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**OUT OF  
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THE HIDDEN COST OF  
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CAR PARKING**

**WE ARE  
MACMILLAN.  
CANCER SUPPORT**



Almost one in five cancer patients who have experienced extra costs as a result of their diagnosis have been forced to cut back on everyday essentials such as buying food.

## A cancer diagnosis can be expensive, making the toughest fight of someone's life even harder.

Macmillan's research has revealed the true scale of the financial burden faced by people living with cancer, with four in five people £570 a month worse off, on average, because of their diagnosis.<sup>1</sup>

Our research shows that, of those cancer patients who have experienced extra costs as a consequence of their diagnosis, almost 1 in 5 have been forced to cut back on everyday essentials such as buying food. What's more, 1 in 20 have skipped meals to save money, and nearly 1 in 12 are scared of losing their home.<sup>2</sup>

# Why hospital car parking?

The most common additional costs facing people living with cancer are travelling to and from hospital, or getting to other healthcare appointments.

Many cancer patients receive treatments such as chemotherapy and radiotherapy as outpatients, rather than staying in hospital as inpatients. This saves money for hospitals as it is cheaper to look after a patient who doesn't stay overnight. Yet cancer patients making frequent trips to hospital for treatment can be left out of pocket as their travel expenses mount up.

**Amongst those paying for travel to and from appointments in the UK, the average cost is £170 a month, with another almost £40 going on car parking charges alone.**

Macmillan has been campaigning to get rid of hospital car parking charges for cancer patients across the UK. As a result, the vast majority of hospitals in Scotland and Wales now provide free parking. And in Northern Ireland, parking is free for chemotherapy and radiotherapy patients.

In 2010 the government issued guidance stating that hospitals in England should offer free or, at the very least, reduced price parking to patients who make regular visits to hospital. However some NHS trusts in England have failed to fully implement this guidance, meaning many cancer patients still face the burden of hospital parking charges.



On average, the daily cost of hospital car parking is

**£7.66**

# The parking charges lottery

We surveyed all NHS trusts in England who provide acute adult cancer services to find out about the car parking policies at their hospital sites.<sup>3</sup> This revealed huge variations in the price and availability of concessions for cancer patients in England.

Of trusts that responded, only 41% of hospitals with a car park provide free parking for all cancer patients. This means 59% of hospitals are still charging at least some cancer patients to use the car park. And, where hospitals do charge, cancer patients could be paying up to £3 an hour to park.

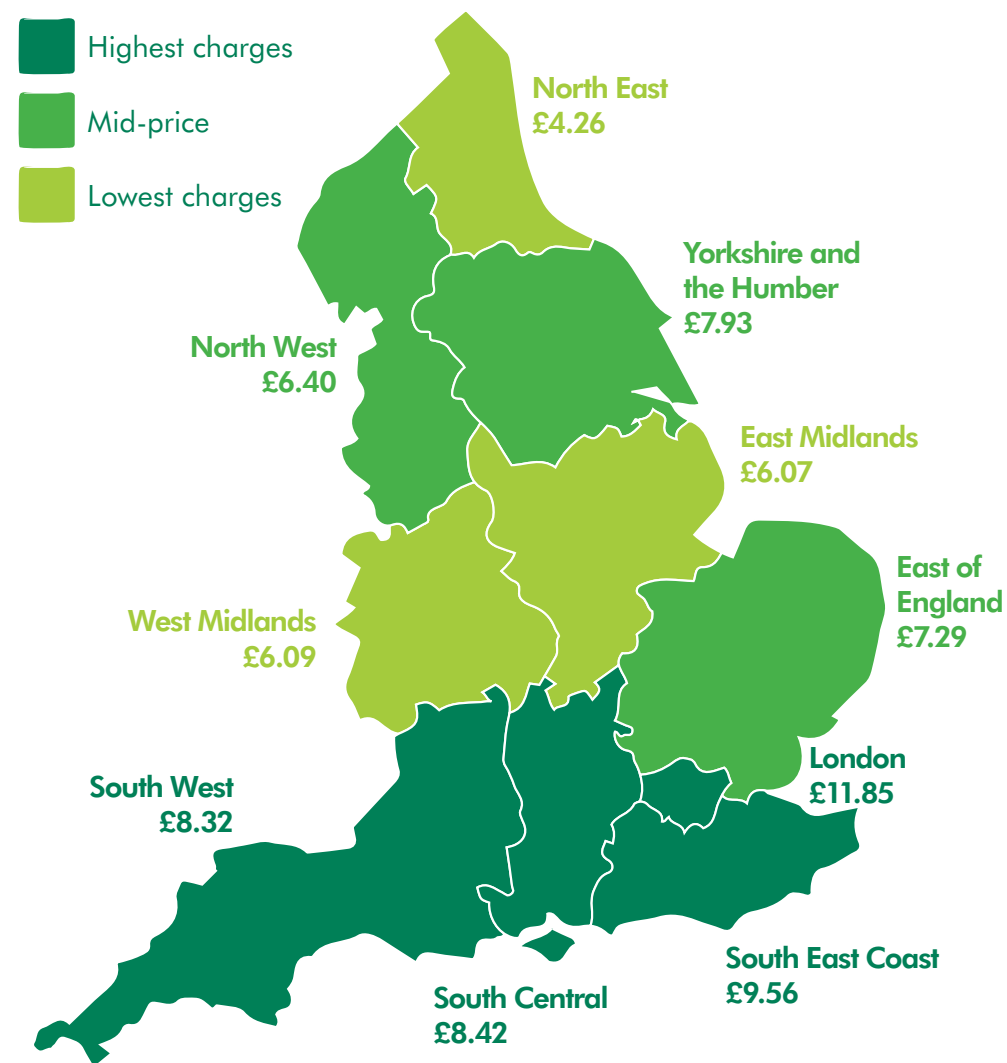
**If the NHS is to remain free at the point of access, this situation must change. Macmillan is campaigning for all hospitals to remove car parking charges for cancer patients.**

