

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD – 30th October 2017

BRIEFING PAPER – HOSPITAL CAR PARKING CHARGES

The Overview and Scrutiny Board have been requested to investigate Hospital Car Parking charges. This followed a notice of motion put forward by Councillor P. M. McDonald at the Council meeting held on 19th July 2017, as follows:

“This Council calls upon all local hospitals to stop charging for parking, that in reality is financially punishing people for receiving treatment or visiting loved ones”

Following discussion at the Council meeting it was agreed that the item would be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for further consideration.

The Board considered the referral at its meeting held on 22nd August 2017. During consideration of the item a number of Members who had recently visited hospitals in the county noted that signs were on display in the car parks and these clearly advised patients and visitors that, after covering the costs of maintaining the car parks, any revenue would be reinvested in hospital services.

Members discussed the subject of hospital car parking charges in further detail and noted that it would be helpful to obtain further information about the charges in place for parking at the hospitals in Worcestershire. This investigation could take into account any concessions that were available and the methods used to advertise these concessions to eligible patients and their visitors.

This briefing paper sets out the additional information requested at that meeting in order for Members to discuss what, if any, further action they wish to take on the matter.

1. Car Parking Details (Information Obtained from the WAHT Website on Monday 30th January 2017)

The Trust operates both a 'pay on foot' and a 'pay and display' car park charging system. The 'pay on foot' payment system means that you will be given a ticket at the barrier as you enter the car park. When you leave the hospital please use one of the pay machines to pay the charge and have the ticket validated. Pay machines are situated outside the main entrance and inside main reception.

The pay and display machines are located at road side spaces and smaller car parking areas that are not barrier controlled. The pay and display pay stations only accept the following coins: £1, 50p, 20p and 10p. Please obtain a ticket before you leave your car and ensure that it is clearly displayed on you dash board or window.

Please note that these machines do not give change.

We have introduced a new 'one hour' car park rate as a response to patients and visitors who told us that their visits are often for no longer than an hour and they would like the option of a reduced fee.

- Up to one hour: £2.50
- 1-2 hours: £3.70
- 2-4 hours: £4.50
- 4-6 hours: £6.00
- 6-24 hours: £7.50

Pick-up/Drop Off

There are several drop off spaces available for 20 minute drop offs outside the main entrances. Please ensure you do not overstay the time limit as you may be subject to penalties.

Car parking concessions

Reduced car park fees are available for patients and close relatives in certain circumstances which may require regular or long term visits.

Parking for Disabled Patients and Visitors

There are designated spaces near main visitor entrance to the car park, head towards the corner nearest the main entrance of the hospital. Please note standard parking charges apply, concessions are available, see above.

Car parking concessions

If you are visiting an immediate relative who is a long-stay patient or you are a patient receiving regular treatment, you may be eligible for a reduced-fee parking pass.

Please speak to the nurse in charge of the ward/department for more information and an application form

Concessions are available in the following areas:

- Terminally ill
- Cardiac Exercise
- Coronary Care Unit (CCU)
- Intensive Therapy Unit / Critical Care Unit (ITU)
- Oncology
- Paediatrics
- Bereavement
- Renal unit
- Long stay

Appendix A provides a copy of the concessionary parking policy.

2. Car Parking – Comparative Data

The charges have been detailed below together with the cost of parking at other health authorities in the region in order to provide a comparison for Members consideration.

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust

Time	Cost
Up to 1 hour	£2.50
1 – 2 hours	£3.70
2 – 4 hours	£4.50
4 – 6 hours	£6.00
6 – 24 hours	£7.50

Wye Valley NHS Trust

Time	Cost
10 mins	Free
Up to 1 hour	£3.00
Up to 2 hours	£5.00
Up to 3 hours	£6.00
Up to 4 hours	£7.00
Up to 5 hours	£8.00
Up to 9 hours	£12.00
Up to 24 hours	£15.00

Royal Stoke University Hospitals North Midlands NHS Trust

Time	Cost
Up to 1 hour	£1.70
1 – 2 hours	£2.80
2 – 3 hours	£3.80
3 – 4 hours	£5.50
4 – 8 hours	£6.50
8 – 24 hours	£8.60

Blue Badge holders pay normal charges.

Concession scheme in place for specific patients (weekly ticket for £10.00)

University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

Time	Cost
0 – 10 mins	Free
Up to 1 hour	£2.50
Up to 2 hours	£3.40
Up to 3 hours	£4.10
Up to 4 hours	£4.90
Up to 5 hours	£6.40
7 – 24 hours	£9.20

Concession scheme in place for specific patients.

South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust

Time	Cost
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First 30 mins	Free
0 – 1 hour	£2.60
1 – 2 hours	£3.10
2 – 4 hours	£4.70
4 – 6 hours	£7.30
6 – 24 hours	£9.60
Weekly Ticket	£15.60

Blue badge holders pay normal charges.

3. Visitors to Worcestershire hospitals paid more than £2.5 million in car parking charges

The following article extract appears in the 30th December 2016 Worcester Advertiser and may be of interest to Members during consideration of this item.

“VISITORS to the three hospitals in Worcestershire paid more than £2.5 million in car parking charges last year.

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust raked in £2,557,081 from patients, staff and visitors - including those who are disabled - at hospitals in Worcester, Redditch and Kidderminster.

The figure put them in the top 10 NHS trusts in England for making money from car parking charges.

It was described as "big money" by Peter Pinfield, chairman of Healthwatch Worcestershire, an organisation that acts as a patient champion.

However, he said he was aware £1 million was needed just to run the car park.

He said: "Generally we find people don't like paying but in Worcestershire they bite the bullet.

"We wouldn't want to see them going up any further than they are now and I'm pleased that if you are a relative or carer of anyone with any of the serious conditions you can get quite a good discount.

"But that's not publicised enough."

He called for the government to make the charges standard across the country.

The latest figures were released as part of a wider investigation that found hospitals across England made more than £120 million from the charges.

This was a five per cent rise on the year before and rising year on year.

A spokesman from the trust said the money was used to maintain the car park with any profit ploughed into patient services.

Some of the money paid goes to private company ISS, which manages the trust's car parking, under the trust's PFI Concession Agreement.

The trust was unable to say how much of the £2.5 million came from parking fines but did say fines were small and only usually given to people parking on double red lines or obstructing ambulances.

A Trust spokesman said: "We are aware that charging for hospital parking is a sensitive subject and this is why here in Worcestershire we constantly review our charges and wherever possible help those suffering real hardship.

"We introduced a new 'one hour' reduced car park rate (£2.50) at the Alexandra Hospital in Redditch, Kidderminster Hospital and Treatment Centre and Worcestershire Royal Hospital from January 2015.

"This was as a direct response to patients and visitors who told us that their visits are often for no longer than an hour and they would like the option of a reduced fee.

"In addition to this we reduced the cost for parking for two hours from £4.50 to £3.70.

"This benefits those visiting the hospital for short periods of time and for those who are visiting for longer or who have multiple visits they may be able to benefit from parking concessions."

The money was raised from parking at the trust's three hospitals between October 2015 and September 2016.

However, reduced fees are available for certain patients and close relatives including those who need regular or long term visits, those suffering from cancer, coronary problems or renal failure, or those visiting pediatrics as well as bereaved relatives.

The trust also said it offers free 20-minute drop off areas outside every hospital, had improved paying facilities and had increased the number of disabled parking spaces at the Royal.

The trust with the highest charges was the Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust, which makes £4,841,108 across the year.

More than half of the 89 trusts that submitted figures were making more than £1 million in car park fees every year."