

Information Governance

Wrightington Hospital
Hall Lane
Appley Bridge
Lancashire
WN6 9EP

Tel: 01257 488271
Email: FOI@wwl.nhs.uk
Web: www.wwl.nhs.uk

Ref: FOI2017/4139

Date Received: 16th August 2017
Response Due: 14th September 2017

24th August 2017

Dear

INFORMATION REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

We are now pleased to respond to your request for information under the FOI Act.

A) *Potential Impropriety (Car Parking)*

On Tuesday 25 July 2017 I visited the above hospital to meet a relative who was admitted to the Royal Albert and Edward Infirmary. I paid the parking fee and used the disabled car parking facility.

However, at the time of parking my own car, I noticed a Volvo car parked in a space (in the same car park) that was one of two spaces set aside exclusively for electrical cars with electrical vehicle charging points. This Volvo car (registration NG66 LZC) was using an 'official' (NHS Trust) yellow Parking Permit

sticker (no. 7052, expiry 31.3.2019) and was plugged into the electrical supply to charge the vehicle's battery. I stayed at the car park for approximately 2 hours and upon leaving the car park I noticed the Volvo car still parked as described.

A number of initial questions occur to me - rightly or wrongly - as follows:

- 1) *In what capacity is the user or owner of this Volvo car been provided with a parking permit? (Perhaps the user/owner of the car was someone receiving free parking concession as per information from your website, e.g. someone receiving hospital treatment at least once a week for an extensive period).*

The identified vehicle is owned by a staff member who pays via their salary for a parking permit.

- 2) *Why is the Trust providing an electrical vehicle (EV) charging point (e.g. in pursuit of what health or other related policy)? And if such a policy exists, how has it been approved by the Trust?*

The Trust introduced EV charging points for electric vehicles to encourage their use by staff and visitors to Trust facilities. As part of the Trust Sustainability & Environmental Management initiative instigated back in 2007 in conjunction with the Carbon Trust, WWL NHS FT within this initiative looked to encourage the improvement of the local atmosphere through the reduction of air pollutants emitted from standard petrol / diesel vehicles.

This is managed through the Trust's Environmental Management Policy which has been reviewed and authorised within the standard Trust policy review and implementation procedures.

Air pollution is viewed as a major global issue which is thought to contribute towards premature deaths and illnesses throughout the world. The majority of air pollution in developed countries is caused by vehicle traffic, especially prominent in towns and cities due to congestion. Air pollution associated with conventional vehicles includes Nitrogen oxides (NOx), Particulate Matter (PM10) and Carbon Monoxide (CO) emitted from exhausts due to the burning of fuel. Diesel emits four times the amount of NOx and 22 times the amount of PM10 that the average petrol vehicle. Through the use of Electric Vehicles the organisation has reduced air pollution and associated CO2 levels by 3.9 tonnes for the period April 16 to March 17.

(Estimate is based on 20 mile run per charge for EV users, and the example cars for comparison are Euro 6 standard, the strictest standard for emissions and the quantities of NOx and PM10 emitted. EVs do not produce any exhaust emissions unlike conventional vehicles.)

- 3) *What is the capital AND running (electricity) cost to the Trust (or any part of the NHS or any other organisation) of providing such EV charging facilities and how is this cost recovered (especially when the NHS) and even the public sector in general) since its inception has been struggling financially?*

The cost outlay for such EV charging points across the Trust was c.£7.4k equating to 25% of the overall £29,667 cost that was 75% subsidised through a central government initiative to incentivise the installation of such equipment around 4 years ago.

For 2016/17 the running cost for providing electricity to these charge points was £527.50.

This cost is not recovered as this is not a requirement of government policy to do so. For reference please see web-link below, particularly section 6 Car Fuel Benefits charge.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/620416/factsheet-tax-implications-refresh.pdf

- 4) *What is the Trust's car parking (and charging) policy covering its employees, volunteers and contractors, customers (patients and people visiting or accompanying patients) etc.? Please can I have a written copy of this policy?*

The Trust's car parking policy is currently under its final review process and the current version in circulation does not reference EV's or their use.

- 5) *Is the Trust or any other relevant organization monitoring the use of car parking generally and also Specifically the EV charging facility at the Infirmary and if so what was the outcome of such monitoring?*

Use of all EV charging facilities has recently started to be monitored more closely and will be monitored quarterly and reported to the Trust's Sustainable Responsibility Group, as well as part of the Energy & Utilities Quarterly Review within the Estates & Facilities Division.

Operational usage is monitored by the Security & Car Parking team, and PCN enforcement is utilised should users exceed the 4 hours' time for charging within such spaces.

The remaining questions are relevant if the user or owner of the Volvo car is not a patient entitled to Free car parking concession (as per your website information):

- 6) *What charge, if any, is levied to the user or owner and what is the method of recovering the charge?
Is the user or owner of this car taking advantage (improper or otherwise) of the parking facility to:*
- a) *park without payment (when clients- including those who are disabled, some of who may be living in poverty- visiting a sick relative have to pay for use of the car park);*
 - and
 - b) *Obtain or procure 'free' or subsidized fuel or electricity to charge the vehicle which may be then used for private purposes?*

If there is a direct, indirect or implied benefit in using the car park in the way the Volvo appears to be making use of, both in connection with simply parking for free' (or at a subsidized rate) AND use of 'free' (or subsidized) fuel in the form of EV charging, is the Trust making tax deductions as appropriate and/or has the Trust informed the HMRC as necessary?

The Trust does not charge extra for the use of EV charging facilities, however standard parking charges apply for use of the EV space.

Staff car park charges are listed below:

Staff pay £12, £24 and £36 dependant on location and relative location to office base. £12 is for off-site car parking, £24 for on-site parking and £36 for barrier controlled and reserved parking.

As electricity is not a road fuel, the car fuel benefit charge does not apply to electric charging.

I trust that this information is helpful to you, however if you are not entirely satisfied with this response please do not hesitate to contact the Information Governance Department on 01257 488271. If we do not hear from you within 28 days we will assume that we have been able to accommodate your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Foster', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Foster
Chief Executive

PLEASE NOTE:

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including any non-commercial research you are doing and for the purposes of news reporting. Any other reuse, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder. You must ensure you gain their permission before reproducing any third party information.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, you should write to: Information Governance Department, Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust, Wrightington Hospital, Hall Lane, Appley Bridge, Wigan, WN6 9EP

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF