

Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Scotland submission of 11 January 2024

PE2041/B: Exempt community healthcare staff from parking charges

Thank you for your letter seeking RCN Scotland's views on the actions called for in PE2041. RCN Scotland supports the petition's call for 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.

The RCN believes that all staff should be able to access safe, sustainable, and affordable travel to work regardless of their role and working hours. The RCN expects all employers to enable their staff to travel to work sustainably without exposure to unnecessary cost and risk. This should include the provision of free onsite parking where available alongside a range of other sustainable travel options.

Parking arrangements form part of working conditions for RCN members and impact recruitment and retention rates.

We are clear that staff undertaking their duties should not be out of pocket for doing so. Where individuals are essential car users, for example because they are required to visit their patients, this should be taken into consideration in respect of the parking facilities provided at their base.

We are of course mindful of the need to expand environmentally sustainable travel options, however in many cases it is simply not practical for frontline nursing staff with a busy caseload to use public transport in relation to both the demands placed upon services and their personal safety.

While larger NHS premises do prioritise parking permits on NHS sites for those who are essential car users, we are aware of issues in some areas where community nursing staff have been unable to access free parking at their base. We would support frontline staff being exempt from parking charges in these circumstances.

Whilst travelling for business purposes, staff will be eligible to claim the cost of parking through the normal expenses process within each board. However, this will mean personal expenditure in the first instance. NHS staff should not unreasonably experience delays for expenses being reimbursed, particularly given the economic environment that currently prevails.

I hope that this response is helpful and supports the Committee's consideration of this important petition.