

Caring for those who care—free parking is not it

December 8, 2020

Focusing on free car parking as a way to “reward” hospital staff is neither equitable, nor beneficial to health and wellbeing, say Harriet Larrington-Spencer and Matthew Jackson



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Labour pledges to end hospital parking charges across England

NHS funding gap 'should not be filled by charging sick patients, anxious relatives and already hard-pressed NHS staff'

Rob Merrick Deputy Political Editor | @Rob_Merrick | Monday 08 May 2017 11:16 | comments



News - Politics

Tories to axe hospital car parking fees for millions



567



Boris Johnson campaigning with his father Stanley Johnson in Uxbridge. CREDIT: ANDREW PARSONS / I-IMAGES

By Edward Malnick, SUNDAY POLITICAL EDITOR
23 NOVEMBER 2019 - 10:00PM

Coronavirus: NHS staff to get free parking

26 March 2020 | Comments



NHS and social care staff will be given free car parking during the coronavirus outbreak, the government has said.

Boris Johnson refuses to U-turn over 'utterly disgusting' plans to charge NHS staff to park at hospitals post-Covid, refuses to apologise again for 'cowardly' remarks on care homes and calls Sir Keir Starmer 'Captain Hindsight' during fiery row

- Matt Hancock promised officials would cover the costs at hospitals in England
- But the Department of Health has said the scheme can't continue indefinitely
- Only 'key patients and staff in certain circumstances' will be able to park for free
- The British Medical Association has criticised the move, yet to be introduced
- And Piers Morgan today called it 'completely ridiculous' and 'utterly disgusting'

By STEPHEN MATTHEWS HEALTH EDITOR and DANYAL HUSSAIN FOR MAILONLINE
PUBLISHED: 09:51, 8 July 2020 | UPDATED: 16:43, 8 July 2020

Clamp for our carers! Free parking for NHS staff will end as the coronavirus pandemic eases, government confirms

- The government initially on March 25 said it would cover NHS staff parking costs
- However, the Department of Health now says that it cannot continue doing so
- Free parking will only continue for patients and staff in 'certain circumstances'

By DANYAL HUSSAIN FOR MAILONLINE
PUBLISHED: 01:51, 8 July 2020 | UPDATED: 01:56, 8 July 2020



CORONAVIRUS: NHS STAFF TO GET FREE PARKING DURING PANDEMIC FOLLOWING PRESSURE FROM CAMPAIGNERS

It comes after more than 400,000 signed a petition calling on the government to scrap charges

Matt Mathers | @MattEm90 | Thursday 26 March 2020 17:54 | comments



Centrality of parking to hospital care

- Hospitals and health services being rationalised into fewer, larger units serving wider areas ([Lucas 2006](#))
- Benefits in centralising services – improved clinical outcomes in some specialties ([Hunter et al, 2013, 2018](#); [Eichler et al, 2014](#))
- Larger units need more land and often located in more peripheral areas
- Increasingly in places that are difficult to access without a car
- Access is more than getting there – cost, time, ease, safety
- Intersectional differences in experiences of access – gender, disability, ethnicity, age
- Lucas et al ([2019](#)) found that 66% of elderly people are unable to reach a hospital within 30 minutes by public transport

The problems with free parking

1. Inequitable
2. Reinforces (and subsidises) the unsustainable increase in private car use and the associated negative environmental and physical health sequelae

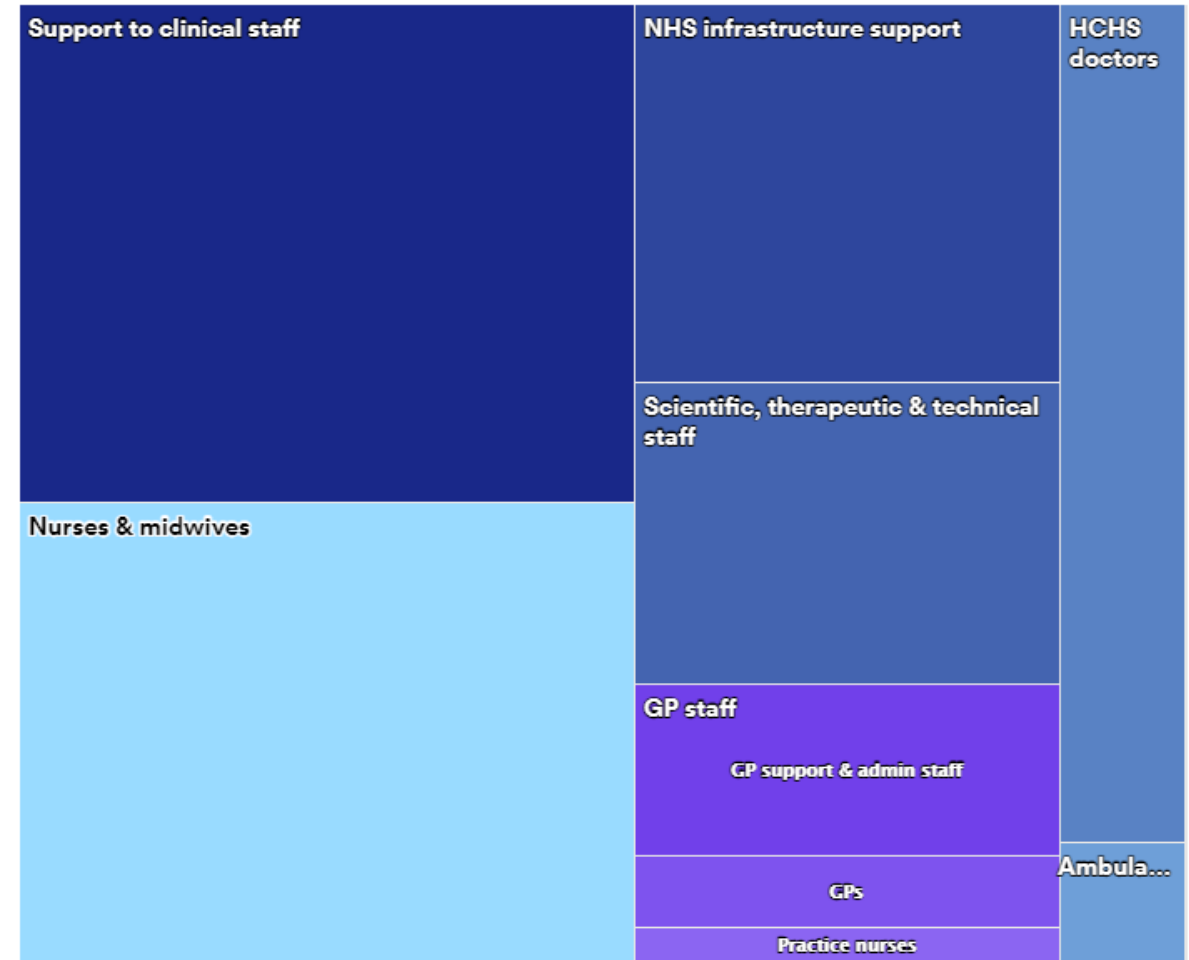


Forced car ownership

- When people have little alternative to buying a car in order to access opportunities, such as employment ([Mattioli, 2017](#))
- As a result of:
 - Geography
 - Temporalities of public transport
- Care work in hospitals (particularly shift work) at the intersection of these
- The consequences of forced car ownership are particularly significant for lower income groups

Forced car ownership

- Who makes up the NHS?
- Includes lower income workers



Forced car ownership

- Who makes up the NHS?
- Includes low-income workers
- A band 5 nurse - £6000 real-time pay cut over the past decade ([Nursing Notes, 2018](#))
- For low income groups, costs of running a car result deprivation in other areas life ([Lucas et al, 2016](#))
- NHS staff most likely to rely on payday loans ([Nursing Notes, 2018](#))
- [Survey of 3000 nurses](#) – 39% skipped meals to feed family/save money
- Lower-income groups suffer most from the externalities of car-centric development ([Cassasco and Lucas, 2019](#); [Lucas et al, 2016](#))

Reinforces and subsidises private car use

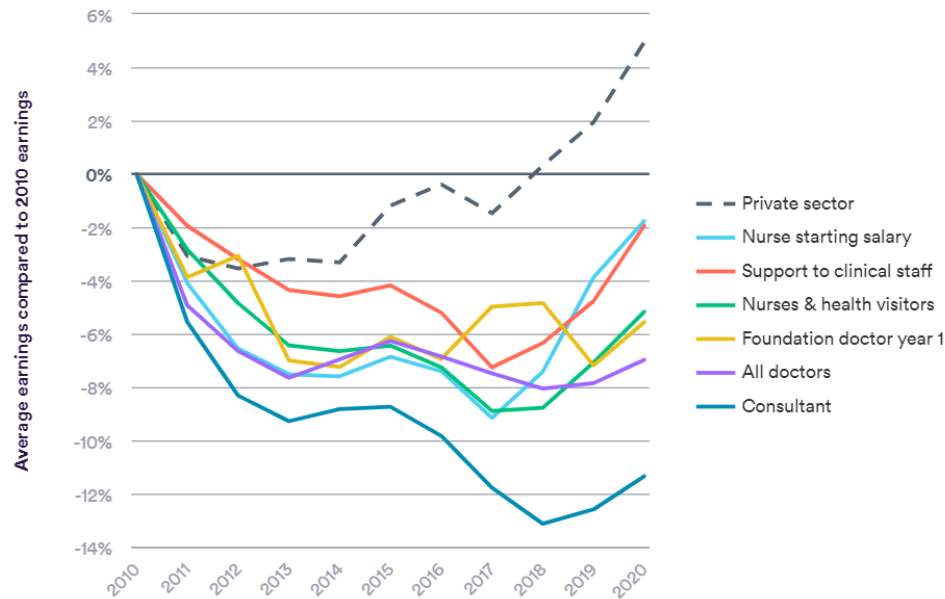
- Free parking subsidises those who drive
- Car and taxi traffic on UK roads [is growing annually](#)
- UK road transport contributes [one fifth of our GHG emissions](#)
- Climate change [expected to have extensive detrimental health outcomes](#)
- Air pollution is the [biggest environmental health risk across Europe](#)
- [Association between traffic related air pollution hospital admissions](#)
- Many UK hospitals are in areas where PM2.5 exceeds safe and legal levels ([BLF, 2018](#))

