

# Hospital Car Parking Survey

## Review of changes at the Cumberland Infirmary Carlisle

December 2016



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### Introduction

In 2014 Healthwatch Cumbria (HWC) received intelligence from the public relating to car parking issues at the Cumberland Infirmary Carlisle (CIC) and West Cumberland Hospital (WCH). As a result of this HWC set up a Task and Finish Group in February 2014 comprised of various agencies and individuals with the aim of investigating the concerns raised by the public. A short survey was created to explore the logistical and emotional impact on people coming to these two hospitals to better understand the current situation.

The report called 'Hospital Parking Survey' was published in December 2014 detailing the findings of the survey. The report also made recommendations on possible changes and provided case study examples throughout. It was concluded that parking at both hospitals was not 'fit-for-purpose' and recommendations were made to the North Cumbria University Hospital Trust (NCUHT) on potential steps that could be taken to address the issues.

Following the report by HWC, NCUHT undertook work and identified potential areas of the current car parks at both hospitals where improvements could be made.

The main response to the HWC report was to create another car parking Task and Finish Group led by NCUHT with HWC participation. This group began meeting in early 2015. The Trust proposed actions where it could make appropriate and practical changes with set target dates for completion of actions. It was proposed that progress would be monitored by the Trust's Estates and Facilities Advisory group.

At CIC from June 2016 a new staff car park was opened providing an additional 100 spaces for members of staff that were permit holders. For staff awaiting permits they would have to park in the public car parking area and Pay and Display in line with other car park users. There are also plans to create a new car park for staff at the back of the Cumberland Infirmary providing an additional 270 spaces; this will be barrier operated.

Furthermore, at CIC from July 2016 a fixed penalty notice for staff and the public was put into operation should people park inappropriately and/or subsequently restrict access for emergency vehicles. These charges also extend to those parking in disabled bays if they are not a blue badge holder. Monitoring of the drop off area is also planned to be more rigorously controlled and charges enforced where necessary.

At WCH the improvements to the car park are still awaiting further action; however work is needed to resolve traffic flow issues before any changes can be made. This will then allow for a pay on exit barrier system to be introduced without any impact on the emergency services.

To understand the car parking experiences of staff and the public now that changes have been implemented at the CIC a follow up survey was undertaken. As changes are ongoing at WCH this follow up is scheduled only for CIC.

This report details the findings of the follow up survey and compares people's experiences from before to now.

## Methodology and Analysis

A 9 question survey was created to evaluate the impact changes to the car park at CIC had had following on from the earlier report done to investigate public concerns. *See Appendix 1 for a copy of the survey.*

This survey was created by editing and shortening the original hospital car park survey used in 2014 and adding in additional questions on experiences of parking now changes have been implemented.

The survey was made available electronically using SurveyMonkey. The survey opened on the 18th August 2016 and closed at 12 noon on 3rd October 2016. The survey was designed to be quick and short to optimise responses and to quickly ascertain public experiences of the CIC car park now compared to before.

Awareness of the survey was raised by:

- Providing a link to the survey on the HWC website
- Four site visits to CIC
- Emailing all of HWC's contacts
- Advertisement on social media

The survey consisted of 8 multiple choice questions with 1 free text question.

There were 244 responses to the survey.

The survey results were then independently analysed by the research team at HWC. The one free text question in the survey was analysed by a content analysis of responses to greater understand peoples experiences and views; responses were grouped into relevant themes.

The analysis of the free text question captured people's comments about the car parking changes at CIC which provides an interesting insight on remaining issues people feel still need addressed.

### Site Visits

HWC carried out visits to the car park at CIC; this was an opportunity for people on site to complete the survey. It was a chance for HWC staff to further discuss the survey with respondents outside of the pre-set survey questions.

HWC visited CIC on 4 separate occasions, the dates of these visits were:

- 24th August
- 25th August
- 14th September
- 20th September

The site was visited at different times of day to maximise the number of people available to take part.



## Findings

The findings presented below are the findings of the electronic survey which includes the survey responses collected from the 4 site visits undertaken.

