Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust: Information for Families

Travelling to GOSH
May 2010 Edition

Many families ask for advice about getting to Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) so we have compiled this guide to help. It covers a great many topics, but if you cannot find what you are looking for, please ring the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (Pals) Office on 020 7829 7862 or the Transport Office on 020 7829 8618.

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Travelling to GOSH using public transport

Public transport in London is managed by Transport for London on behalf of the Mayor of London and the Greater London Authority. This includes all buses, the tube and trams. Their website contains a wealth of information on getting around London and is available at www.tfl.gov.uk. They also have a travel information line on 020 7222 1234.

Oyster card

The cheapest way to travel on public transport in the London area is using an Oyster card. This is a pre-payment card that ensures that you pay the cheapest fare however many buses and tubes you take on the day. It also makes travelling quicker as you only need to touch in and touch out on the scanners at the start and end of your journey, rather than buy a ticket each time. Children aged 11 or older need to have an Oyster photocard to get free or reduced rate travel in the London area.

You can buy an Oyster card at most tube stations and top it up with money as and when needed. You do not need to live in or travel to London regularly to have an Oyster card so it can be useful for visits or stays at GOSH. It also carries deals for tourist attractions in the London area. More information about the Oyster card is at www.tfl.gov.uk/oyster.

Tube


The two underground stations nearest GOSH are Russell Square and Holborn. Russell Square is on the Piccadilly Line (dark blue on the tube map) and Holborn is on both the Piccadilly and Central (red on the tube map) lines. Neither station is easy for wheelchair users as there are steps from the platforms. Both are five-minutes walk away from the hospital.

The nearest underground stations with disabled access are King's Cross (on the Piccadilly, Northern, Victoria, Circle, Metropolitan and Hammersmith and City lines) and Euston (on the Northern and Victoria lines).
National rail

All mainline stations within London are on a bus route to GOSH. Details follow in the next section. If you need assistance to travel by train, this is often possible. Most train companies can arrange to have a member of staff meet you at the stations at either end of your journey, help you on and off the train and carry any baggage. It is best to give at least 24 hours’ notice so that they can make arrangements. A list of contact numbers for train operating companies is available on www.nationalrail.co.uk/tocs_maps/tocs/ or by telephone from National Rail Enquiries on 0845 48 49 50.

Buses

There are a number of buses that stop near GOSH. They are cheaper than using the tube and the majority are accessible to wheelchairs. The buses travelling from mainline stations to GOSH are as follows:

- Victoria – 8, 38
- Charing Cross – 91
- London Bridge – 521
- Waterloo – 68, 168, 188, 243
- Liverpool Street – 8, 242
- Euston – 59, 68, 91, 168
- King’s Cross – 91
- Paddington – 7

A bus map for central London, which includes GOSH, is available at www.tfl.gov.uk/buses

Walking

GOSH is in central London, within 15 to 20 minutes walking distance of King’s Cross, St Pancras and Euston stations. Marylebone, Paddington, Liverpool Street, Victoria and Waterloo stations are a short bus ride away. For details of buses serving these stations, please see the previous section. For maps showing walking routes around London, please call Transport for London on 020 7222 1234 or visit their website at www.tfl.gov.uk.

Cycling

If you are planning to cycle to GOSH, please visit the Transport for London website at www.tfl.gov.uk/cycles for maps of cycle routes leading the GOSH. We have cycle racks at the hospital where you can leave your bicycle in Powis Place, between the main hospital building and the Royal London Homeopathic Hospital (RLHH). Other bicycle racks are available in Queen Square.

Taxi

You can hail London black cabs in the street if they are displaying their ‘for hire’ light. There are also taxi ranks at most mainline stations. For details of which stations have taxi ranks, please see the interactive map on the Transport for London website. The Taxicard scheme allows reduced cost in taxis for certain groups of people (see page 7).
Minicabs in London are now licensed but you cannot hail them in the street. All licensed minicabs display a yellow diamond shaped sticker on the top left corner of their windscreen. Please do not use unlicensed minicabs.

**Cheaper travel fares on public transport**

There are various schemes in place that allow you to travel on public transport more cheaply than usual. Details of some of them follow, but for more local schemes, ask at your local council offices.

**Disabled Person’s Railcard**

This card enables you to buy discounted rail tickets for you and one person travelling with you at the same rate. The discount is about one-third of the standard fare, although it does not apply to all tickets. It costs £14 for 12 months and £48 for three years.

