

# Workplace car parking management in Greater Manchester

## Good practice from the health and higher education sectors

### Introduction

In early 2017, the Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) Travel Choices team ran a series of workshops on the subject of car parking management with participants from the health and higher education sectors in Greater Manchester. The participants were all members of the Travel Choices Business Travel Network and are committed to encourage sustainable commuting and business travel.

The workshops primarily addressed staff car parking, which was identified by representatives from both sectors as a key element of workplace travel plan delivery. The facilitated workshop

discussions identified challenges faced by organisations in managing car parking, considered potential solutions and provided an opportunity to share experiences and good practice.

This note outlines the key issues and learning points identified during the workshops, many of which are transferable to other workplaces.

Fourteen organisations took part: eight NHS Trusts and five Higher Education institutions. One Local Authority also attended. The participants discussed the parking challenges they faced, which are summarised in the table below.

Challenge faced by organisation	Number of organisations affected
Insufficient spaces to accommodate demand, often coupled with increasing demand for parking	9
Overspill parking on neighbouring residential streets causing tensions with local residents	3
Staff parking is too cheap, compared to public transport	3
Problems with the general public using car parks intended for students/visitors because they are cheap and convenient for other destinations	2
Culture amongst staff of an expectation of a parking space	2
Staff parking in visitor areas, particularly at hospital sites	2
Insufficient spaces for visitors	2
Equipment / technology problems - e.g. getting the right barrier system in place, outdated equipment	2

## Parking policy solutions

The key issue of concern shared by all organisations was an insufficient supply of car parking to accommodate demand. There are broadly two options to address this situation:

- Increasing supply
- Managing demand

The workshops focused on options to manage demand for parking, through a workplace parking policy introduced as part of a workplace travel plan.

A workplace car parking policy provides an objective tool for managing parking demand that seeks to remove subjectivity in the decisions as to who should be permitted to park in the limited number of spaces available.

### Car parking policy development: key considerations



**Whether permits to park are to be restricted:** in such cases, careful consideration needs to be given to agreeing the criteria for permit entitlement.



**Parking for temporary/ contract staff/ volunteers.**



**Potential reallocation of spaces** for example from staff to visitor parking.



**To charge or not to charge:** for parking and who should pay - in which case charging options (price and method of payment) need to be established.



**Hours of operation:** of parking restrictions and charges.



**Future development plans** which may have potential implications for car parking and should be considered.



**Parking off-site:** 'overspill' parking into neighbouring streets can increase when parking restrictions and charges are introduced, causing tension with the local community.



**Resourcing:** However robust the system in place, management of car parking can take up significant staff time so ensuring appropriate staff resource is crucial



**A smart approach to workplace parking ensures there is sufficient parking supply for those who most need parking, making best use of the opportunities for staff to access the site using public transport, walking and cycling, to reduce the amount of parking required.**

## A needs-based approach to car park management

Prioritising parking based on need is advocated by national good practice guidance including:

- The Department of Health's Technical Memorandum (HTM) 07-03 NHS car-parking management: environment and sustainability; and
- The British Parking Association's Higher and Further Education Parking Charter (now part of the Professionalism in Parking Accreditation (PiPA)).

### Who "needs" to park?

The "need" for an employee to be provided with car parking at the workplace is a highly subjective area. Personal values strongly influence the extent to which each individual perceives their own need to park.