### Question 1. What was the purpose of your visit to the Cumberland Infirmary (CIC) today?

Of the responses to this survey question the most common reason for peoples visit to CIC was to accompany a family member or friend to an appointment (36%) or attend an appointment for themselves (35%). Only 11% of responses were from members of staff.

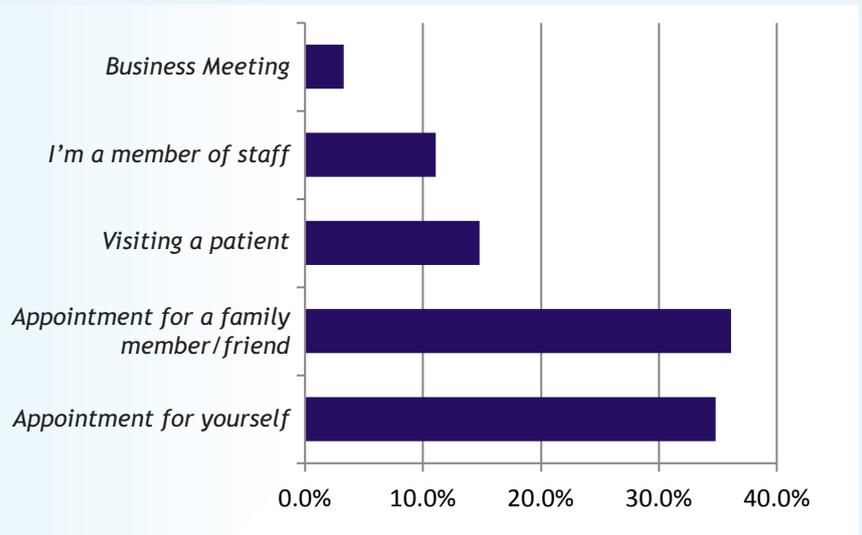


Figure 1. Reasons for visiting CIC

### Question 2. How did you travel to the CIC?

The majority of respondents (89%) when asked how they travelled to the hospital responded that they had travelled by car and parked at the hospital.

During site visits to CIC engagement staff positioned themselves around the site frequently moving around to maximise the number of opportunities there were to engage with people.

In the 2014 car park survey the highest proportion of responses was also from those who had travelled by car.

Use of their own, family or friends cars to access the hospital is still strongly relied upon. As noted in the 2014 car parking report, more needs to be done to encourage visitors to use public transport to help ease car parking demand.