Sacrifice(ing) & Reward

NHS staff pay and the cost of living 2010-2020

06/04/2021

Chart



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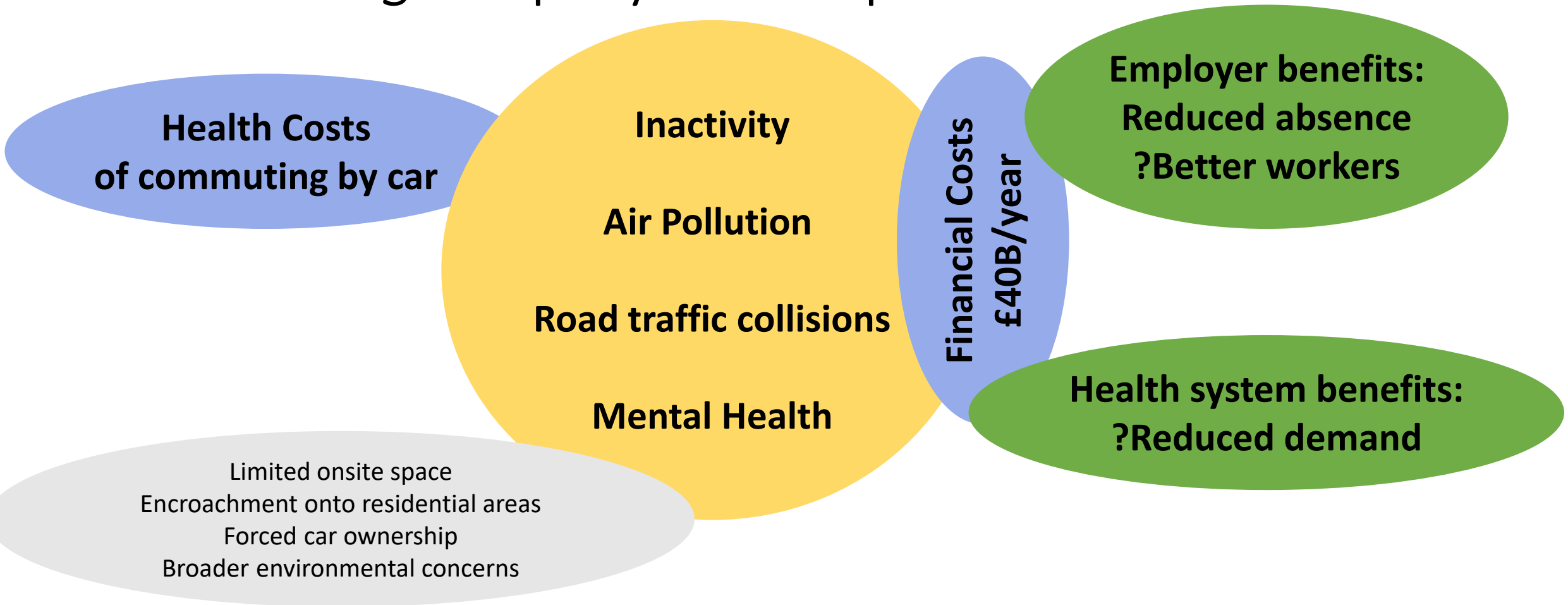
Note: Based on consumer price index (CPI).

- Tokenistic compensation
- Healthcare is special
- Healthcare as a financial transaction

- A caring reward?



Vision for the Future: NHS as *caring* employer and provider



Increase capacity or do it differently?

Caring for Staff—Modelling to Patients

- Hospitals/Clinics as active travel hubs
 - Engaging local councils, business, public transport...
- Physical: storage, showers, tool stands...
- Human: champions, user groups, trainers/mentors...
- Financial: cycle-to-work (removal of forced car ownership)
- Carrot & Stick