

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee

18th Meeting, 2023 (Session 6), Wednesday
6 December 2023

PE2041: Exempt community healthcare staff from parking charges

Petitioner	John Ronald
Petition summary	Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to encourage local authorities to exempt staff working at community healthcare facilities and who don't have access to free on-site staff parking from on-street parking charges and allow them to care for vulnerable and sick people in our country without it costing them thousands of pounds per year.
Webpage	https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE2041

Introduction

1. This is a new petition that was lodged on 3 August 2023.
2. A full summary of this petition and its aims can be found at **Annexe A**.
3. A SPICe briefing has been prepared to inform the Committee's consideration of the petition and can be found at **Annexe B**.
4. Every petition can collect signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 275 signatures have been received on this petition.
5. The Committee seeks views from the Scottish Government on all new petitions before they are formally considered. A response has been received from the Scottish Government and is included at **Annexe C** of this paper.

Action

The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take on this petition.

Clerk to the Committee

Annexe A

PE2041: Exempt community healthcare staff from parking charges

Petitioner

John Ronald

Date lodged

3 August 2023

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to encourage local authorities to exempt staff working at community healthcare facilities and who don't have access to free on-site staff parking from on-street parking charges and allow them to care for vulnerable and sick people in our country without it costing them thousands of pounds per year.

Previous action

I have contacted my local MSPs.

I have also contacted NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and local councillors.

Background information

I work alongside nurses, social workers, health visitors, doctors, admin staff, cleaners and other vital staff within a community health building, which is surrounded by parking meters. Parking charges have increased dramatically to £6 per hour. This means staff pay £48 when working an eight-hour shift. Working a 5 day week, this comes to around £11,520 per year – equivalent to nearly half of the salary of some staff.

We are living through a cost-of-living crisis.

We clapped for our emergency workers, we cheered them on through a pandemic, but now the council and government charge them to care for sick, elderly, and vulnerable people. Community staff need to use their cars but are being punished financially for carrying out their roles. A simple solution would be to provide permits exempting them from charges.

Annexe B

The logo for SPICe, featuring the text 'SPICe' in white on a purple-to-blue gradient background.

The Information Centre
An t-Ionad Fiosrachaidh

Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on petition PE2041: Exempt community healthcare staff from parking charges, lodged by John Ronald.

Brief overview of issues raised by the petition

This petition is calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to encourage local authorities to exempt staff working at community healthcare facilities and who don't have access to free on-site staff parking from on-street parking charges and allow them to care for vulnerable and sick people in our country without it costing them thousands of pounds per year.

Background

On street parking

Local authorities can levy charges for parking in council owned or operated off-street car parks and on-street parking places under the provisions of Part IV of the [Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984](#) ("the 1984 Act"). Prices for the use of local authority owned or managed off-street car parks are set by Order, made under Section 35(1) of the 1984 Act. Similarly, prices for parking in chargeable on-street parking spaces are also set by Order, made under the provisions of Section 46 of the 1984 Act.

The level of charges for both on-street parking places and local authority owned or managed off-street car parks are a matter for the local authority concerned.

Blue Badge holders are the only people exempt from paying for on-street parking. This exemption is set out in the [Local Authorities' Traffic Orders \(Exemptions for Disabled Persons\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2000](#).

Reimbursement for parking

NHS Scotland has issued [Guidance on Reimbursement of 'Out of Pocket' Expenses for Volunteers within NHS Scotland](#) this states:

“Volunteers should be encouraged to use public transport to and from their place of volunteering where possible, in accordance with guidance around the use of public transport which may be in place at the time. Reimbursement of the costs of travel tickets, car parking charges, toll charges, bus, underground, ferry or taxi fares (where prior approval for use of a taxi has been given) should also be made. Appropriate receipts, used tickets or ticket stubs must be submitted with a claim.”

In relation to NHS staff being able to claim for parking this is covered in the policies of each Health Board. For example, [NHS Tayside's Staff Travel & Accommodation Policy](#) states:

“The Board will reimburse all expenses for car parking costs incurred whilst travelling on Board business away from the employee's normal place of work. Claims must be made using eExpenses and supported by receipts. Where no receipt is available, a note to that effect is required in eExpenses.”

Scottish Government action

Parking at NHS hospitals

In September 2008, the Scottish Government announced that car park charges would be abolished at NHS hospitals in Scotland on 31 December 2008. In relation to staff parking [CEL 1 \(2008\) - Revised guidance on hospital car park charging](#) states:

“It is clear that there has to be a balance between the needs of patients, the public and staff in the use of the limited parking spaces at many hospital sites. Striking this balance is not always easy. While priority must go to safeguarding access for patients, Boards must ensure through staff partnership arrangements that the circumstances of staff who have specific transport needs are considered”.

In 2021, the [Scottish Government announced hospital parking charges are set to end permanently in Scotland](#) after agreements were reached to buy out two car parks in Glasgow and Dundee operated through PFI (private finance initiative) schemes. It also stated that negotiations were progressing to take over the last remaining PFI car park in Scotland at Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.

Scottish Parliament action

The Health Social Care and Sport Committee has [received correspondence from the Scottish Government in relation to hospital car park charges](#) and it has also been the subject of parliamentary questions such as S6W-02333.

Lizzy Burgess and Alan Rehfisch
SPICe Researchers

31/08/2023

The purpose of this briefing is to provide a brief overview of issues raised by the petition. SPICe research specialists are not able to discuss the content of petition briefings with petitioners or other members of the public. However, if you have any comments on any petition briefing you can email us at spice@parliament.scot

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in petition briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

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Annexe C

Scottish Government submission of 7 November 2023

PE2041/A: Exempt community healthcare staff from parking charges

Please accept my apologies for providing a response to this petition at such a late date.

I can advise you that this is not a matter that the Scottish Government can intervene in.

Local authorities are responsible for setting parking charges on all property they own. They are also responsible for determining who is exempt from such charges.

As you know, local authorities are independent bodies with their own powers and responsibilities separate from the Scottish Government. Local and national government have committed to respecting each other's democratic mandates as part of the Verity House Agreement in order that we can work together more effectively to improve the lives of the people of Scotland.

Once again, please accept my apologies for the delay in providing this response. I do hope, however this reply is of some assistance.

Yours sincerely

JOE FITZPATRICK MSP
MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPOWERMENT AND
PLANNING