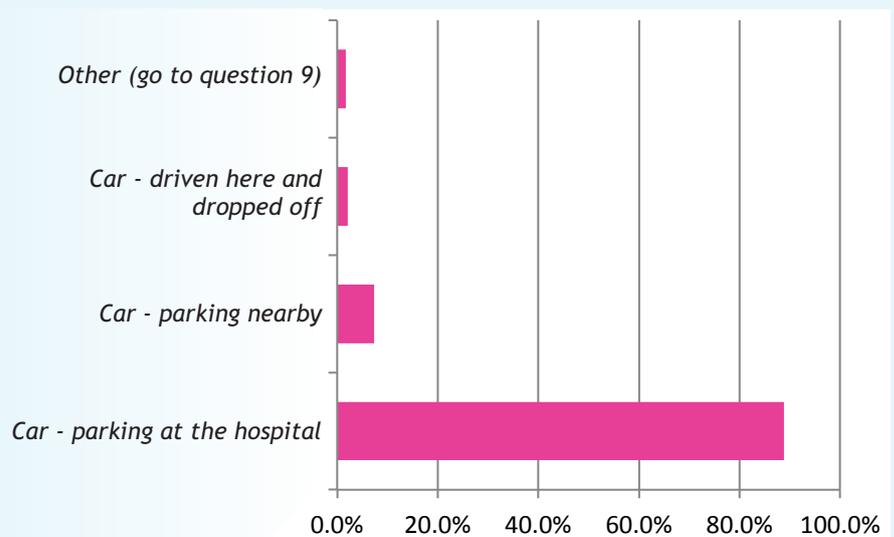


Figure 2. How respondents travelled to hospital

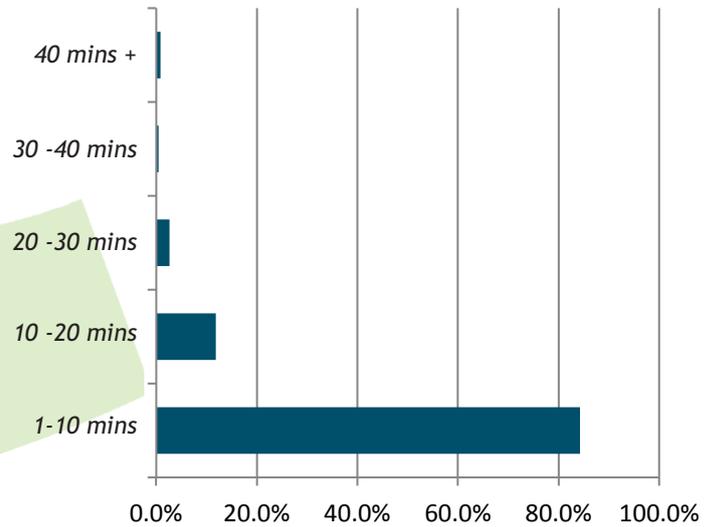
**Question 3. How long did it take you to find a parking space?**

In the 2014 survey only 22% of respondents found a space within 0-10 minutes, most (60%) took up to 20 minutes to find a space and 9% responded that it took over 40 minutes to find a space.

In the 2016 survey 84% responded that they found a space within 10 minutes, 12% found it took up to 20 minutes to find a parking space and less than 1% responded that it took over 40 minutes to park.

A direct comparison cannot be made between the two surveys as they have a different number of respondents and potentially different people responding. However, the findings do appear to suggest that since the changes have been introduced respondents to the latest survey are finding a car parking space quicker.

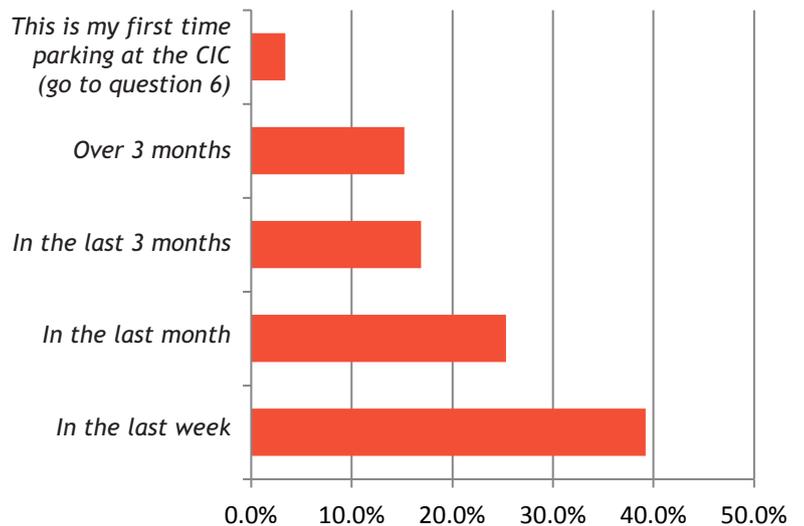
**Figure 3.** showing how long it took respondents to find a parking space



**Question 4. When did you last park at the CIC?**

When asked when they had last parked at CIC 39% responded that it was in the last week. Only 15% of respondents had last parked at CIC over 3 months ago.

