

Summary of need for patient transport vehicle access at 256 Grays Inn Road (November 2023 – revised April 2024)

From: Queen Square Division and UCLH Patient Transport Service, UCLH

Introduction

In 2025 UCLH will open an outpatient unit and MRI suite within 256 Grays Inn Road for patients who would otherwise have visited Queen Square for their care. These neurological/neurosurgical patients are managing conditions that affect their brain, spinal cord, peripheral nervous system and muscles and as such many will have some form of associated impairment – physical, cognitive or both.

Given the vulnerability of our patients, the accessibility of the site is a key priority and can make the difference between a poor and excellent patient experience. This paper summarises **the need for two ambulance bays on site**, for use by UCLH patient transport services.

Patient transport vehicle volumes

All UCLH patients are eligible for the Trust’s patient transport service to get to and from their appointment. There are specific criteria for use, linked to whether a medical condition impacts on their mobility.

The table below summarises the anticipated volume of patients and vehicle movements at the Grays Inn Road site for UCLH patients per day (Monday to Friday).

Service	Average number of patients per day	% arriving/ leaving by patient transport*	Number of patients per day	Number of vehicle journeys per day **	Average number of vehicles per hour (based on 8am-8pm M-F)
Outpatients and MRI	275	7%	19	38	3

* Data collected as part of a patient survey completed in March 2023 of over 2000 outpatients and MRI patients at Queen Square.

** Vast majority of patients will be dropped-off and collected by separate vehicles. The vehicle does not normally wait on-site for the patient.

Important notes

- The maximum length of a patient transport vehicle is 20ft 4" (6mt 20cm) with ramp extended 27ft (8mt 23cm).
- We cannot predict the exact number, frequency or timings of when patients will arrive by hospital transport, but the data above provides our best estimation. The reasons for this are:
 - Patients are booked hospital appointments in turn, based on both clinical need and waiting times. At the time of booking an appointment, it is not known whether a patient will request and/or be eligible hospital transport.
 - Some patient journeys may be consolidated i.e. more than one patient sharing the same vehicle, but this will depend on many factors such as appointment times, patient address, patient access needs and shift patterns of ambulance crew.
- <5% of patients using the transport service will be on a stretcher. This equates to approximately 1 patient (2 vehicles) per day for patients on a stretcher.
- Clinical services will be open typically 9am-5pm Monday to Friday, with patients arriving from 8am and leaving until 6pm. However, there is scope for services to be extended into the evenings (8am-8pm) and weekends in the future.
- Vehicle dwell time expected to be an average of 30-minutes but could be up to 1 hour or as little as 10 or 15 minutes. This is to allow for a patient to be escorted to their clinical area and for the driver to return to the vehicle (and same in reverse for collections). The variation in time is dependent on the access and support needs of each individual patient.
- UCLH and its patient transport provider (G4S) do all they can to mitigate any wasted ambulance journeys or vehicles needing to wait for space within an ambulance bay to become available. If, however there was a scenario where two vehicles were occupying the two bays and a third ambulance arrived, this third vehicle would drive around the local area until a bay was vacated.

Conclusion

UCLH will require two ambulance bays at the Grays Inn Road site to optimise the flow of patient transport vehicles and therefore the running of clinical services with patients arriving and being collected on time. It would not be possible to achieve this with one ambulance bay only, given the expected number of patient vehicles, the likelihood of an ambulance arriving while another is already 'parked' in the one bay would be too high. Across the ten sites of UCH, all have at least two ambulance bays to avoid this risk.

Waiting times for ambulances can vary depending on the number of patients that need collecting/dropping off and their addresses. The patients coming to Grays Inn Road are very vulnerable and therefore reducing their waiting time for collection as much as possible is important for their well-being and ability to recover after attending a hospital appointment. By having enough space for two ambulances to drop-off and collect patients at the same time, the benefits to patients and the operational running of the service will be significant.



Image above shows one of the UCLH patient transport vehicles.