



# GPI POLICY - Pitcairn Health Centre Operational Policy

## **References:**

### THE CONSTITUTION OF PITCAIRN

*Contains multiple references relating to Health including  
Section 61 Definition of “minor”*

### LAWS OF PITCAIRN, HENDERSON, DUCIE AND OENO ISLANDS

*2017 Revised Edition*

Cap 7 Prisons Ordinance Section 8 & Prisons Regulations

Cap 11 Local Government Ordinance, Section 7

Local Government Regulations Part II, Part III,

CAP 12 Immigration Ordinance Sections 6 (2)(c), 12 (3)(c) & 19

CAP 24 Dental & Medical practitioners Ordinance

CAP 22 Social Welfare Benefits Ordinance Part II & III

### GPI POLICIES

GPI Employment Guidance

GPI Health & Safety Policy

GPI Subsidised Travel & Baggage Policy

GPI Social Protection Policy

GPI Personal Loans Policy

GPI Pitcairn Island Health Centre Operational Policy

## **Rationale:**

The GPI is committed to providing a high standard of primary health care to the Pitcairn community, via its permanently staffed Health Centre. Its activities include health management, health promotion, preventative health care and secondary assessments, referrals and funding for off-island treatment and travel requirements. These activities reflect the United Kingdom’s obligations under the United Nations International Health Regulations.

Pitcairn Island is remote and accessible only by sea. Its normally resident population of less than 50 individuals is aging, with increasing numbers moving from employment to retirement. The GPI’s ability to effectively meet Pitcairn’s health needs remains a high priority. All off-island treatment assessments and referrals are managed by the Pitcairn Medical Officer in partnership with Healix and provided off-island in New Zealand and/or Tahiti.

## **Policy Objectives:**

To support the effective delivery of comprehensive health care services to the Pitcairn Island community. To provide agreed guidelines for managing patient charges, patient access to off-island health care services and emergency medical evacuations when necessary.

## **Abbreviations:**

HMG – His Majesty’s Government

GPI – Government of Pitcairn Islands

PIO – Pitcairn Island Office in NZ

PI MO – Pitcairn Island Medical Officer

Date Policy last reviewed: Nov 16<sup>th</sup> 2022.

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GPI Charter Vessel – Currently MV Silver Supporter  
Medivac – Emergency Medical Evacuation  
PSP – Patient Support Person  
FCA – Family and Community Advisor  
UKHSA - UK Health Security Agency

### **Definitions:**

**Primary Health Care:** Refers to a broad range of out-of-hospital services. Its goal is to manage and improve community health through regular consultation and preventative services such as health education and counselling, disease prevention and screening. Primary health care includes services such as general practice, nursing, pharmacy, family planning, mental health and wellbeing, dentistry, optometry and audiology. Some primary health care may require the patient to have treatment off island at the discretion of the Pitcairn Island Medical Officer.

**Off-island Medical Treatment:** Refers to treatment requiring hospitalisation or specialist care. Pitcairn Island does not have these facilities. Patients requiring off-island health care must travel to either Tahiti or NZ at the discretion of the Pitcairn Island Medical Officer.

**Medevac:** Refers to emergency medical evacuation of sick or wounded patients. It is distinct from medical referrals which relate to less urgent, off-island medical care or investigation.

**GPI Temporary Disability** A disability is any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions). The GPI has in place a Temporary Disability Allowance in place to enable those suffering temporary disability, as diagnosed by the PI MO, to continue to participate in tailored employment i.e., reduced hours or light duties, whilst recovering without financial hardship. The Temporary Disability Allowance entitlement is recommended and monitored by the PI MO and administered by the DM Community Services.

**GPI Cost-of- Living Allowance:** The GPI provides a non-recoverable daily allowance for patients and, if necessary, approved carers to cover reasonable daily expenses whilst off-island for medical treatment.

**New Settler:** Refers to those who have been approved, by the Governor of the Pitcairn Islands, to settle on Pitcairn. A new settler's entitlement to subsidised health costs and benefits does not come into effect until they have been normally resident on Pitcairn Island for 6 months or more.

**Minor:** A minor is a child, 18 years or younger, unless otherwise provided for within the Laws of Pitcairn Island. There is no charge for medical treatment for normally resident minors who attend school or who may be home schooled

**Normally Resident:** Refers to a person who usually lives on Pitcairn Island as a long-term permanent resident.

**GPI Charter Vessel:** Refers to the ship contracted by HMG to provide freight and passenger services for Pitcairn.

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**Off-island Medical Treatment Referral Categories:** Refer to the types of Off-Island treatment options available, on approval of the PI MO, as listed in the GPI/MO Medical Referral Approval form (see Annex C). There are 4 categories.

**Chronic Illness:** This term refers to a persistent and recurring illness, lasting three months or more, which incurs significant disturbance and impairment to a persons physical, psychological or social wellbeing.