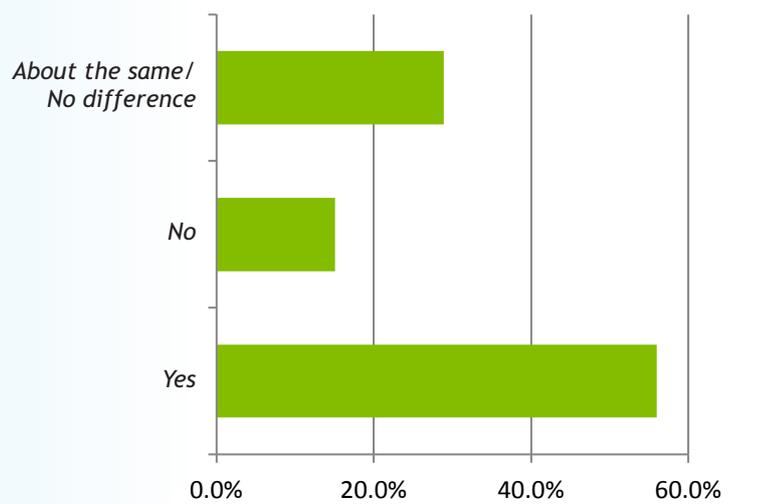
**Figure 4.** Showing when respondents have parked last at CIC



**Question 5. Did you find it easier parking at the CIC today than on your last visit here?**

People on the whole were very positive and stated that they did find parking easier than on their previous visit. 56% of respondents answered that ‘yes’ they had found it easier to park at the CIC on that day than on their last visit. 29% responded that parking was about the same or there was no difference compared to last time. 15% stated that they did not find it easier to park.

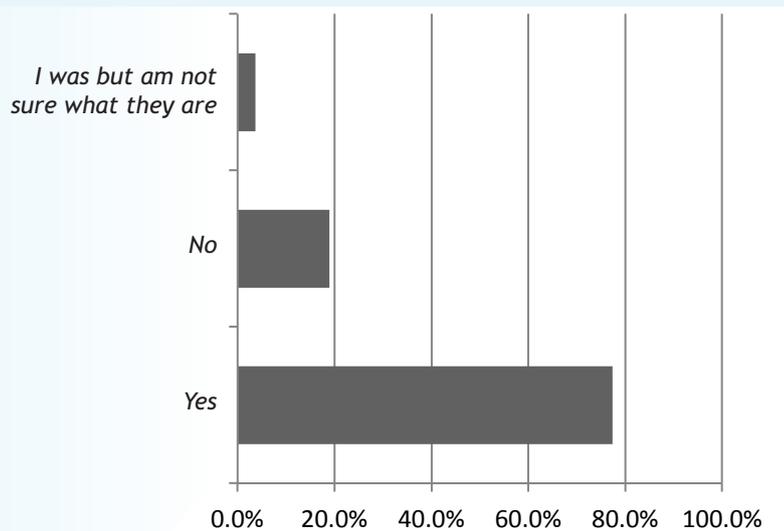
**Figure 5.**  
Showing if respondents found it easier to park on that day compared to their last visit



**Question 6. Are you aware of recent changes to car parking at CIC?**

The majority (77%) responded that they were aware of the recent changes to car parking.

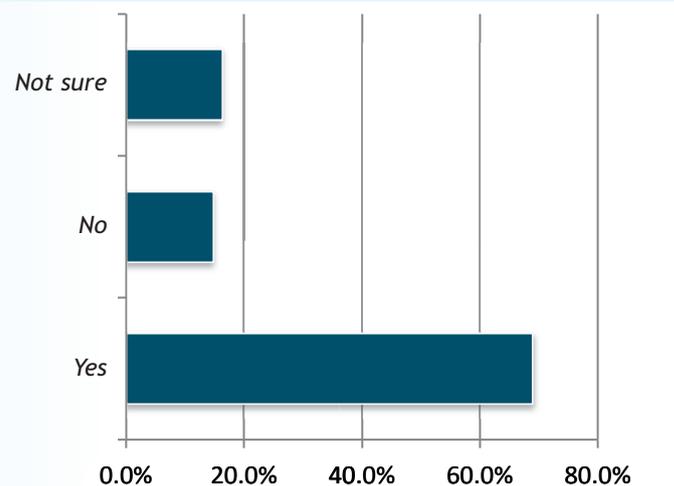
**Figure 6.**  
Shows if respondents were aware of changes to car parking at CIC



