



the national treatment  
purchase fund



National Treatment Purchase Fund  
TREATING PEOPLE.

**FASTER**

## INTRODUCTION

The National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) was set up by the Government to treat patients like you, who have been longest on public hospital waiting lists for an operation. The Minister for Health and Children has given special funding to the NTPF for this specific purpose. The NTPF is there to reduce the waiting time for public patients. Treatment is arranged in private hospitals in Ireland, Northern Ireland or England.

As a result of the NTPF over 30,000 patients (June 2005) have been treated and taken off public hospital waiting lists. The NTPF is arranging treatment each month for at least 1,000 public patients who are waiting over three months for an operation. The numbers of patients being treated monthly is rising.

It is entirely your choice to take part in this initiative. Patients who choose treatment with the NTPF will receive their operation or procedure free of charge. Medical card entitlements are not affected in any way. Some people think because they are not seriously ill or waiting years for an operation that the NTPF is not for them. This is not the case. The NTPF treats young and old and will help patients who require major as well as minor procedures.

Overleaf you will find information on how the NTPF works as well as answers to any questions you may have.

If you have any more questions, or are not sure if you are entitled to this service, please get in touch with the NTPF directly on Lo-Call 1890 720 820.

Waiting and worrying  
about an operation?



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Get on with life

Back to school

Back to work

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

You will be contacted by the hospital or health board where you are on a waiting list to ask if you are interested in being treated under this initiative. You will be contacted by phone, by post or at an out-patient clinic. The hospital or health board will ask your permission before arranging treatment for you under this initiative and before transferring your records to the doctor / hospital where you will be treated.

If you have not been contacted by your local hospital or health board and feel you are entitled to treatment under the NTPF you can call the NTPF directly on Lo-Call 1890 720 820.

## PATIENT MOBILITY

Patients who are willing to travel outside their local area and have their treatment carried out in a hospital, other than their local hospital, will receive faster treatment.

For example, if you are a Dublin patient waiting for a cataract operation and you are willing to be treated in the west or midlands of Ireland or if you are a patient from the West of Ireland waiting for an operation for varicose veins and you are willing to be treated elsewhere in Ireland or in the UK, your operation can be arranged almost immediately.

If for a specific reason you are unable to travel or would prefer to be treated within your health board area the NTPF will arrange treatment in a hospital as close to you as possible, however this may take longer.

In some specialised cases you may receive treatment from your own consultant in a public hospital if the capacity exists.

## WHAT HAPPENS THEN?

Once you have accepted the offer of treatment you will be contacted by the NTPF liaison officer at the hospital where you will receive your treatment. He or she will give you the exact date for your operation and will advise you of any preparations that you need to make before you are admitted to hospital.





## WHO WILL BE MY CONTACT?

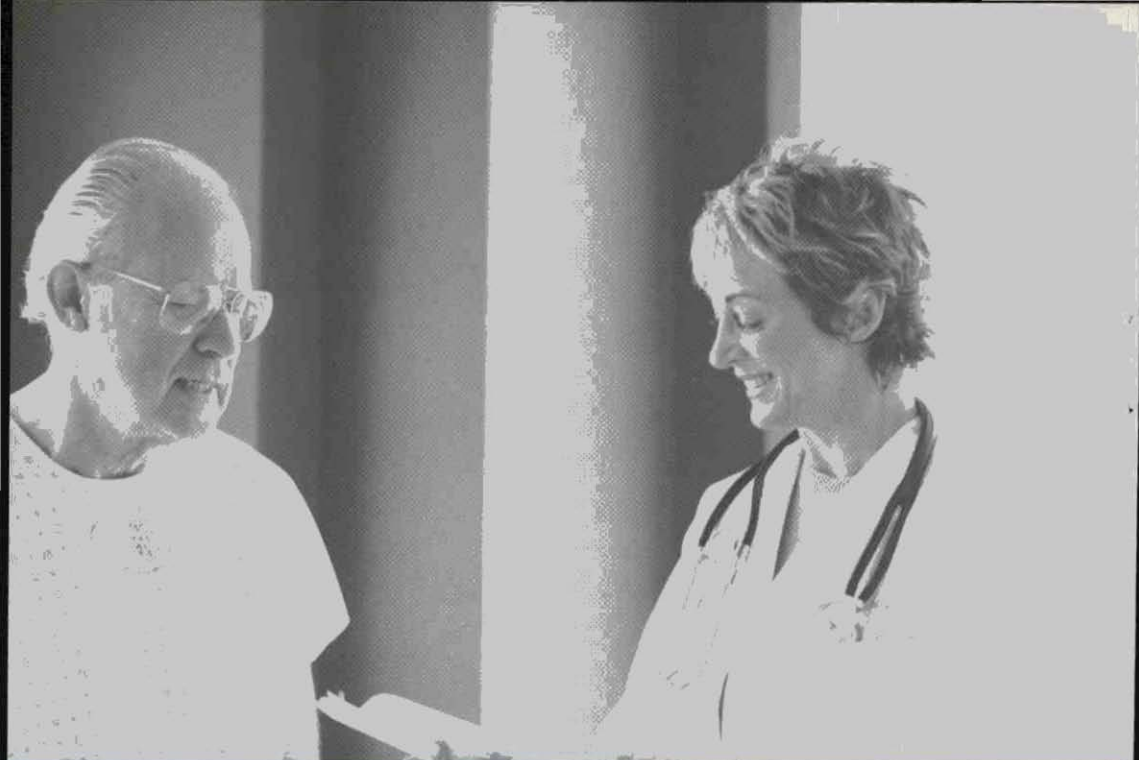
Each health board and participating hospital has a designated liaison officer. These officers work together to ensure that your treatment goes as smoothly as possible and see that you have all the information you need at all times.

Your initial contact will be with the liaison officer in your hospital or health board area. He or she will explain how the NTPF operates and answer any questions you have. They will also ensure that all of your records and clinical details are referred from your consultant to the consultant who will treat you.

## WILL I HAVE THE SAME DOCTOR AS I HAVE NOW?

There are a number of ways in which NTPF patients receive treatment. You may be treated by:

-  Your current consultant in a private hospital in Ireland.
-  Another consultant in a private hospital in Ireland.
-  Another consultant in a private hospital in England.
-  In a small number of cases, you may receive treatment within a public hospital in Ireland.



## WHAT STANDARD OF HOSPITAL WILL I BE TREATED IN?

All of the hospitals participating in the NTPF initiative have been carefully assessed by the NTPF to ensure they meet strict quality standards. Your wellbeing is very important and this initiative has been carefully planned to ensure that your health is top priority for everyone involved in your care, wherever you are treated.

Your doctors and local health board will have assessed your case carefully before deciding that it is safe for you to go to another hospital for treatment.



## TRAVELLING FOR TREATMENT

If you are required to travel outside of Ireland for treatment the NTPF will make sure that all the necessary arrangements are put in place for you. The NTPF will arrange for transport to and from the airport. You will be met at the airport in England, and brought to the hospital where your treatment is arranged. Return transport will be similarly arranged. Please remember that if you are travelling abroad for treatment you will need to bring appropriate identification, such as a current valid passport, with you. The NTPF understand that patients travelling to England for treatment may prefer to have a family member or friend accompany them. As a result the NTPF will make and pay for all the necessary travel and accommodation arrangements for a patient's travelling companion. Please remember that a family member or companion travelling with you must be in good general health and be capable of assisting you throughout your journey.



## WHAT SHOULD YOU REMEMBER WHEN PREPARING FOR YOUR HOSPITAL VISIT?

When preparing for your hospital admission you should remember:

1. To bring pyjamas or a nightdress, dressing gown, slippers, toothbrush, towel and basic toiletries.
2. To bring a list of all medications that you are currently taking.
3. If you have dentures, eyeglasses, contact lenses or hearing aids to bring them with you.
4. The use of mobile phones and computers are generally not permitted in hospitals. In some cases there are designated areas where mobile phone use is allowed.
5. It is not advisable to bring personal electrical appliances with you but battery operated shavers and radios (with headphones) are allowed.
6. It is not usual policy to ensure the safety of personal possessions and some hospitals do not have secure storage facilities. For this reason, do not bring valuables, jewellery, or large amounts of money with you to hospital. You will only need enough cash to purchase newspapers and other small items.
7. If you are attending as a day case patient you will not need to bring all of these things. Just bring what you need for the day in hospital.



## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER MY OPERATION?

In most cases it is expected that you will be discharged home to the care of your GP and your treating hospital will give you a letter to take to him or her. If it is necessary for you to have a follow up out-patient appointment with the consultant who treated you, this appointment will be made for you or you will be given the information to make it yourself.

When you are ready to leave the hospital the NTPF liaison officer will contact your local health board and update them on your treatment. They will also ensure that any follow up care arrangements are put in place for you. If you have any questions following your operation please contact the NTPF liaison officer in your local health board or hospital.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF I NEED MEDICATION?

You will be given a supply of medications that are prescribed for you while you are in hospital. Any further supplies or prescriptions can be obtained in the normal way from your GP.

## WHAT IF I EXPERIENCE A PROBLEM AFTER MY OPERATION?

If you experience any medical problems after you are discharged, as a small number of people do after any operation or treatment, you can:

1. Contact your GP who will refer you back to the consultant who treated you if they feel this is necessary.
2. Go to your local accident and emergency department if the problem is urgent. You should inform the nurse or doctor on duty of the name of the hospital or consultant where you had your operation carried out.
3. Contact the liaison officer for the NTPF in your hospital or health board if you are unsure about what to do.



## HOW CONFIDENTIAL WILL MY TREATMENT BE?

Your treatment is entirely confidential. The only people to see your clinical file will be your transferring consultant, the liaison officers and the consultant and nursing staff in the treating hospital.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF I DO NOT WISH TO HAVE MY TREATMENT ARRANGED IN THIS WAY?

It is entirely your choice to take part in this initiative. If you do not wish to take part, you will stay on the waiting list for treatment that you were originally on. If you have decided not to take part and later change your mind, contact the NTPF liaison officer in your hospital or health board.



## DOES THE NTPF WANT TO HEAR MY VIEWS?

### PATIENT FEEDBACK

Patient views and experiences are important to us at the NTPF. To help us understand how well the initiative is working you may receive a telephone call or postal questionnaire from us following your operation. This will be completely confidential and no one in the hospital including your NTPF liaison officer will see your answers. It is your choice to take part in any surveys but any feedback you give us will help us improve the service we offer patients. Alternatively a patient can call the Lo-Call number or write to the NTPF with comments. Patient surveys carried out to date have found very high levels of satisfaction. In a recent survey 98% of patients rated their treatment as good, very good or excellent.

A selection of comments received from patients are as follows:

"I had a great experience. My carers, particularly my surgeon, were excellent."

"I was delighted to get my surgery completed having waited for 8 years."

"Everyone I came in touch with treated me with the utmost care and friendliness. I have no complaints at all. Excellent."

"I travelled to England for my hernia operation, and it couldn't have been easier. The NTPF ensured all my treatment needs were catered for from start to finish."

### OTHER COMMENTS/QUERIES

If you have any other comments or queries on this initiative we welcome these also.

**Lo-Call 1890 720 820**  
today for further information

This booklet is issued by:  
The National Treatment Purchase Fund  
Ashford House  
Tara Street  
Dublin 2



Ms Mary Harney  
Tánaiste & Minister for Health & Children  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

27<sup>th</sup> January 2006

Dear Tánaiste,

Since the National Treatment Purchase Fund was established in 2002 we have worked to reduce the waiting time for public patients on hospital waiting lists for surgical procedures.

Nationally, to January 2006, we have provided 40,000 operations to people on in-patient waiting lists effectively, and to the highest clinical standards – as per attached list. Prior to the establishment of the fund, many of these patients had been waiting for three to four years for treatments and that had a significant impact on their quality of life. Now patients in the public hospital system on an in-patient waiting list for more than three months for a surgical procedure are being facilitated by the National Treatment Purchase Fund.

On the attached list, you will see the breakdown of patients treated from each area. These patients required a wide range of different procedures, including the treatment of cataracts, hip replacements, open heart surgery, spinal operations, hernias, etc. Our core focus has been to reduce the length of time that public patients wait for operations. The vast majority of the procedures have been carried out in hospitals, in Ireland primarily, within the private sector.

The NTPF is also undertaking a number of new initiatives which will help in the provision of care and treatment to patients. These include the establishment of a national Patient Treatment Register, which will provide accessible and up to date information on treatments to both patients and GPs. The new Register will also ensure that there is a complete and accurate picture of hospital waiting lists in Ireland, and enhance accountability and transparency in the management of waiting lists and in reducing waiting times. The first phase of the Patient Treatment Register was launched in September 2005 and can be accessed at [www.ntpf.ie](http://www.ntpf.ie)

The NTPF is also piloting a new approach to outpatient services for patients aimed at reducing the time that it takes for public patients to see a consultant. Approximately 3,600 patients benefited from this initiative last year and it is hoped to double this number in 2006.

I will keep you informed of NTPF developments. In the meantime if there are any queries that you have in relation to the NTPF, please let know. I have enclosed a copy of our patient information book for your information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P O'Byrne', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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Patrick O'Byrne  
Chief Executive



## Number of Operations from June 2002 – to Jan 2006

County	Number of Operations
Carlow	736
Cavan	1260
Clare	358
Cork	2616
Donegal	2583
Dublin 1	310
Dublin 2	124
Dublin 3	328
Dublin 4	187
Dublin 5	753
Dublin 6	241
Dublin 6w	74
Dublin 7	705
Dublin 8	738
Dublin 9	473
Dublin 10	551
Dublin 11	824
Dublin 12	1160
Dublin 13	319
Dublin 14	248
Dublin 15	546
Dublin 16	228
Dublin 17	240
Dublin 18	79
Dublin 20	180
Dublin 22	614
Dublin 24	875
Co Dublin	1826
Galway	3580
Kerry	469
Kildare	1432
Kilkenny	891
Laois	530
Leitrim	177
Limerick	1094
Longford	457
Louth	1646
Mayo	1121
Meath	1409
Monaghan	818
Offaly	758

Roscommon	504
Sligo	268
Tipperary	1166
Waterford	1362
Westmeath	779
Wexford	1309
Wicklow	912
Total	39859