

For the Record – Press Statements

Publication	Dudley
Date of article	2 nd October 2013
Reporter	Martyn Smith
Headline	'CASHING IN ON THE DISABLED'
First paragraph/s of article	<p>DUDLEY hospital chiefs have hit back in a row over parking fees which a campaigner claims break anti-discrimination law.</p> <p>Disabled former football manager Steve Daniels from Netherton has slammed bosses at Russells Hall Hospital for charging blue badge holders the same as able-bodied motorists for parking.</p>
Press enquiry	<p>The Dudley News has contacted the Trust about parking charges for disabled blue badge holders.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the hospital charge the same fees for blue badge holders and able-bodied drivers? • In the light of the conditions of the Equality Act 2010, and the recent decisions by other Trusts to alter their charges for disabled drivers after legal action, does the Trust feel any obligation to charge disabled drivers less, if it does not do so already? • Does the Trust agree that disabled people take longer to get to and from the hospital buildings and many have no option to use a private car because their disabilities make using public transport impossible? If so, does the Trust agree it would be unfair to charge disabled people the same as able-bodied drivers? • Who sets parking charges at the hospital? • Does the Trust own the car park or lease it from a private landlord?
Trust response	
<p>COMMENT FROM PAULA CLARK, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE DUDLEY GROUP NHS FOUNDATION TRUST</p>	

The Dudley Group is in a contractual relationship with our Private Finance Initiative (PFI) partners in the running and funding of our car parks. There are no plans to change parking charges or who they apply to at this time.

Blue badge holders are not treated less favourably than non-disabled drivers and are subject to the same car parking charges. The Trust complies with the government requirement to provide spaces for blue badge holders.

We acknowledge that blue badge holders can face more difficulty in reaching their destination and so blue badge parking bays are provided near to our buildings and entrances to minimise the distance involved. Non-disabled drivers have to park further away from the entrances. There are also drop-off points located at each of our main entrances allowing people to be dropped off as close to their destination as possible.

Although public transport is often not an option for blue badge holders, there is the alternative of non-emergency hospital transport which can be arranged for those patients whose medical condition prevents them from getting to and from hospital. Arrangements for this can be made by a patient's GP or by staff in the department a patient is visiting.

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