

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

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Your Ref: JH/JT
Our Ref: COR/3120/2020
Date: 6th October 2020

Dear Jim,

Thank you for your letter of 24 September 2020 setting out a recent motion passed by Belfast City Council. In the motion the Council has asked for a review of the categories of acute conditions that currently can avail of free car parking to ensure access to those patients most in need.

The Department's policy on car parking provision and management in the Health and Social Care (HSC) sector for Northern Ireland was published in 2012 and sets the direction for car park management including charging.

This includes the criteria for the provision of free and concessionary parking for patients on the following care paths: radiotherapy, chemotherapy, renal dialysis, and critical care/high dependency. Furthermore HSC Trusts can exercise discretion to apply the eligibility criteria in other situations where the duration and/or frequency of visits lead to significant charges incurred by patients or relatives. Full details on the provision of free and concessionary parking are attached in an Appendix to this letter.

Patients can also avail of the *Hospital Travel Costs Scheme* which helps people on a low income or income-based benefits who may be entitled to reclaim car parking charges or other travel expenses for hospital treatment.

Information surrounding parking measures, including charges and concessions can be found on each HSC Trust internet site. Eligible service users are encouraged to channel their request for concessionary car parking through the Ward Sister/Nurse.

As the policy provides HSC Trusts with the scope to exercise discretion in providing free car parking, I have no plans to review my Department's policy on car parking provision at this time.

Yours sincerely

Robin Swann MLA
Minister of Health