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## Media release

Communications Department

Tel: 01225 826282

ruh-tr.communicationteam@nhs.net

www.ruh.nhs.uk

### New parking payment system for Bath's RUH

A computerised parking payment system is being introduced at Bath's Royal United Hospital in September, coinciding with the opening of a new 300-space car park.

The automated number plate recognition (ANPR) system works by cameras capturing a car's number plate when entering and leaving a car park. Drivers will pay by coin, card or phone and can also pay by phone and online after having left the hospital, as long as they do so before midnight on the day they visited.

It means some important changes for Blue Badge holders, who will have to log their car registration onto the ANPR database to ensure continued free parking. If they do not register their vehicle they will have to pay the standard parking tariff.

Badge holders can register from Aug 1 by calling 01225 824100. They will also have to present their Blue Badge for validation at one of the hospital's designated reception areas once the new system starts operating.

Parking charges, for the fifth year running, will not be increased. There will be changes to two current tariffs - the £1 for 30-minutes charge will be replaced by a £2 for one-hour fee, while the current £15 five-day ticket will be extended to seven days at no extra cost.

Howard Jones, RUH Director of Estates and Facilities, said: "The new ANPR system is aimed at improving the available parking for all patients and visitors and enhancing their experience of coming to the hospital. ANPR replaces the current system of pay and display machines and barriers and means drivers should find the new ways of paying more user-friendly and, in many cases, fairer and cheaper."

The RUH has worked with the Nimbus disability consultancy, one of the country's leading providers of disability-related advice, to ensure the new system is transparent and as fair as possible to everyone. A public meeting was held at the RUH on July 15 to discuss Blue Badge parking issues.

Martin Austin, Nimbus managing director, said: "We're supporting the RUH to ensure that disabled people are able to help shape the services they use and ensure that none of the changes have a disproportionate impact on them. We are still inviting comments via <http://www.nimbusdisability.com/blog/ruh-bath-have-your-say/> which will ultimately contribute to the Trust's access statement and car park policy."

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The new ANPR system will be operated by the car park management company ParkingEye, which will monitor and analyse parking data and issue parking charge notices in accordance with NHS parking guidelines. An appeals process tailored to the needs of hospital patients will be available should anyone feel they have been unfairly charged.

The opening date for the new 300-space car park and the ANPR system is yet to be confirmed.

New RUH charges will be:

- Up to 20 minutes - Free
- Up to 1 hour - £2.00
- Up to 2 hours - £3.00
- Up to 4 hours - £4.00
- Over 4 hours and up to 24 hours - £6.00
- 7 day ticket - £15.00

Concessions for visitors and patients requiring frequent attendance over a lengthy period will remain in place.

- Car parking charges at the RUH have stayed the same for the past four years
- RUH parking charges are comparable with, or cheaper than, other hospital Trusts in the South West and B&NES council public car parks.
- Parking fees are intended to cover the cost of providing onsite parking, including ownership, maintenance, security and staffing and are not designed to generate profit. Any incidental profits are put back into patient care.