

Our Open Letter on new parking system at Beeches Green Health Clinic - to PropCo and ParkingEye

Written by Administrator

Saturday, 16 July 2016 12:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 16 July 2016 12:59

Dear PropCo and Parking Eye, [the former manages land at NHS sites, the latter is the company contracted to run parking systems at Beeches Green]

Re: Installation of number plate recognition equipment at Beeches Green Health Centre in Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 4BH.

We are a Stroud-based community action group and we have received a number of complaints regarding the new parking system at Beeches Green. We have sent the following to PropCo and Parking Eye.

We would like to register our disapproval – we believe the new system is unnecessary and is resulting in unfair and unjustifiable impacts. Neither patients nor people who work in NHS/Social Care at the site should be forced to pay to park.

Staff in the various facilities at Beeches Green report many patients – daily - complaining of confusion regarding the use of the registration machines, many unsure if they are meant to be paying or registering for free parking. The signs are complicated and the two sections of car park (free/paid) are not clearly defined as separate - those with literacy problems may have difficulty with the signs (1% of the population are illiterate and 4% severely dyslexic). Many patients have paid unnecessarily due to fear of charges from Parking Eye and many more have simply not realised that they had to register, resulting in fines. For a several weeks, the pay machines were broken – with several people being fined as a result due to their not having access to the mobile phone app which was presented as the only alternative way to pay.

We have spoken to members of staff who tell us that they had never received reports of patients being unable to park under the previous system, though parking was sometimes difficult. When parking became difficult in the past, the caretaker was very successful in preventing non-NHS users from leaving their cars at the site.

The new system does not only prevent non-NHS users, but also excludes users and staff of services relating to the new Redwood building and the mammography unit. Previously, many of the people working in this new building were able to park within other parts of the estate. As a part of the NHS, users and staff of the breast screening unit were also able to park for free. Now we have a system where staff and users of some – but not all – NHS and social care services have to pay to park. This has led, amongst other things, to the breast-screening unit moving to a site further from the town centre, creating inconvenience and confusion for those accessing the services.

We request answers to the following queries:

Please can we have sight of the impact assessment carried out prior to installation of the new system?

Please can you explain why those using the Blue Badge scheme have to pay for parking when they use NHS services not within the older health centre or podiatry unit?

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Please can you clarify the legal basis for escalation of parking charges (a £100 charge is threatened if £60 is not paid in the first two weeks)? Can you confirm that it is the case that the number plate recognition cameras/computer will record length of stay and that fines should be comparable to the applicable rate for parking?

Please can you provide details of the cost of the installation and its up-keep vs the cost of using a car park attendant?

Yours sincerely,

Stroud Against The Cuts