

Purpose of this response

The Board of East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust met on 1 May 2024 at Hertford County Hospital. The following question from the public regarding parking at Lister Hospital was considered at this Board meeting:

AGENDA ITEM 6

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The below was passed on by Hertfordshire County Council and is being treated as a question from the public.

Title: Lister Hospital Car Parking Upgrade

Statement:

We the undersigned petition the County Council to petition East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust (The Lister Hospital) to improve parking for staff, visitors and patients at their site.

Justification:

There is not enough parking at the hospital. The spaces are poorly marked. Catalytic converters are often stolen from cars at the site. Staff are regularly fined by SABA. The multi-storey car park is poorly designed and results in damage to cars.

In addition, after it was agreed for the above question to be treated as question from the public, a self-survey by staff was received by Trust management. Whilst the survey was provided as information rather than a question, it was circulated to all Board members as background information.

The Board is aware there is public and staff interest in this topic and therefore agreed to provide this response to be published on the Trust's website ahead of the official minutes being published, to ensure timely information for those who have asked the question.

Adam Sewell-Jones, Chief Executive at East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust said:

“We recognise that car parking on the Lister site is a cause of concern for staff and it is an area of focus for the Trust to improve. It’s a subject I take very seriously, particularly in terms of the impact on the wellbeing of our staff at the start and end of their working days.

As such, an independent survey has been undertaken with a professional traffic management team.

While recognising the time of peak periods of pressure on the surface car parking spaces for staff at Lister, the survey shows the overall current utilisation of available parking is at 85%, including the off-site car park at the garden centre (compared to 90-95% which is deemed to be full capacity).

At present, the survey data does not support the need for a significant expansion of capacity that a new multi-storey car park would provide.

What is shown is the need for better distribution of the current staff parking spaces at the site while exploring all options for alternative parking.

The Trust is currently taking the following actions to better use existing capacity and to secure some additional capacity:

1. Finalising negotiations with landowners for some additional parking spaces adjacent to the hospital
2. Relining staff surface car parking spaces to make the most of current space (including more clearly marked bays) and create additional spaces
3. Reallocating staff permits between staff car park spaces to balance the use of all spaces
4. Negotiating over the use of additional offsite parking with a more frequent and extended shuttle bus service
5. Implementing increased hybrid-working and flexible working to reduce the demand for staff parking, particularly at peak times

The Trust has recently made improvements to staff car parking as part of its investment in maintenance.

Catalytic converter theft is a national issue with approximately 3,000 - 4,000 reported stolen per year. Fewer than 10 have been reported stolen over the last 24 months at Lister Hospital. However, we have increased security patrols, worked closely with the police, and shared recommendations with staff on how to protect their vehicles.

Parking tickets are issued in line with Trust and car parking policies, and an appeals process is in place. Tickets are issued for not correctly parking in bays, or not displaying a valid permit. To maintain safe access in case of emergencies it is essential that vehicle owners park in designated areas and only where they are permitted to do so.

The multi-storey car park was designed and built by construction experts in line with design guidance. Regrettably damage is caused to vehicles in all car parks. Between January and April 2024, 115,000 cars entered the multi-storey car park. In the same time period, 10 accidents were reported to SABA or the Trust.

Taking into account all of the above, which I hope responds to all points in the public question, I would like to emphasise to staff and patients that both I and the Board hear the feedback about parking and the impact it has on staff and patients. As such, I want to reassure staff and patients that improving parking at Lister is one of my main goals over the next year.”

The Board recognised the concerns about parking and supported the Chief Executive’s response to the question.