**Healix:** Refers to Healix Health Services, a company which provides 24/7 medical support to the PI MO, including logistical support for off island treatment.

### 1. GENERAL ACTIVITIES – PITCAIRN HEALTH CENTRE

- 1) The GPI is responsible for recruiting and contracting medical practitioners for Pitcairn and the PIO will work with past and present PI MOs when recruiting.
- 2) The GPI, via the Pitcairn Health Centre provides primary health services to all Pitcairn Island residents and visitors from neo-natal to geriatric care.
- 3) All medical practitioners, contracted to HMG as the PI MO, are required to submit their qualifications to the PIO and the Community Services Division Manager as per the GPI Dental and Medical Practitioners' Ordinance.
- 4) All staff employed by HMG are required to have a full medical and psychological health and well-being check before being contracted. It is the responsibility of the PIO to notify the PI MO of the health of all incoming contracted staff and partners.
- 5) It is the responsibility of the PI MO, in consultation with the PIO, Pitcairn Council and the HMG Administrator to undertake annual reviews of Pitcairn's Medivac Procedures (Annex B) so as to ensure it remains fit for purpose in case of emergency.
- 6) All resident PI MOs are required to publicly display a copy of their registration/qualifications at the Pitcairn Health Centre.
- 7) The Pitcairn Health Centre provides general practice, nursing, x-ray, pharmacy, urgent and emergency care services.
- 8) The Pitcairn Health Centre provides appropriate procedures to allow for the analysis of biopsies and medical samples at an approved overseas facility. The PI MO and Health Centre Nurse liaise with the PIO to provide the most accurate results as quickly as possible
- 9) It is the responsibility of the PI MO to ensure that test results are followed up, when required and recorded in individual patient files at the Pitcairn Health Centre.

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- 10) It is the responsibility of the PI MO to determine what may or may not be a chronic condition.
- 11) It is the responsibility of the PIO MO to ensure patients suffering from temporary disability are regularly assessed and that their temporary disability status is regularly conveyed to the DM Community Services.
- 12) From March 2023 it is the responsibility of the PI MO to undertake 6 monthly medical health and well-being checks for Pitcairn's working pensioner group.
- 13) The PI MO and staff at the Pitcairn Health Centre provide annual First Aid training to ensure that all local First Aid certificates are current.
- 14) It is the responsibility to the PI MO to advise off-island Specialists that they are required to contact Helix in the first instance when suggesting follow-up appointments for patients.
- 15) When deemed appropriate by the PI MO, it is the responsibility to the PI MO to utilize technology and virtual meeting capabilities on-island for patients requiring off-island follow-up consultations etc.
- 16) The PI MO will work with UKHSA, the Administrator and the Pitcairn Island Council on matters pertaining to public health and Covid-19 quarantine and infection management.
- 17) It is the responsibility of Pitcairn Health Centre staff & the PI MO to ensure all consultations are private and patient confidentiality maintained all times. Responsibility is to the patient in the first instance.
- 18) It is the responsibility of Pitcairn Health Centre staff & the PI MO to ensure information about Patients' rights are displayed at the Pitcairn Island Health Centre.
- 19) Pitcairn Health Centre staff provide health education and/or preventative health advice on an ongoing and regular basis to the Pitcairn Island Community. The education provided is approved and funded by the GPI based upon recommendations from the PI MO and the FCA.
- 20) It is the responsibility of the Pitcairn Island Council to ensure the HMG Administrator, as head of the Pitcairn Public Service, the DM Community Services and Pitcairn Health Centre staff to abide by the confidentiality clauses within the GPI Employment Guidance Policy. Responsibility is to the patient in the first instance.
- 21) It is the responsibility of the PI MO to provide patients and relevant managers with Medical Certificates and assessments in the case of illness and/or accidents or injuries, in the work place, which may require time off work and/or light duties.
- 22) Temporary disabilities, as diagnosed by the PI MO, may entitle the patient to a Temporary Disability Allowance. Treatment work related injury or illness is covered under the conditions in the GPI Health & Safety Policy.

