

Changes to car parking charges: engagement feedback

April 2018

As we do every year, we have reviewed some of our car parking charges, and in March put forward some proposals for changes to our weekly car parking charge, and carers charge.

To find out what people thought of the proposals, we engaged with more than 500 people across the west Suffolk community to get their feedback (from 26 March to 6 April, 2018). Thank you to everyone who took part.

Taking the feedback into account, we have now supported some changes that will come into effect from 1 May.

Weekly ticket

As of 1 May, it will cost £25.00 to purchase a weekly, seven day ticket. This equates to £3.57 per day (usual day cost, £12.40).

This is a reduction in our original proposal of £30.00 per week, following our engagement work.

This ticket is designed for those who may be attending or visiting the hospital over an extended period.

Carer parking

As of 1 May, the discounted daily rate for carers will be £3.00 per day (non-concessionary day cost, £12.40).

This is a reduction in our original proposal of £5.00 per week, following our engagement work.

This discounted rate is available for family carers; the Trust will also be introducing a new process to apply and access family carer discount. Please contact the patient advice and liaison service (PALS) for more information.

Why are we making these changes?

We know that many people, rightly, feel very strongly about hospital car parking. No hospital takes the decision to charge for car parking lightly, but it is well-known that the NHS is facing some significant financial challenges, with reduced funding, and is being asked to do more with less. This unfortunately means that we have to sometimes make difficult decisions to ensure we can keep providing high-quality care as an Outstanding rated Trust.

All the money that the Trust makes from car parking is reinvested into our services and providing care to patients, and across a year, this car parking income is roughly equivalent to a full ward's worth of nurses.

Concessions are available for those people attending the Macmillan or renal units for treatment. Patients on Income Support or Family Credit are also able to claim reimbursement for some car parking charges, and specific arrangements can be made in specialist circumstances for some patients attending for repeat treatments or short stay care.

What was the feedback?

Weekly ticket

The proposals put forward were to increase the weekly ticket (seven day parking) rate to £30.00.

The Trust received 531 responses to its weekly car parking survey on this proposal.

When asked to consider the proposed £30.00 weekly charge:

- **14.9%** (65 people) said a £30.00 charge would be 'very reasonable' or 'reasonable'
- **8.4%** (37 people) said a £30.00 charge would be 'neither reasonable or unreasonable'
- **76.7%** (335 people) said a £30.00 charge would be 'unreasonable' or 'very unreasonable'

When asked to consider a £25.00 - £29.00 weekly charge:

- **23.6%** said this would be 'very reasonable' or 'reasonable'
- **15.3%** said this would be 'neither reasonable or unreasonable'
- **61.1%** said this would be 'unreasonable or very unreasonable'

Taking this feedback into account, the original proposal of £30.00 was disregarded.

As of 1 May, it will cost £25.00 to purchase a weekly, seven day ticket. This equates to £3.57 per day (usual day cost, £12.40).

Carer charge

The proposals put forward were to introduce a family carer charge of maximum £5.00 per day.

The Trust received 18 responses to its carer car parking survey. Eight people also attended the face-to-face carer engagement session; participants included Trust experts, nursing staff, and active carers.

When asked to consider the proposed £5.00 daily charge:

- 93.75% felt this charge would be too high
- 6.25% felt this charge would be about right
- 0% felt this charge would be too low

When asked to indicate what they considered to be the most fair and reasonable for a discounted concessionary daily charge:

- 50% said less than £2.00 would be most fair and reasonable
- 43.75% said £2.00 - £3.00 would be most fair and reasonable.

Taking this feedback into account, the original proposal of a maximum £5.00 per day was disregarded.

As of 1 May, it will cost £3.00 to purchase a carers ticket (a non-concessionary day ticket costs £12.40).

This discounted rate will be available for family carers; following feedback from the carer group, the Trust will also be introducing a new process to apply and access family carer discount.