Some hospitals charge by the hour while others operate daily or weekly maximum price caps. A daily price cap can help to reduce parking costs for patients who are receiving treatment or attending long appointments.

The average daily maximum cost is £7.66, but daily parking charges can be over three times this amount. Where weekly price caps exist, these average £14 a week but we found some hospitals who were charging as much as £72 for a weekly parking ticket.

Worryingly, 10% of hospitals have failed to implement any of the government's guidance. These hospitals offer no discount schemes, and continue to charge cancer patients the full cost of parking.

## Average daily cost of hospital parking in England



Average daily maximum cost of car parking in England, excluding discounted tickets. Regions shown in the map above are Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) which were current at the time of our research in December 2012. SHAs are the same as government office regions – except that the large South East England region is split into two: South Central, and South East Coast.



# Discount schemes need to do more

Whilst 59% of hospitals with a car park in England still charge at least some cancer patients to park, most do operate discount schemes. However, our research shows that not all cancer patients are able to take advantage of these.

For instance, many hospitals only offer a discount if staff can identify a cancer patient as being on a low income. Others allow patients to buy a weekly ticket at a discounted price.

A weekly ticket can benefit patients who need to attend hospital daily for treatments like radiotherapy but are often little help to cancer patients who attend hospital less frequently but are treated over a longer period.

For example, a patient attending once or twice a week over a number of months for a course of chemotherapy may find it cheaper to pay the full price of parking every time they attend rather than purchasing a discounted weekly ticket.

**Our survey found 59% of hospitals are still charging at least some cancer patients to park. Almost 10% have no discounted parking schemes and are charging cancer patients the full price for parking.**

As well as the availability of discount schemes, the price of a discounted ticket can also vary greatly. We found discounted parking tickets which still cost up to £8 a day. While we welcome discount schemes for cancer patients, they are not a substitute for free parking. Even with a discount, the cost of parking can really add up for people on a long course of treatment.

Amongst those paying for travel to and from appointments in the UK, the average cost is £170 a month, with another almost £40 going on car parking charges alone.<sup>1</sup> This figure suggests many people living with cancer either are not aware of, or not able to access, reduced price parking and other discount travel schemes.<sup>4</sup> Hospital trusts should take practical steps to make help with travel and parking costs more widely available.

## David's story

'When my wife Lynette was diagnosed with breast cancer, I stopped working to look after her and received a Carer's Allowance of £80 a week. There were times when I spent nearly half of that just paying to park the car at the hospital. I must've spent around £700 on hospital car parking in one and a half years.

'I remember one night when Lynette was taken in for emergency surgery, and the doctor told me they didn't know if she'd be coming out. I drove straight back to the hospital to be with her and spent the rest of the night waiting and worrying. The last thing I needed after hearing my wife might not come out of surgery was to be charged £10 to park the car.

'Lynette is back at home with me now and I am a full time carer. I'd like to see free parking for cancer patients – it's unfair that we had to pay such a high price at a difficult time.'