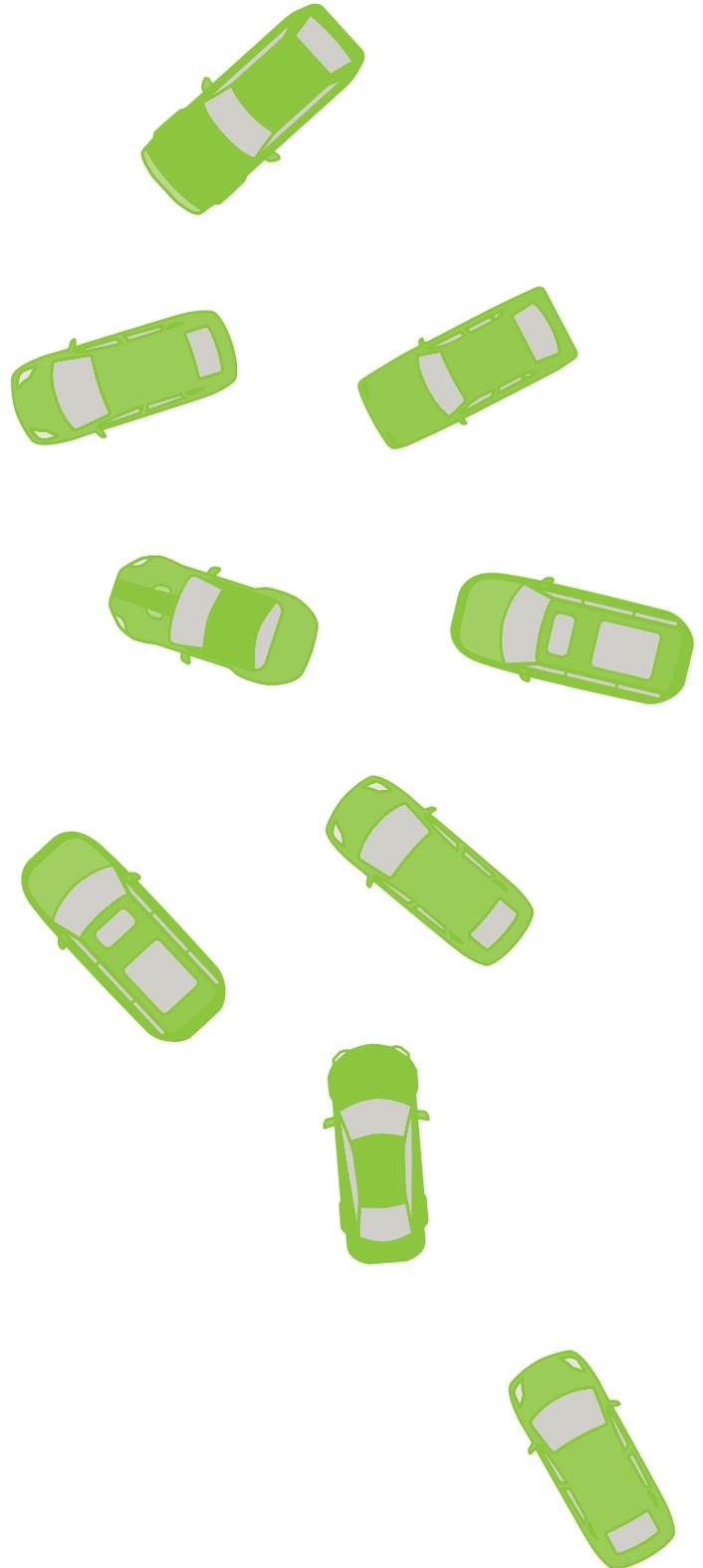
The challenge in developing a workplace car parking policy is to define "need" clearly and equitably.

There are some objective criteria which can be used to inform a needs-based assessment. These include:

- Distance from an employee's home to the workplace
- Availability of public transport options for the employee

More subjective criteria include personal circumstances and operational requirements.

TfGM also provided support to University Hospital of South Manchester NHS Foundation Trust (UHSM) to scope a potential needs-based assessment for their Wythenshawe Hospital site. This report includes some example distance and public transport based permit exclusion zones that were produced for UHSM but which have not yet been implemented.



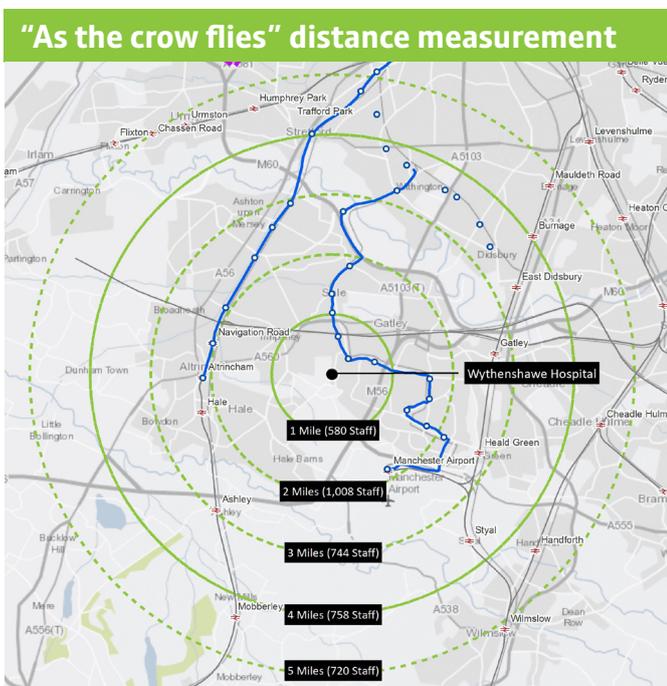
## Objective criteria to prioritise parking

### 1 Distance based prioritisation of car parking

A distance-based approach prioritises parking for those who live outside of a defined exclusion zone within, for example, one or two miles of the workplace, on the basis that staff living in the exclusion zone can walk or cycle to work.