**Question 7. Do you feel parking changes at the CIC have had a positive effect?**

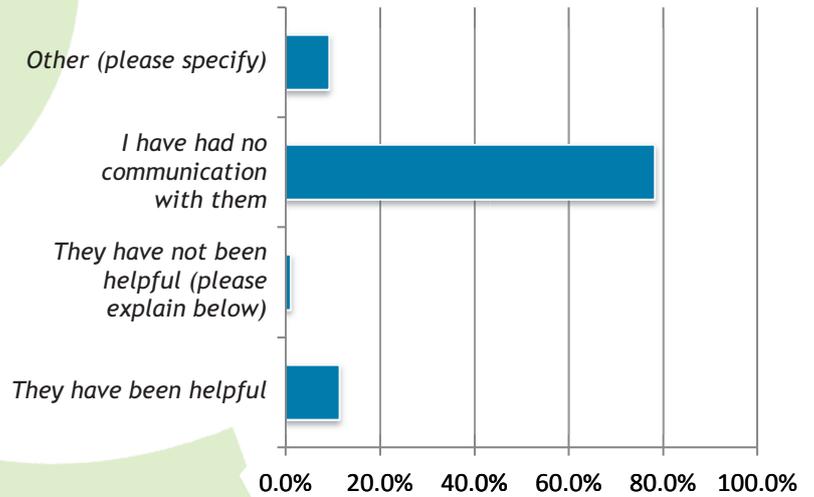
Respondents were very positive about the effect of car parking changes, 69% responded that parking changes had had a positive effect.

**Figure 7.**  
If respondents felt car parking changes have made a positive difference



**Question 8. What has your experience of the parking attendants (UKPC) been?**

The majority responded that they have had no contact with parking attendants. Of those who have had contact 11% said they had been helpful. There were 17 who responded ‘other’. Five of these responses were about car parking ticket penalties, two responded that the parking attendants were “rude” and the remainder of the ‘other’ comments were ambiguous such as “ok”, “absent” and “no problems”.



**Figure 8.**  
**Experience of car parking attendants**

*Would you like to make any other comments about the car parking changes at CIC? E.g. clarity of signage, instructions for payment, information on how to challenge any fees/charges?*

A content analysis of the free text comments to this question were analysed and grouped into the following themes:

- Lack of available information
- Issues with payment
- Confusion over disabled blue badges
- Concerns that the changes do not benefit staff
- Remaining car parking issues
- Changes have had a positive effect

These themes reflect people’s thoughts and views on the car parking changes and provide an interesting insight into the remaining issues people feel still need to be addressed. The analysis also showed that some were very positive about the changes.

**Lack of available information**

Within this overarching theme there were three recurring themes that emerged.

**Signage**

A number of responses commented negatively on the car parking signage, mentioning that greater clarity was needed. In particular better signage was commented as needed on car parking changes, appeal processes and use of disabled blue badges. For example, some of the comments on signage were:

- “lack of signage. needs to be better”
- “lack of signage”
- “signage isn’t good”
- “better signage about parking changes/appeal processes”
- “better signage about blue badge holders being able to use undesignated bays”

## Lack of public awareness surrounding car parking passes

There is a lack of publicly accessible information to people about car parking passes. It was commented that it should be made clearer to all visiting CIC and especially for regular visitors about longer term car parking passes other than pay on the day for that day. Example comments were:

- “could there be a weekly parking permit”
- “don’t advertise weekly tickets”

## Remaining unease about finding a car parking space

There was some free text comments where respondents expressed anxiety and stated they left early to travel to the hospital to find a space not sure how easy it would be. This may be because some people are still unaware of the car parking changes and more needs to be done to raise awareness of recent changes to the CIC car park and how changes have been applied.

