



**Craig Whittaker MP**

**CALDER VALLEY**

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## **Hospital Transport: Age UK Painful Journeys Campaign**

Thank you for contacting me about hospital transport for elderly people.

I understand that this issue is affecting ever more people as our society ages, and I would like to assure you that there are cross-governmental efforts being made to ensure elderly and frail people are able to gain access to suitable transport to hospitals. I hope you are encouraged to know that the Department of Health is aware of these issues, and runs a number of schemes to assist patients with non-emergency hospital transport.

Some people are eligible for non-emergency patient transport services. These services provide free transport to and from hospital for people whose condition means they need additional medical support during their journey.

The Healthcare Travel Costs was set up to help those patients who require assistance with their travel costs to non-emergency medical appointments. Under the scheme, eligible patients (and sometimes carers) are reimbursed for costs incurred in travelling to appointments at non-primary medical and dental services. Patients who are not in receipt of a qualifying benefit but are on a low income may be eligible for assistance through the NHS Low Income Scheme.

You may be pleased to know that the Department of Transport manages a Community Minibus Fund in England and Wales. With a budget of £2 million, this fund is available for charities and community groups to provide minibus journeys for elderly residents, amongst others, to help them reach medical services and local amenities.

The NHS works closely with independent providers, who offer non-emergency patient transport throughout the country, and offer essential support to conventional ambulance services.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Whittaker'.

Craig Whittaker MP