

PE2079/D: Introduce legislation to provide for exemptions in paying medical facility parking charges and to create a new classification of parking badge for care-givers

Scottish Government written submission, 14 June 2024

The Blue Badge scheme in Scotland is designed to allow disabled people who experience severe barriers in their mobility to park closer to their destination. As long as the Blue Badge holder is a passenger, carers can still use the badge to drop off or pick up the badge holder.

The Blue Badge scheme only applies to on-street parking. Off-street car parks, such as hospitals or supermarkets are governed by separate rules. Therefore, the decision to offer parking concessions at these types of facilities would be the responsibility of the relevant health board, local authority, or landowner.

For clinics or medical units without NHS car parks it is understood that any required parking would have to be via on-street local authority run spaces. Should parking charges be higher in locations close to any medical facilities or if Blue Badge spaces are not available it would be appropriate to raise this directly with local authorities.

The administration and enforcement of the Blue Badge scheme is the responsibility of local authorities. A separate concessionary scheme, such as a carers badge, would present significant challenges, including around administration, resourcing, enforcement and measures to prevent fraud and misuse.

The care provided by Scotland's unpaid carers is invaluable. The Scottish Government knows that many are caring under very difficult circumstances especially in recent years, with the pandemic, and now with the cost of living crisis, it has been tougher than ever before.

The Scottish Government worked with carers and stakeholders to develop our replacement benefit for Carer's Allowance, Carer Support Payment, which is being delivered by Social Security Scotland. We consulted with carers, the organisations who support them, and the wider public, to design the benefit to meet the needs of those who will use it. We introduced Carer Support Payment at the end of 2023 in the pilot areas of Dundee City, Perth and Kinross, and Na h-Eileanan Siar (the Western Isles). The benefit is being rolled out to more areas later this month and will be available nationally from November 2024. Carer Support Payment provides income for carers in recognition of their vital role and its impact on their lives and ability to take on paid work. Carers getting Carer Support Payment (or Carer's Allowance in Scotland) will also get extra support from our Carer's Allowance Supplement. Where carers are on low incomes, they may also be entitled to extra amounts in other benefits as a result of getting Carer Support Payment.

It is vital that people know what benefits they are entitled to, and that they are able to easily and consistently access them. The Scottish Government is committed to supporting people to receive what they are entitled to and are working with a range

of partners who have experience in benefit take-up to learn every lesson we can on what works best.

To help individuals, including unpaid carers, access support according to their own circumstances, [the Scottish Government has launched a cost of living website](#). This may include assistance with energy costs, the Scottish Welfare Fund and Council Tax reductions.

Under the Carers Act, each local authority must have an information and advice service for carers which must include information about income maximisation.

The Scottish Government would encourage anyone providing unpaid care to contact their social work department or local carer centre to find out what support they may be able to offer.

Yours Sincerely,

Health Infrastructure and Sustainability Division