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Dear

### **INCREASE IN CAR PARKING CHARGES**

Thank you for your letter in which you raise concerns regarding the recent increase in car parking charges at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals. Please find below details regarding the changes that were introduced across the Trust in early January this year.

Whilst the cost of maintaining and operating the car parks has increased year on year, charges have not increased since 2004. However, following a review of car parking charges, and after very careful consideration, the Trust decided to increase visitor car parking charges to £3.00 per day from January 2012.

The Trust strongly believes that the car parks should be self-financing, and be operated and maintained without subsidy from patient care budgets. The additional income the increase will generate will be used to improve car parking facilities, such as access for disabled drivers, new security cameras, and improving drop-off points at entrances for the public and ambulances. Any surplus will be reinvested in patient care.

The Trust wishes to emphasise that no patient or visitor will be charged more than £3.00 per day to park, even if they visit the hospital twice in one day. Patients and visitors making a return visit within 24 hours are requested to advise/inform the Car Parking Control Room when leaving the first time of their intention to return later. There is no limit to the number of return visits within any 24 hour period. Further information along with other exemptions and concessionary information is displayed at each car park pay station at our hospital sites and is included in the patient appointment letters and supporting access web sites for the disabled i.e. DisabledGo which can be accessed by visiting <http://www.disabledgo.com/en/org/lancashire-teaching-hospitals>.

All wards and departments are being reminded of the exemption and concessionary rates and the process for Ward staff, patients and visitors to apply when they meet such criteria i.e. free parking for registered disabled drivers, free parking for patients who require regular or long-term care, including cancer, kidney dialysis, critical care patients, and parents of neo-natal patients, and to provide a discounted £10 weekly ticket for regular patients and visitors who do not meet the exemption criteria.

As part of the programme to introduce the charges the Trust recognised the need to inform users of the pending increase. To facilitate this, information relating to the increase was published on the Trust's website before Christmas, but we acknowledge that not all of our patients and visitors

would have seen this notice. Advice was also displayed on the digital car parking signage at the entrance to our hospital sites.

In relation to information being published in appointment letters, the Trust schedules many appointments weeks and months in advance and to advise each patient individually that the car parking charges would be increasing in January would have incurred significant costs.

The current policy is that visitors are exempt from charges if they are in the hospitals for less than 15 minutes and confirmation is publicised to that effect. However, a number of similar comments have been made and consideration is to be given to increase the length of time for free car parking. This will be looked at over the next few months as we need to understand what changes are required to the car park equipment.

We understand that hospital car park charges may be unpopular but we hope the above information has given you an insight into why we have increased the charges. I hope I have answered your questions and responded to your comments. However, should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact Miles Timperley, Director of Facilities and Services, on 01772 522782, who will be able to respond to your queries.

Yours sincerely