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- 23) PI MOs are required to supply patients with copies of their on-island medical records when a request to do so is made by the patient. This will be undertaken in a timely and efficient manner. Responsibility is to the patient in the first instance.
- 24) All patients treated at the Pitcairn Health Centre are required to pay for their treatment as listed, and publicly displayed, at the Pitcairn Health Centre. It is the responsibility of Pitcairn Health Centre Staff to ensure billing is accurately applied to patients accounts and submitted to the GT on a monthly basis (See Annex A. Pitcairn Health Centre Charges)
- 25) Non-resident Pitcairn Islanders, returning for holidays etc, are required to pay full costs. All Non-resident Pitcairn Islanders and incoming HMG contracted staff are required to bring 6 month's supply of their own medications.
- 26) It is the responsibility of the PI MO to prescribe medications. It is the responsibility of the Pitcairn Nurse to dispense medications and it is the responsibility of the Health Centre Receptionist to manage accurate medication billing.
- 27) All short-term visitors are required to pay full treatment and prescription fees at the Pitcairn Health Centre (See Annex A. Pitcairn Health Centre Charges)
- 28) New Settlers are required to pay full treatment and prescription charges until they have been normally resident on Pitcairn Island for 6 months or more. (See Annex A. Pitcairn Health Centre Charges)
- 29) Temporary long-term visitors are required to pay full treatment and prescription charges at the Pitcairn Health Centre. (See Annex A. Pitcairn Health Centre Charges)
- 30) Medical treatments and prescription charges for HMG contracted staff at the Pitcairn Health Centre are covered via their individual employment contracts.
- 31) Individuals may place an order for a specific item/medication with Clinic. When that order arrives on the supply ship the person who placed the order is obligated to take the order and pay for it, as invoiced by the Pitcairn Health Centre, in its entirety, via the GT Office.
- 32) Patients may be charged a proportion of the cost of their medications, depending on their status e.g., fully employed, child, pensioner, visitor, non-resident, etc. A schedule of these charges is available in the clinic. (See Annex A. Pitcairn Health Centre Charges)

### **2. GENERAL ACTIVITIES - EMERGENCY MEDICAL EVACUATION REFERRALS**

The PI MO coordinates with Healix to provide safe, prompt and efficient Medivac services when deemed necessary, as stated in the Procedure for Medical Evacuation Emergency (Annex B).

- 1) It is the responsibility of the PI MO to undertake medical assessments of patients to ascertain whether emergency evacuation for treatment is necessary or if the patient can be safely treated on island.

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- 2) Only patients normally resident on Pitcairn Island and approved new settlers, are eligible for subsidised travel and off-island medical treatment under this policy and the GPI Health Funding Policy.
- 3) It is compulsory for all visitors travelling to the Pitcairn islands to provide proof of medical travel insurance which must include cover for emergency medical evacuation. Visitors requiring assessment for referral and medical evacuations, are required to pay 100% of all costs.
- 4) All patients must attend their scheduled Hospital/Consulting Physician/Specialist appointments and diligently follow any instructions concerning appointments and prescribed medical treatments, as agreed by the PI MO.

### **3. GENERAL ACTIVITIES - OTHER OFF-ISLAND TREATMENT REFERRALS**

- 1) The PI MO tracks the health care of all patients receiving approved off-island medical care and refers patients to appropriate facilities for treatment and services as required.
- 2) All treatment referrals must be approved by the PI MO via the information provided within the PI MO Medical Treatment Referral form (Annex C).
- 3) It is the responsibility of the PI MO to ensure patient confidentiality is strictly maintained during the approval process. Responsibility is to the patient in the first instance.
- 4) 4.1 Those who are normally resident on Pitcairn Island who may travel off-island for any reason, are strongly encouraged to have dental and optical examinations particularly if it has been a year or more since their last examination. In order to utilize this service patients must discuss their needs with PI MO, before leaving the island.  
  
4.2 Any person who receives approved medical treatment while off-island, for unrelated reasons, is only entitled to subsidised medical costs as per the category stated on the signed Medical Referral Form (Annex C). There is no entitlement for cost of living or accommodation payments, unless prior approval has been arranged.
- 5) The PI MO, with the patient, will complete a Medical Referral Form (Annex C) and make the appropriate referrals, via Healix, as required. The PI MO will also ascertain if any other medical tests or investigations are required, whilst the patient is off-island, and refer specifically for these as appropriate.
- 6) It is the responsibility of the PI MO & Healix to ensure all medical practitioners, seen by a patient whilst they are off-island, send copies of all treatment records to the PI MO at the Pitcairn Health Centre. This includes recommendations for follow-up off-island consultations.
- 7) It is the responsibility of the PI MO to ensure all test results / recommendation are added to patient files and actioned as required.

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- 8) The PI MO and Nurse are responsible for ensuring all necessary referral documentation is complete and that patients are aware of their referral categories and responsibilities. This includes completing the Medical Referral Form (Annex C), with the patient's signature.
- 9) It is the responsibility of the PI MO to advise the DM Community of which Medical Referral Category a patient or patient support person requires.
- 10) It is the responsibility of the Pitcairn Island Council to ensure the GPI Pitcairn Health Centre Operational Policy and the GPI Health Funding Policy is made broadly available to the Pitcairn Community and relevant stakeholders.
- 11) It is the responsibility of Pitcairn Health Centre to advise patients to read the GPI Pitcairn Health Centre Operational Policy and the GPI Health Funding Policy when they sign their Medical Referral Form so as to ensure patients are well informed of their right and responsibilities.

### **Annexes**

Annex A - Pitcairn Island Health Centre Treatment and Medication Charges

Annex B - GPI Emergency Medical Evacuation Procedures

Annex C - GPI PI MO Medical Treatment Referral Form

Annex D – GPI Health Funding Application Form

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