For example:

- “before getting there the thought of trying to find a space had caused a bit of anxiety”
- “expected it to be a nightmare. Came an hour early.”
- “was constantly worried on the way here that she wasn’t going to get parked”

## Issues with payment

There were three sub themes that emerged from the main theme ‘issues with payment’.

### How to pay for car parking

One sub theme that emerged from the free text was the issue of having to have loose change to pay for car parking. It was expressed that an alternative payment method would be more suitable. Comments were:

- “pay by card or in notes perhaps a change machine”
- “not happy about payment methods eg card/notes. Not everyone has cash”
- “payment on card on exit would be better”

How long to pay for

A common theme that reoccurred was that the majority of people who responded did not know how long to pay parking for. Respondents stated that they would either over pay, return to their car to top up the payment meter or would be fined. The reason people did not know how long to pay for was due to uncertainty over how long they would be at their appointment for. The solution to this issue that recurred was a payment on exit system and therefore paying for time parked only.

For instance,

- “end up paying for more parking that you need”
- “put in more money than is required”
- “don’t know long to pay for”
- “don’t know how long to pay parking for”
- “pay for time parked and no more”
- “don’t know how long your going to be parked for”
- “how do you feed the machine if you are here and inside the hospital?”
- “what happens when someone comes by themselves and the appointment doesn’t finish within the allocated time?”

## Issues with car parking fines

Another sub theme that reoccurred was issues surrounding the car parking charges. This is an ongoing issue and often respondents mentioned being charged as their appointments overran. Respondents felt strongly about the car parking charges.

- “ticket that was produced... 6 minutes after my ticket ran out”
- “patient was fined while visiting A&E for emergency treatment”
- “charges are a disgrace and a massive burden”
- “should be a warning; not charged the first time”
- “trying to catch people to fine”
- “fined very quickly- need to be more flexible”
- “got a ticket for being an hour over because I was still in my appointment”
- “ran into A&E to get change (no longer than 5 mins) and got a parking ticket”
- “Information on challenging fees”

## Disabled blue badges

There were two sub themes that emerged from the comments on disabled blue badges.

### Use of blue badges

There is a lack of clear information about the use of disabled blue badges from the public and staff. The issue this refers to is what do those with disabled blue badges do if they are unable to find a disabled space and have to use a ‘normal’ space. The query is whether the blue badge would still be valid or would the person have to pay.

- “not sure if people with blue badges have to pay if using normal space”
- “not enough disabled spaces shouldn’t have to pay in ordinary car park”
- “not enough disabled spaces. To say that we are unable to use a ‘normal’ space and use the blue badge is discriminatory”
- “is there a charge on disabled parking”

### Lack of disabled spaces

It also emerged that some people felt there was not enough disabled spaces. However, some commented that it was easier to find a disabled space now the changes have been enforced.

- “lack of disabled parking”
- “should provide more disabled parking”
- “no problem finding disabled bay since changes enforced”

## Concerns that the changes do not benefit staff

There is the feeling amongst the staff and visitors surveyed that the changes to the car park benefit visitors to the hospital but not staff.

- “Patients now have a positive experience but staff however do not”
- “more staff spaces. More staff permits”
- “waiting list for permits means you have to pay which penalises staff. Staff parking hasn’t increased”
- “being late for my shift”
- “grass area opposite the Carlisle Dental Centre for parking?”
- “multi storey for staff. Upset about recent price increase for staff. Not a guaranteed space. I came in an hour early just to get a space. If late because of trying to get a space I have to work longer”
- “Not enough staff parking. All staff need parking permits...seems appalling staff have been penalised when they have been working!”

