

Circumcision HelpDesk™



London Meet and Greet Service

for adult circumcision patients who would like a guide to show them the way around London

Including a note on Public Transport in London

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Published in England by The Circumcision Helpdesk™

London, United Kingdom

<http://www.circumcisionhelpdesk.org>

The London Meet and Greet Service

Introduction

A growing number of patients are travelling to London to have their circumcision performed by one or other of the doctors/clinics recommended by us or on various bulletin boards and specialist circumcision discussion groups. Many of these travel considerable distances, including from mainland Europe, and are not at all familiar with London, its traffic and complex transport network.

A survey we carried out recently at one London Clinic showed that whilst 65% of patients were fairly local; 13% came from more distant parts of Greater London but 22% travelled from far outside the Greater London area, including Spain, Edinburgh, and Penzance.

Why the London Meet & Greet Service exists

Unless one is very familiar with London and its traffic, it is inadvisable to travel by car to any of the main surgeries. Central London traffic can be very heavy and difficult to negotiate; parking is hard to find (especially close to the surgeries) and can be very expensive if found. There is also a 'Congestion Charge' of £15 for any day one enters the central zone with a vehicle.

Taxis are quick, but they are also expensive, especially during peak periods when they may be sitting in traffic for some time, whilst clocking up the fare.

London's public transport network is very good, but complex, as more fully described on page 4.

Knowing the most efficient way of getting from A to B takes the experience of a well travelled Londoner, especially if the normal and obvious route is disrupted that day by planned engineering works or unforeseen circumstances.

What does the London Meet & Greet Service offer?

The London Meet and Greet Service is provided by courtesy of the Circumcision HelpDesk™ to ensure that patients visiting London for their circumcision can safely and efficiently find their way to and from their chosen surgery in order to arrive unflustered and in good time for their appointment.

You will be met and assisted by a lifelong Londoner with extensive knowledge and experience of travelling around London by all means of public transport.

He will meet you at a suitable point in London, (see the list of regular meeting points on page 3) and conduct you through the transport system to the surgery, by the most efficient route. He will wait for you and show you the way back again to the original meeting point (or to your hotel if staying in London overnight – in which case he can also meet you there again the next day to show you back to the starting point).

For whom do we supply the service?

The service is available to any male, aged 16 or over, who is visiting London in connection with getting a circumcision (i.e. for a consultation or the procedure itself), who would like a guide because he is not familiar with London; or who simply wants a companion.

We will assist you even if you will have a companion with you (e.g. a parent, partner or friend), but the Oyster Card offer (see next section on cost) applies only to one adult as we have only one spare (adult rate) card available.

What will it cost me?

There is no charge for the service itself (although a cup of coffee never goes amiss!). The guide has a no-charge travel card so you don't have to pay his fares within the London Travel Zones.

You pay only for your own travel costs within London (as you would do without our service).

As described on page 4, London is divided into 9 travel zones radiating from the central area and charging is based on the number of different zones through which you travel. All the major rail terminal stations are in the central Zone 1, whilst all the clinics are in Zones 2, 3 or 4. (We can quote you exact fares once we know where you will arrive in London and which clinic you will be visiting.)

Payment can be made by any contactless method (credit/debit card or phone app) or with a London Oyster card. Some journeys may be paid for in cash as you go, but at a significantly higher cost than contactless.

If you don't have your own contactless payment method, we can loan you a pre-loaded Oyster travel card. At the end of your London travels, you will pay your guide, in cash, only for the fares that you have debited to the loaned Oyster Card.

How do I access the service?

Make your initial contact by e-mail to info@circumcisionhelpdesk.org or via one of the bulletin boards where 'Cirkdone' is a contributor. Give him as much notice as possible of your plans but at least two weeks before your planned appointment (preferably before finalising the appointment and travel). You will be given general advice on how much time to allow for the journey across London and his availability for the suggested day.

As soon as you have fixed the appointment and decided on how you will get to London, contact him again by e-mail confirming details of which clinic you are attending and the date & time of the appointment. Also specify details of your travel to London (e.g. train departure time, from where, and due arrival time in London) as well as your mobile phone number (if possible) in case of any

problems arising on the day. You will be given your guide's mobile number and where exactly you will be met.

We wish to make the travel part of your circumcision appointment free of any hassle and as smooth as possible, so that it is one less thing for you to worry about.

Optional Companion service

From our experience we appreciate that some patients (particularly younger ones) are very nervous about actually having their circumcision. We can therefore provide an optional companion service (still no charge) in which, with the doctor's agreement, we sit with you in the surgery itself during the circumcision to give moral support and answer some of the questions you may have but don't want to disturb the doctor. Our guide has observed many circumcisions and so is very familiar with what the doctor is doing and trying to achieve for you. He can pass on some of that knowledge as the circumcision proceeds. This service is also available even if you don't actually need a guide around London.

We stress that this is a totally optional extra and you don't have to use this extra service if you don't want to; your guide will then simply sit in the waiting room until you are ready.

Your privacy is as important to us as to you. All matters seen or discussed are treated in strict confidence, exactly as is the case between the doctor and you.

Meeting Points

The following is a list of the places in London where we would usually meet you in accordance with these arrangements. Other places may be possible by special prior agreement (but a travel charge will become payable if outside the London Travel Zone).

Airports:

London City (LCY)

London Heathrow (LHR) (Or use TfL Rail train and meet at Paddington station.)

London Luton (LTN) Use Thameslink train and meet at St Pancras station.

London Stanstead (STN) Use Coach or Train and meet at Liverpool Street.

London Gatwick (LGW) Use Coach or Southern Rail Train and meet at

Victoria. OR Use Thameslink Rail and meet at London Bridge, Farringdon or St Pancras. The best route depends on which surgery is to be visited, so your guide will advise which is the best meeting place during discussions in advance of travel.

Note: Luton, Stanstead and Gatwick airports are well outside the London Travel Zone, so significant extra costs would be incurred if met there.

Coach Station:

Victoria

Main Line & Suburban Railway Stations:

Blackfriars
Cannon Street
Charing Cross
Euston
Farringdon
Fenchurch Street
King's Cross
Liverpool Street
London Bridge
Marylebone
Moorgate
Paddington
St Pancras
Waterloo
Victoria

Public Transport Travel in London

London has a comprehensive, but complex, transport system comprised of: National Rail; The London Overground; TfL Rail (eventually to be part of Crossrail – the Elizabeth Line); The Underground (Tube); Docklands Light Railway (DLR); Buses and Trams. There is also a Cable Car across the Thames and a boat service on the river (each with its own fare structure).

To give an idea of the complexity, the Tube alone has 11 different lines and 270 stations! The DLR alone adds another 39 stations.

Charging is based on a Zone system, with 9 zones radiating from the central area (Zone 1). You are generally charged according to the number of different zones through which you pass, but the buses and trams have a flat fare however far you go.

Buses and Trams are totally cashless, requiring a Contactless Debit/Credit card, a Contactless mobile phone payment App (eg Apple Pay) or a London Oyster Card.

Tube and DLR fares can be paid in cash at ticket machines, but it is cheaper to use an Oyster or other Contactless means at the barriers.

On buses and trams you Touch IN only, whereas on all other transport you must touch IN and OUT (with the same card) to be charged the correct fare.

At some interchange stations you also need to touch the purple card reader on the interchange route to confirm your travel route and not be charged for passing through Zone 1 when you have actually stayed outside it.

Holders of National Disabled or Older Persons bus passes can use them only on the buses or trams. They are not valid on any trains.

Your Meet and Greet host will always have a spare adult rate London Oyster card with him in case your own Contactless system fails to work.