You can apply for a card if you or your child:

- are registered as having eyesight difficulties
- are registered as deaf or use an NHS hearing aid
- have epilepsy and have repeated seizures even though you receive drug treatment
- receive attendance allowance
- receive disability living allowance at the higher rate for mobility for one year or middle rate for personal care
- receive severe disablement allowance
- receive long term incapacity benefit
- receive war pensioner’s mobility supplement
- are buying or leasing a vehicle through the Motability Scheme

You can apply for a card by writing to:
Disabled Person’s Railcard Office
PO Box 163
Newcastle upon Tyne NE12 8WX

Or contact their helpline on:
Tel: 0845 605 0525
Textphone: 0845 601 0132

**Family Railcard**

This card enables you to buy discounted rail tickets for at least one adult and one child aged between five and 15 years travelling together. Children under five travel free on all trains when accompanied by an adult and each adult can take two under fives with them. If the only child travelling is under five, you will need to buy them a discounted ticket to get the discount on the adult fare as well. The discount is about one-third of standard fare, although the times you can travel are restricted to outside the morning peak times. A family railcard costs £20 per year and you can apply for it in person at any railway station. For further details, please visit the Family Railcard website at www.familyrailcard.co.uk or telephone them on 0870 942 3648.
Transport for London discounts for children and young people

There are various discounts for children and young people using public transport within the London area. Brief details follow, but there is also information available on the Transport for London website at www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/fares-tickets/2007/freetravel.asp.

- Children under five years old travel free at any time on the bus, tube, DLR and trams as long as an adult with a valid ticket, Oyster Card or Freedom Pass, accompanies them.

- Children aged between five and 11 years old can travel free at any time on buses and trams. They can also travel free during off peak periods as long as an adult with a valid ticket, Oyster Card or Freedom Pass, accompanies them. If they are travelling before 9.30am or an adult is not accompanying them, they will need to pay the fare or use an Oyster photocard.

- Children aged 14 or 15 years old (or 16 to 18 years old in full time education) need an Oyster photocard to travel for free on buses and trams and at child-rate on the tube or DLR. More details about Oyster photocards is available at www.tfl.gov.uk/photocards or pick up a leaflet at any tube station.

Taxicard

This scheme is for people with mobility impairment who find it difficult to use public transport. It is a discounted taxi service, where the passenger pays a contribution to the fare and the remainder is paid from the Taxicard scheme. The London boroughs and the Mayor of London fund the scheme.

You can apply for a Taxicard if:

- you receive disability living allowance at the higher rate for mobility for one year or middle rate for personal care
- you are registered blind or receive a war pension mobility component
- you live in a London borough

You may be eligible if your family doctor (GP) endorses your application but you may need a mobility assessment. You can apply:

- By post:
  ALG TEC Taxicard
  New Zealand House
  80 Haymarket
  London SW1 4TZ
- By telephone: 020 7484 2929
- By email: taxicard@alg.gov.uk
- By fax: 020 7484 2919

Boroughs vary in the amount of subsidy they provide. Generally, Taxicard holders pay a flat fare of £1.50 per trip and a maximum amount will be subsidised. This is usually £10.30 during the day, £12.80 at night and £11.30 at weekends.
Travelling to GOSH by car

If you need to travel to GOSH by car, please be aware that parking can be difficult around the hospital. You will also need to pay the congestion charge to enter central London. The following section explains the main points to remember before you travel.

Finding your way into and around London

The map on page 2 shows the motorway network and junctions around London. To plan your driving route from home to GOSH, please visit the AA website at www.theaa.com/travel.

The Congestion Charge

If you come to GOSH by car, you will have to pay a charge to drive within the central London Congestion Charging zone 7am – 6pm on weekdays (excluding bank and public holidays). There are number of exemptions and discounts for certain vehicles or vehicle users, for instance disabled badge holders who have registered with Transport for London. You should pay the Congestion Charge or register for a discount before you travel by visiting the website www.cclondon.com or ringing 0845 900 1234. You can also use the free phone near the main reception desk. You can pay the Congestion Charge in person at selected shops and petrol stations within the zone. Use the Shop Locator at www.cclondon.com to find your nearest shop.

Parking

There are various options for parking your car near GOSH:
- use a pay and display machine to park on the street;
- park on the street if you have a disabled badge;
- park in one of the various NCP car parks in the local area;
- use a parking permit issued by GOSH if eligible.

These options are explained in more detail in the next sections.

Please note that traffic wardens patrol the area around the hospital regularly and parking incorrectly will usually lead to a parking ticket and possibly the towing away of your car. The hospital cannot be held liable for any problems or expenses caused by incorrect parking.
Pay and display machines
There are pay and display bays on Great Ormond Street, Queen Square and Boswell Street, all of which allow a maximum stay of two hours. They charge on a basis of a two-minute period so can be quite expensive.

