transport, e.g. the Christmas period.

## 2 Responsibilities

- 2.1 Overall responsibility for the management of this Practice Guidance Note rests with the Head of Estates and Facilities, with day-to-day responsibility delegated to the Service Manager (General Services).

2.2 Heads of Departments/Service Managers are responsible for ensuring the appropriate use of taxis within their area.

### **3 Criteria for Use of Taxis**

3.1 Taxis can be provided where there is no other alternative timely mode of transport to move patients, staff or goods (specimens, notes, drugs etc.), from one work location to another.

3.2 It is the responsibility of Associate Directors to identify authorisation levels in their area of responsibility.

### **3.3 Patients**

3.3.1 Where essential for clinical reasons and following clinical risk assessment, a taxi can be used to transport patients, including a staff escort if required. These reasons can include the following, but they are not exhaustive;

- Transfer of patients at short notice between hospital sites (for diagnostic services) to courts etc., where an ambulance or alternative transport is not available or is deemed not suitable
- Where a patient has been absent without leave and requires transport back to a hospital site
- Attendance at a day clinic/service where ambulance or public transport is deemed unsuitable
- To return patients from leave who are undergoing a crisis
- Urgent admission/transfer to another site/location
- If public transport is not accessible or appropriate for disabled service users
- To/from social activity/event if deemed suitable;
- To promote attendance at outpatient clinics and other medical related appointments where an individual has a history of non-attendance (by exception and agreed by a Clinical Manager)

### **3.4 Staff**

3.4.1 Taxis may be used by staff in special circumstances that can include the following, although they are not exhaustive;

- Resolution of an urgent staffing problem
- To address lone worker safety issues
- Where a member of staff is particularly authorised to use a taxi by their Directorate Manager/Group Director, e.g. to address issues of disability, mobility or other exceptional circumstances

- On-Call Services

3.4.2 Where staff are away from the Trust's locations on Trust business (e.g. attending a conference), taxis can be used in line with agreed procedures for claiming expenses, i.e. the employee makes their own arrangements, pays for the taxi and claims the cost back from the Trust on production of receipts. Claims from home to departure point, e.g. rail station, can only be made for excessive miles over and above their normal mileage between home and base.

3.4.3 The Trust will not provide taxis for staff, including bank and agency staff, to travel to and from work when there is no public transport, e.g. over the Christmas period.

### 3.5 Goods

3.5.1 Taxis can be used to transport urgent bloods/samples/medicines/notes etc., if they cannot be transported by any other means. Consideration must be given to the risks associated with security, patient confidentiality, infection control and decontamination issues prior to using this method of transportation.

3.5.2 Routine transport/courier services **must** be used whenever possible.

## 4 Booking of Taxis

4.1 Taxi requests which start North of Tyne must be made through the Reception Desk at St Nicholas Hospital, on Ext. 56605.

4.1.1 Taxi requests which start South of Tyne must be made through reception at Hopewood Park on Ext. 67001. Taxi bookings outside of hours 20.00 – 08.00 Monday - Sunday, should be made via the St Nicholas Hospital switchboard, ext. 56605.

4.1.2 If a return journey is required and the details are known, the return taxi can be booked at the same time as the first booking and through the same booking point.

**Note:** Any member of staff who books a local taxi direct with the company will be responsible for the payment of the journey and will not be able to claim it back through travel expenses.

4.2 When making a booking the following information must be given:

- Location of collection and destination
- Date and time required
- The goods or name of staff/patient to be conveyed
- Name of the person giving authority for the booking, e.g. Nurse in Charge/Team Leader
- Cost Centre Code

- Any special requirements, e.g. wheelchair accessible vehicle

## **5 Audits**

- 5.1 Ongoing audits and checks of the use of taxis will be carried out. Any abuse of the system will be investigated which may lead to disciplinary action taken against the employee concerned.