## Remaining car parking issues

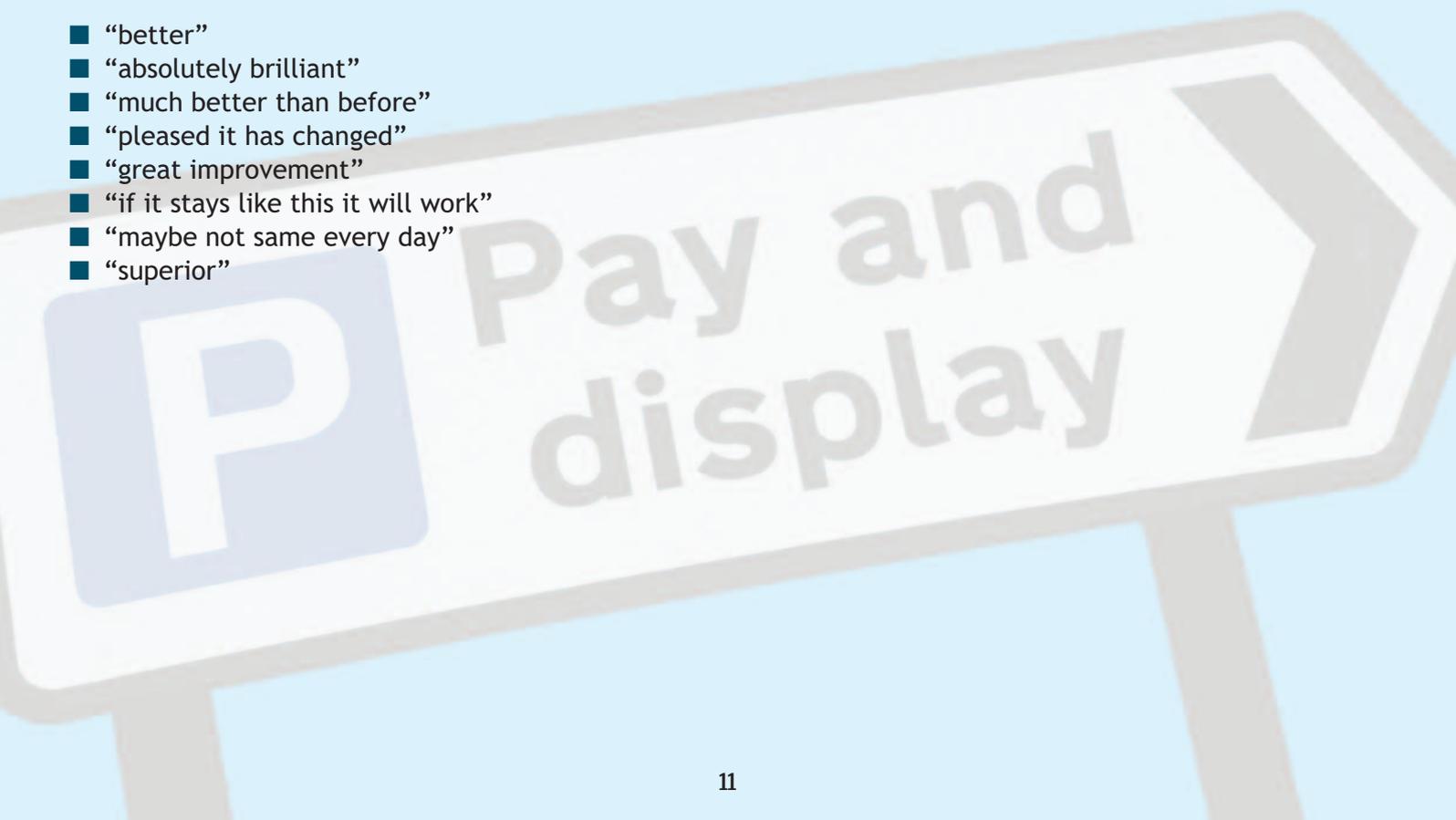
Comments expressed that there could still be more spaces and in particular it was mentioned that a multi storey car park could be created and unused areas surrounding the hospital could be converted into more car parking spaces.

- “more meters”
- “more spaces”
- “no need for all grass areas could be parking”
- “multi-storey” “multi storey would help”
- “empty land adjacent to Carlisle dental centre...would make sense for it to be a car park I think?”

## Changes have been positive

There were many comments about the positive effect the changes to car parking have had, although there was concern expressed about whether the changes will last or if finding a space varies day to day.