Disabled badge holders
If you have a disabled ‘Blue Badge’, you can park in resident parking bays, pay and display spaces or by parking meters free of charge and without a time limit. You can also park on single yellow lines for a maximum of three hours. This only applies in the immediate area of the hospital. Please put your disabled badge clearly on your dashboard and if parking on a single yellow line display the time of your arrival. Please refer to your Blue Badge Scheme booklet available from dft@twpten.press.net or telephone 0870 1226236.

NCP car parks
There are three NCP car parks in the area surrounding GOSH: at the Imperial Hotel on Russell Square, under Bloomsbury Square and under the Brunswick Centre. Parking is usually chargeable by the hour, but it is possible to park there all day or for longer. For details about these car parks and their charges, please visit the NCP website at www.ncp.co.uk or telephone them on 0870 606 7050.

GOSH parking permits
We can provide a parking permit for parents travelling by car for the day of their child’s appointment, admission or discharge. Parents of children in intensive care can have a parking permit for up to three days in succession. Please note that we cannot provide parking permits outside of these circumstances.

Please visit the main reception desk to collect your parking permit. You will need to bring your appointment or admission letter and your car registration number. Once you have the permit, please display it clearly on your dashboard. It allows you to park on a single yellow line only in Guilford Street.

Parking elsewhere will make the permit invalid and put you at risk of getting a parking ticket.

Parking tickets
You are at risk of getting a parking ticket if:
- you do not move your car within the period paid at the pay and display machine or you have exceeded the two-hour maximum;
- you are displaying your disabled badge and are parked on a single yellow line but have stayed longer than the three hours allowed;
- you have display a parking permit from GOSH but have parked somewhere other than on a single yellow line on Guilford Street;
you have not displayed your pay and display ticket, disabled badge or parking permit clearly on the dashboard.

If you receive a parking ticket, you can:

- accept that the ticket is issued correctly and pay the fine;
- dispute the issuing of the ticket and not pay the fine.

Please note that you cannot pay the fine and then appeal against it afterwards. By paying the fine you are accepting that it was issued correctly.

If you choose to appeal against the parking ticket, you must contact London Borough of Camden at the following address:

PCN Processing
PO Box 20217
London NW1 99H

You can use your parking ticket and appointment or admission letter as proof that your child was a patient at GOSH when the ticket was issued.

Getting help with travel costs

If you receive benefits such as income support, you can get help with your costs to and from hospital. This can be for admission, discharge and appointments, for the patient and one parent or carer only. Travel costs for another adult will only be reimbursed if they are needed to accompany the patient for medical reasons.

The benefits included are:

- Income support or pension credit
- Income-based job seeker’s allowance
- Working tax credit or child tax credit if you earn less than £15,050 per year
- HC1, HC2 or HC3 certificates available from job centres or social work departments.
- Disability working allowance

If you are unsure whether you are entitled to help with travel costs, you should fill in the HC1 form. They will assess your household income and you may then be eligible for help with transport costs.

The amount we can reimburse depends on how you travel:

- We can reimburse the cost of the least expensive form of public transport (trains, tubes, buses and trams). Please buy your tickets in advance where possible to get the best value.
- We cannot reimburse you for taxi journeys.
- Please discuss air travel with the transport office in advance.
- We will reimburse you for 14p per mile between your postcode and the hospital.
Non-emergency medical transport

GOSH can provide non-emergency transport using ambulances and taxi cars for patients. This costs the hospital around a million pounds a year, so we have to ensure that we only provide it for children who need it the most.

The general rule is that we provide non-emergency medical transport where any other method of getting to and from GOSH would be damaging to the patient’s health. This may be assessed before transport is provided.

If you have any questions about non-emergency medical transport, please contact the Transport Office at GOSH.

Useful telephone numbers and websites

Transport for London (TfL)
Tel: 020 7222 1234
Textphone: 020 7918 3015
Website: www.tfl.gov.uk

National Rail Enquiries
Tel: 08457 48 49 50
Textphone: 0845 60 50 600
Website: www.nationalrail.co.uk

AA Journey Planner
Website: www.theaa.com/travel

National Car Parks
Tel: 0870 606 7050
Website: www.ncp.co.uk

London Congestion Charge
Tel: 0845 900 1234
Website: www.cclondon.com

Notes

Compiled by the Patient Advice and Liaison Service and Transport Office, in collaboration with the Child and Family Information Group, with assistance from the GOSH Consultation Panel.