

Congestion Charge and ULEZ NHS patient reimbursement scheme – guidance for NHS trusts

The Congestion Charge (CC) and Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) are crucial tools in managing traffic and reducing air pollution in London.

Air pollution affects people's health throughout their lives. It increases the risk of developing cardiovascular and respiratory diseases and lung cancer and reduces life expectancy. In 2019 air pollution contributed to around 4,000 premature deaths in London. The greatest number of deaths attributable to air pollution were in outer London boroughs, mainly due to the higher proportion of elderly people in these areas, who are more vulnerable to the impacts of air pollution.

The Mayor of London recently announced his decision to expand the ULEZ across all London boroughs. The expansion will come into effect on Tuesday 29 August 2023 and will help five million more Londoners breathe cleaner air.

Already, around 90 per cent of vehicles seen driving in outer London (and 94 per cent of vehicles seen driving in the existing ULEZ) meet the necessary standards. And nearly half of Londoners do not own a car. So, it is likely that the majority of patients won't need to worry about paying the charge, even if they do need to drive to appointments. At its heart, this policy is about making Londoners healthier, reducing demands on the NHS and saving the NHS money.

However, Transport for London (TfL) recognises that some NHS patients may need to drive to appointments using a vehicle that is not compliant with the ULEZ standards, because using public transport isn't clinically advisable for them and it is not always possible for patients to walk or cycle.

NHS patients travelling through the ULEZ and /or the CC zone to attend an NHS appointment may be able to claim a reimbursement of any ULEZ and/or Congestion Charges paid.

Which patients can claim?

1. Patients who are clinically assessed as too ill, weak or disabled to travel to an appointment on public transport, **and**:
 - a. Have a compromised immune system; or
 - b. Require regular therapy or assessment; or
 - c. Require recurrent surgical intervention.

OR

2. Patients who, during an epidemic or pandemic prevalent in Greater London, are clinically assessed as being too vulnerable to infection to travel to an appointment on public transport.

It is at the NHS trust's discretion to determine which patients are eligible for a reimbursement, of the charges paid, based on the above criteria.

In all cases, the vehicle in respect of which the reimbursement is claimed must have been used for the purpose of transporting the patient to attend an appointment relating to establishing a diagnosis or to treatment provided by or on behalf of a health authority, NHS trust or other NHS organisation. (The vehicle does not have to be the patient's own vehicle).

Eligible organisations

NHS trusts are eligible to register for the patient reimbursement scheme.

Eligible organisations not yet operating an NHS patient reimbursement account need to contact TfL (CCTEStakeholder@tfl.gov.uk) where they will be provided with the appropriate paperwork that should be completed and returned to TfL.

On receipt of this paperwork TfL will set up an account to administer patient claims for reimbursed journeys.

Reimbursement Process

TfL will provide a secure website (extranet) where account holders can download a list of claims (.csv file) each month.

TfL will validate each individual claim and will reimburse valid claims. The method of reimbursement will depend on how the charge was paid:

- **Autopay:** In cases where a customer has an autopay service and their journey has been paid for using this method, then the NHS trust is NOT required to reimburse the customer directly. Once a claim file, with details of the journey have been submitted to TfL, TfL will then credit the customer's autopay account.
- **Non-Autopay:** Where a customer has made a payment via another channel (Web, IVR, Contact Centre), then the NHS trust is required to reimburse the customer directly via their internal process. Once a claim file, with details of the journey has been submitted, TfL will reimburse by BACS payment direct to the account holder. Up to two claims per month can be made through patient reimbursement accounts. Each claim is a csv file uploaded online containing details of applicable journeys.

The account holder remains responsible for managing the account, its users and for ensuring that all account details are up to date.

Transport for London (TfL)

23 March 2023