#### Example distance based exclusion zones

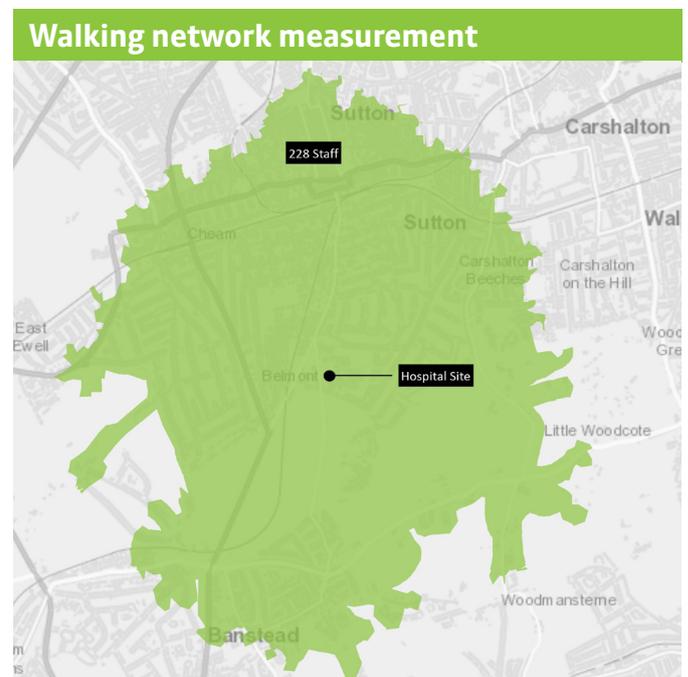
Two example distance based exclusion zones are shown below. The simplest option is an “as the crow flies” measurement where the exclusion zone is based on a straight line distance from the site.



The second option is to define a walking network using GIS tools, which calculates distance based on actual walking routes, giving a more accurate measurement of walking routes available to staff.

‘As the crow flies’ offers a more simple measurement but will not take into account walking routes and barriers to walking journeys, such as rivers.

A walking network using GIS will produce more accurate walking distances between points, but requires specialist software and expertise.



Advantages	Disadvantages	Considerations
Prioritises car parking for those furthest from site who are less likely to be able to walk or cycle to the site	Does not take public transport options into account – a staff member outside the exclusion zone may have a better public transport option	<p>Consultation / liaison with staff is important in order to define:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is a reasonable walking distance? Two miles is around a 40 minute walk – is that reasonable?</li> <li>For large sites, defining the point of measurement on the site is key: it could be the main entrance, the staff member’s usual building base or the central point of the site</li> <li>Exemptions from the rule. Blue Badge Holders should always be exempt from any criteria and should be provided with a space as close to their place of work as possible. For staff with temporary disabilities, many organisations arrange for temporary parking permits on the advice of Occupational Health staff. Other exemptions should be considered and discussed with staff</li> </ul>
An objective criterion which can be definitively measured –staff are either in or out of the zone	May be seen as favouring long distance commuters or discouraging staff to live close to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walking environment – issues such as safe pedestrian crossings and lighting should be considered</li> <li>Site permeability – multiple pedestrian entrances into the site increase pedestrian accessibility of the site</li> </ul>

