

WELSH HEALTH CIRCULAR



Llywodraeth Cymru
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Title: Car parking management – guidance for NHS Wales

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For Action by:
Health Board Chief Executives
NHS Trust Chief Executives

Action required by:
Health Boards and NHS Trusts

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Enclosure(s):

Dear Colleague,

Summary

The purpose of this circular is to notify and to clarify to all health boards and NHS Trusts arrangements for car parking at NHS hospital sites. This WHC sets out the procedure within NHS Wales concerning car parking charges and the management of car parking across the NHS in Wales.

As a consequence of this new guidance the previous circular '*WHC (2008) 011 Reform of Car Parking in NHS Hospitals*' has been revoked.

Background

From 1st April 2008, free car parking has been provided at all NHS hospital sites for patient, staff and visitors. The only exceptions to this were where health boards had external contracts in place. The guidance explained that external contracts should not be reviewed or extended. There are three hospitals where there are external contracts in place all of which expire in 2018. When the contracts expire all parking across NHS Wales will be provided free of charge to patients, staff and visitors.

Health Boards and NHS Trusts will continue to be responsible for the management of car parking across their estate. The approach should be set out in your sustainable travel plans for your main hospital sites. This requirement is set out in '*WHC (2008) 058 Sustainable Travel Plans in NHS Wales (Site Specific,) to include Car Parking Plans*'. This WHC remains extant.

NHS Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP) visited all health boards and NHS Trusts in 2017 to discuss and share information on how the NHS organisations currently deal with car parking management issues. The Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust were not included in the programme of visits as their estate does not cover hospitals and similar facilities. The meetings with key NHS staff identified common issues across the NHS and best practice that could be shared.

It is recognised, that when free car parking is available across all hospital sites in Wales after September 2018, it may increase site traffic flow and access problems leading to further pressures on some sites that already have significant parking issues. This guidance sets out advice and best practice to be applied when managing car parking on hospital sites.

Policy

The key themes for car parking management should be to:-

- Protect disabled parking spaces, maintain a safe traffic flow around sites and ensure clear and safe access routes for emergency vehicles are maintained;

- Encourage people to use alternative means of travel, reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- Encourage the development of sustainable travel hubs; and
- Encourage people to only park on hospital sites for hospital related business.

Advice

As all parking at NHS sites will be free of charge for patients, staff and visitors later this year the focus will need to be on the management of on site car parking.

There is an expectation that any enforcement measures would be proportionate and largely to address illegal parking and access issues. On some hospital sites it will also be necessary to control the possible use of parking spaces by commuters or others with no business at the hospital.

There are a number of ways that NHS organisations could look to alleviate car parking ranging from number plate recognition to park and ride schemes and this advice is not intended to be prescriptive. Major acute hospitals, for example, are likely to have significantly more car parking pressures than other hospital sites. Similar hospitals can have different parking issues. These can relate to their location, the footprint of their estate, the number of spaces etc. It would be impossible to have a one size fits all approach.

Whilst recognising the significant pressures there are in respect of car parking at a number of hospital sites there should be a clearly understood car parking management system. This should include clear signage and the system should be clearly understood by patients, staff and visitors and as far as possible the wider community.

For example, illegal car parking, that may cause access problems for emergency vehicles, should be treated differently to patients who are a few minutes over their allocated parking time following their appointment.

Good practice management arrangements

As a result of the visits NWSSP identified a number of good practice management arrangements which NHS organisations should consider. These are set out below:-

- Management schemes should be consulted upon with staff, public/visitor groups and unions to determine the parameters such as the time limits etc;
- Management schemes should be well signposted at site entry and other locations;

- Car parking enforcement charges should be no more than charges levied by local authorities within the Health Board/Trust area;
- Appeal procedures should be well advertised and easy to navigate;
- Appeal procedures should be compassionate to the appellant, where justified;
- Management schemes must be driven by safety and not in terms of profit for the NHS organisation or any management company that have been appointed by the NHS organisation;
- Parking policy should be based around the “*Wales Penalty Processing Partnership, Civil Parking Enforcement Procedures*”, and

<https://www.wppp.org.uk/pdf/WPPP%20CPE%20Procedures.pdf>

- There should be ‘hospital permit holders only’ areas at acute hospital sites. This would be for staff who meet certain criteria such as midwives and on-call medical staff.