# Our vision for hospital car parking

We would like to see free car parking offered to all cancer patients attending hospital for regular treatment or, at the very least, discounted parking schemes made more widely available.

We are also recommending to hospital trusts that:

- 1 Free or discounted parking should be made available for relatives and prime carers who are regularly visiting or accompanying the patient.** Trusts that charge for parking should introduce a daily and weekly price cap, and offer discounted season tickets.
- 2 Car parks should operate on a permit or pay-on-exit system.** This would mean people don't have to pay for parking upfront, or run out halfway through treatment or visits to top up the parking meter.
- 3 Patients should be informed of parking exemptions in their first appointment letter, and concessions should be non-means tested and widely promoted.** For instance, trusts could display information about discounts on their website, and in car parks, reception areas and waiting rooms.
- 4 Responsibility for informing cancer patients about their rights should reside with a specific member of staff.** Healthcare professionals should also be made aware of free parking schemes so that they can make sure patients know how to claim.
- 5 Where hospital car parking is managed by an outside contractor, there should be a review of charges.** When the existing contract finishes, free parking for cancer patients should be introduced.

## References

- 1** Total cost figure includes additional expenditure and loss of income. Figures based on a postal survey of 1,610 adults with a cancer diagnosis. Fieldwork took place between August and October 2012. The majority (95%) had received cancer treatment within the last six months. Results were weighted to be representative of all people with a cancer diagnosis in the UK by age, gender, cancer type and country of residence.  
[www.macmillan.org.uk/hiddenpricetag](http://www.macmillan.org.uk/hiddenpricetag)
- 2** Macmillan Cancer Support/YouGov online survey of 1,495 UK adults living with cancer. Fieldwork was carried out between 1–16 August 2011. Survey data has not been weighted.
- 3** Macmillan Cancer Support Freedom of Information Request sent to 153 acute and specialist NHS trusts providing acute adult cancer care services in England. Two trusts were omitted in error. 128 trusts responded within our deadline, a response rate of 83%. The 128 responding trusts cover 303 hospital sites. Results presented in this report are based on these 303 sites.
- 4** The NHS Low Income Scheme is a means-tested scheme that provides help to people who are not exempt from healthcare costs, including travel to receive NHS treatment, but who may be entitled to full or partial help if they have a low income. For more information on financial assistance with travel and parking, visit [www.macmillan.org.uk/travelandparkinghelp](http://www.macmillan.org.uk/travelandparkinghelp)

If you're sending this report to your local hospital, please tear out this bookmark and keep it. You could hand it out to family or friends, or keep it for yourself as a reminder.

Cancer is the toughest fight most of us will ever face. But no one should go through it alone. The Macmillan team is there every step of the way.

We want to make sure people affected by cancer are able to concentrate on their health, instead of worrying about their finances. So, we offer expert financial guidance and information on our website, through our face-to-face benefits advisers and the Macmillan Support Line.

Together, we are all Macmillan Cancer Support.

For cancer support every step of the way call us free on  
**0808 808 00 00**  
(Monday to Friday, 9am–8pm)  
or visit **macmillan.org.uk**

Hard of hearing?  
Use textphone 0808 808 0121, or Text Relay.  
Non English speaker? Interpreters available

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CANCER SUPPORT**

# WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

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1

Find out the parking situation at your local hospital. Is your hospital still charging cancer patients to park?

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2

Contact your local hospital trust and send them a copy of this report. Our *Campaigns guide book* has resources and tips to help you – visit **[be.macmillan.org.uk/campaigns](http://be.macmillan.org.uk/campaigns)** to order your free copy.

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3

Keep up to date with the campaign and sign up as an e-campaigner at **[macmillan.org.uk/hospitalparking](http://macmillan.org.uk/hospitalparking)**

Find the campaign online at **[macmillan.org.uk/hospitalparking](http://macmillan.org.uk/hospitalparking)** or contact us at **[campaigns@macmillan.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@macmillan.org.uk)**



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Almost

**10%**

of hospitals in England have ignored government guidance completely and continue to charge cancer patients the full price for parking.

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The average daily cost of using a hospital car park is

**£7.66**

but the situation is a lottery. Some hospitals offer completely free parking, while others charge anything from £2 to £24 a day.

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**59%**

of hospitals in England are still charging some cancer patients to park. This is despite government guidance that hospitals should offer free or discounted car parking for patients undergoing regular treatment.