## 2 Prioritisation of parking based on proximity of frequent public transport routes

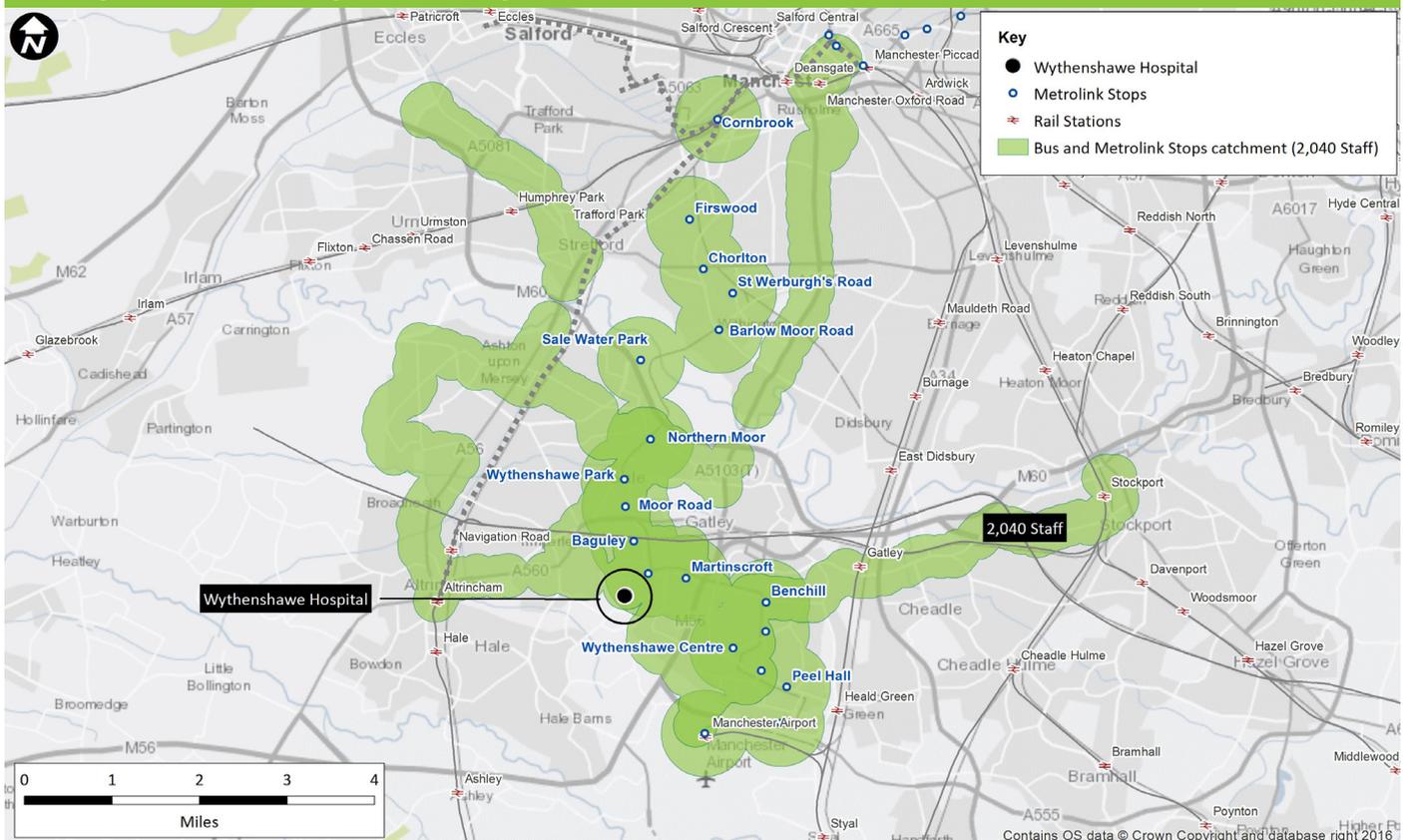
Staff living close to direct public transport routes serving the site may be given a lower priority for parking permits. In transport planning, 400 metres is considered a reasonable walking distance to a bus stop.

For Metrolink stops and rail stations 800 metres is considered a reasonable walking distance.

Understanding the number of staff who live within these stop/station catchments for routes serving the site on a reasonable frequency can help in making decisions on provision of parking spaces and allocation of parking permits.

Advantages	Disadvantages	Considerations
<p>Prioritises car parking for those with no or poor PT</p>	<p>Measurement more difficult, requires specialist GIS tools to plot bus routes and home postcodes</p>	<p>Consult with staff to define:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is a reasonable public transport frequency? Most workshop participants suggested a service frequency of between 10 and 15 minutes, though some thought every 30 minutes was reasonable.</li> </ul>
<p>An objective criterion which can be definitively measured – staff are either in or out of the public transport catchment</p>	<p>Public transport routes and frequencies are subject to change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is a reasonable walking distance from bus / Metrolink stop? Are the 400m for bus / 800m for Metrolink and rail appropriate for your staff?</li> <li>• Exemptions</li> </ul>

