

UHL Response to the new NHS Patient, Visitor and Staff Car Parking Principles

In August 2014 the government produced some guidelines for all NHS establishments detailing standards that should be met when dealing with car parking for all users of NHS sites. The information below sets out the guidelines and the UHL response.

- NHS organisations should work with their patients and staff, local authorities and public transport providers to make sure that users can get to the site (and park if necessary) as safely, conveniently and economically as possible.

The UHL work closely with the City and County Council to provide alternative sustainable transport modes to the hospital.

The Trust also links in with patients and staff to gain user views on access to the hospitals.

- Charges should be reasonable for the area.

The UHL car park tariffs are comparable with other hospital sites; within the East Midlands we have one of the cheapest tariff rates. The UHL rates are also comparable with local car parks.

- Concessions, including free or reduced charges or caps, should be available for the following groups: people with disabilities, frequent outpatient attenders, visitors with relatives who are gravely ill, visitors to relatives who have an extended stay in hospital, staff working shifts that mean public transport cannot be used.

Other concessions, eg for volunteers or staff who car-share, should be considered locally.

All three UHL sites have some free parking for disabled blue badge holders.

The Trust offers a range of concessions which are available to all patients or prime carers. These include a maximum daily rate, a weekly ticket, a monthly ticket and at the Leicester Royal Infirmary site a saver ticket (£50 worth of parking for £25, no expiry date).

Trust staff have to apply for a permit to park at any of the three UHL sites, the cost of the permits are at a subsidised rate, the rate is dependant upon salary.

Trust volunteers park for free.

Car sharers only have to pay for one permit.

- Priority for staff parking should be based on need, eg staff whose daily duties require them to travel by car.

The Trust is currently going through a process called 3P (Priority Parking Permits). Under this scheme all staff have been asked to reapply for their permits and all applications will be assessed. The new permits will be issued according to need. Working unsocial hours and the requirement to use a car whilst at work will be the main scoring areas.

- Trusts should consider installing 'pay on exit' or similar schemes so that drivers pay only for the time that they have used. Fines should only be imposed where reasonable and should be waived when overstaying is beyond the driver's control (eg when treatment takes longer than planned, or when staff are required to work beyond their scheduled shift).

The Trust currently utilises Pay on Exit at the Leicester Royal Infirmary site but Pay and Display at the two exterior sites. Work is currently underway to establish the cost and feasibility of installing Pay on Exit at all sites.

There are currently procedures in place to prevent the issuing of a fine to patients that stay longer than their pay and display time.

Staff are issued with permits for "staff only" car parks therefore they do not utilise the pay and display car parks.

- Details of charges, concessions and penalties should be well publicised including at car park entrances, wherever payment is made and inside the hospital. They should also be included on the hospital website and on patient letters and forms, where appropriate.

The Trust advertises in all the above areas, it also makes use of the internal web site, triangular adverts in restaurants, information in patient bedside booklets, display boards at all ward/clinic entrances, information in the hospital radio magazine directing people to the website and information on the hospital buses (that are also public buses).

- NHS trusts should publish: their parking policy, their implementation of the NHS car parking principles, financial information relating to their car parking, summarised complaint information on car parking and actions taken in response.

The public parking policy itself is not publicised but is available, all the information within the policy is provided on the website and in a separate user friendly car park booklet. Financial and complaint information is available on request.

The actions we take show we are implementing the NHS car parking principles.

- NHS organisations are responsible for the actions of private contractors who run car parks on their behalf.

Interserve manage the UHL car parks but they have to manage them in line with the UHL policies and procedures as well as the BPA guidelines.

- NHS organisations should act against rogue contractors in line with the relevant codes of practice⁵ where applicable.

The UHL will only work with reputable companies.

- Contracts should not be let on any basis that incentivises fines, eg 'income from penalties only'.

Interserve are paid to manage the car parks.