- “better”
- “absolutely brilliant”
- “much better than before”
- “pleased it has changed”
- “great improvement”
- “if it stays like this it will work”
- “maybe not same every day”
- “superior”



## Summary

The 'Hospital Parking Survey report' published in 2014 concluded that the parking at CIC was not 'fit-for-purpose' and was having a detrimental effect upon the public and staff. Healthwatch Cumbria made recommendations to the Trust on improvements that could be implemented.

Following on from the improvements the Trust made to car parking HWC designed a follow up survey to determine the impact the changes have made. This follow up involved four additional site visits.

It can be concluded from the latest survey findings that the majority of respondents felt that the car parking changes have had a positive effect and that it was easier to park now.

The free text comments provided an interesting insight into respondent's experiences and views on the car parking changes. The main themes were:

- Lack of available information regarding clearer signage, car parking passes and unease about finding a parking space.
- Issues with payment regarding how much and how long to pay for and unhappiness with the new car parking charges
- Confusion over the use of disabled blue badges and whether they are still valid in a 'normal' space or if the blue badge holder would have to pay. Despite it being easier for people to find a disabled space now comments mentioned there could be more disabled spaces made available.
- Concerns that the changes do not benefit staff with the biggest issue being the lack of available parking for staff.
- Remaining car parking issues. Comments suggested that more spaces could be created by making use of unused land surrounding the hospital.
- Changes have had a positive effect. Many respondents felt that car parking was now much better and had improved.

The car parking changes have made a positive difference; however there are still issues remaining. From the survey and site visits it has become apparent that there are issues still around the use of coin machines on arrival which respondents feel would be better if it were pay on exit and issues with the number of car parking spaces available. There are also remaining issues with parking for staff.

## **References**

**Healthwatch Cumbria 'Hospital Parking Survey Report December 2014**

*<http://healthwatchcumbria.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Healthwatch-Cumbria-Car-Parking-Report-December-20141.pdf>*

**Hospital car parking update May 2016-Healthwatch Cumbria website**

*<http://healthwatchcumbria.co.uk/hospital-car-parking-working-group-update-may-2016/>*

**NCUHT Formal Response to Hospital Parking Survey report 2014**

*<http://healthwatchcumbria.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Response-from-North-Cumbria-University-Hospitals-Trust-re-Car-Parking-March-2015.pdf>*

**New parking options at the Cumberland Infirmary-Healthwatch Cumbria website**

*<http://healthwatchcumbria.co.uk/new-parking-options-at-the-cumberland-infirmary/>*



## Appendix 1



V5 -RP - 17/08/16

### Hospital Car Parking Survey

**1. What was the purpose of your visit to the Cumberland Infirmary (CIC) today?**

- Appointment for yourself
- Appointment for a family member/friend
- Visiting a patient
- I'm a member of staff
- Business meeting

**2. How did you travel to the CIC?**

- Car - parking at the hospital
- Car - parking nearby
- Car - driven here and dropped off
- Other(go to question 9)

**3. How long did it take you to find a parking space?**

- 0-10 mins
- 10-20 mins
- 20-30 mins
- 30-40 mins
- 40 mins +

**4. When did you last park at the CIC?**

- In the last week
- In the last month
- In the last 3 months
- Over 3 months
- This is my first time parking at CIC (go to question 6)

**5. Did you find it easier parking at the CIC today than on your last visit here?**

- Yes
- No
- About the same / No difference

**6. Are you aware of recent changes made to car parking at CIC?**

- Yes
- No (go to question 9)
- I was but am not sure what they are

**7. Do you feel parking changes at the CIC have had a positive effect?**

- Yes



- No
- Not sure

**8. What has your experience of the parking attendants (UKPC) been?**

- They have been helpful
- They have not been helpful (please explain below)
- I have had no communication with them

Free Text

**9. Would you like to make any other comments about the car parking changes at CIC?**

**THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY**  
All responses will be treated in complete confidence.  
The results will be available online at [www.healthwatchcumbria.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchcumbria.co.uk)

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