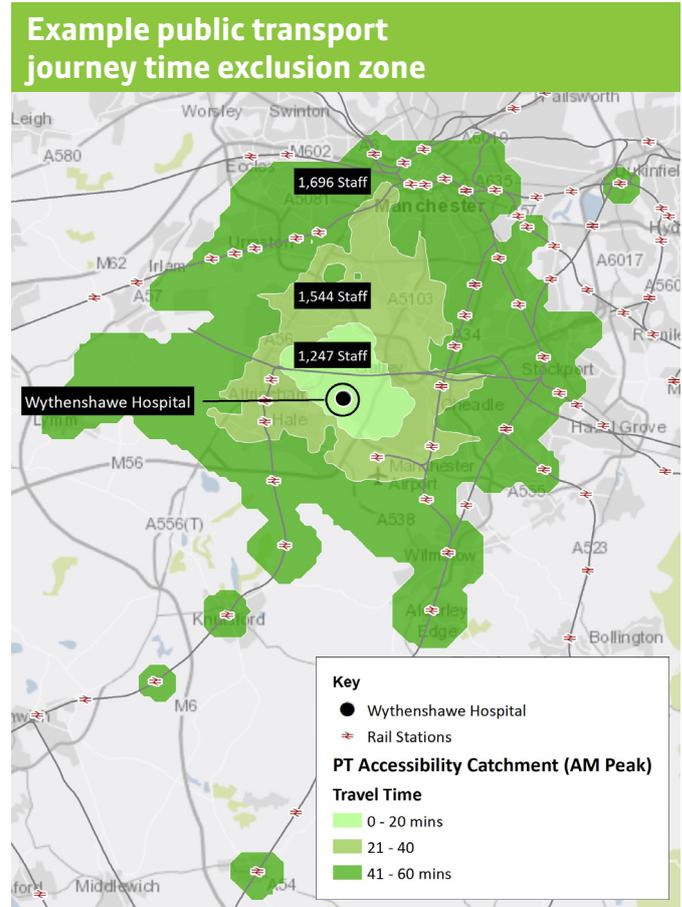
### Example route-based public transport exclusion zone



### 3 Prioritisation of parking based on public transport journey times

Staff living within a reasonable public transport journey time may be given a lower priority for parking. This can be measured using GIS tools and, unlike the route-based approach, would include journeys requiring interchange between bus routes or between bus, tram and train. The same advantages, disadvantages and key considerations for the route-based approach apply.

In addition, there is a need to consult with staff to gain a consensus on what is a reasonable journey time (20 minutes, 30 minutes or longer?) and to consider the “real-life” performance of the transport system, such as delays to buses affected by congestion which can increase journey times for commuters. A staff member who is refused a parking permit on the basis that they can travel to work in under 30 minutes by bus, as defined by a timetable, may experience a journey that takes longer than that.



## Subjective criteria to prioritise parking

### 4 Prioritisation of parking based on operational needs of the organisation

Staff who are required to use their own vehicle during the working day may be prioritised for parking permits. This may include staff who are travelling between sites, making regular business trips and staff who are working outside of normal working hours.

A key consideration in this approach is to clearly define the operational need for a staff member to use their own vehicle and to involve line managers in the decision making process to validate.

Organisations should be wary of over-reliance on staff using their own vehicles (known as the “grey fleet”) for work-related travel<sup>1</sup>

**At The Christie NHS Foundation Trust, a needs-based assessment for parking permits is in place which gives a higher priority to applicants who have an operational need to travel to work by car, which is given more weight than personal circumstances when permit applications are considered.**

<sup>1</sup> Compared to a car club or leased car pool arrangement, grey fleet vehicles are older, more polluting, less safe and more expensive to the organisation. There are also Duty of Care considerations and potential exposure to potential prosecution under the Corporate Manslaughter Act in the event of death caused by driver negligence. For more detail, see Getting to Grips with the Grey Fleet, British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association and Energy Savings Trust, available at: [http://www.bvrla.co.uk/sites/default/files/documents/research/bvrla\\_grey\\_fleet\\_final\\_0.pdf](http://www.bvrla.co.uk/sites/default/files/documents/research/bvrla_grey_fleet_final_0.pdf)

## **5** Prioritisation of parking based on personal circumstances

Staff with other commitments outside of work that require them to travel to work by car may be prioritised for parking.

Other commitments may include childcare responsibilities, caring for relatives or similar.

This approach is very subjective – for example, views on whether parents need to drive children to school vary according to the value judgements of each individual. Establishing the extent of an individual's 'care commitments' is also important. For example, distinguishing between a staff member who is a primary carer for a severely disabled relative from a staff member who pays a social visit to an elderly relative after work. Both may see themselves as having caring responsibilities that require parking at work.

Several workshop participants had introduced permit allocation criteria based on personal circumstances. Key learning points were:

- Give greater priority to staff with children at nursery / primary school and less to staff with children at secondary school.
- To gain acceptance of introducing parking permit criteria, ensure that staff are asked to provide details of their other commitments (such as childcare). This reassures staff that these elements are being considered, even though they may be given less weight in the final decision.
- Offer staff the right to appeal refusals for parking permits, at which point they may provide additional detail that is not collected in the initial application, to be considered by an independent panel who are not involved in the initial application review.

**Manchester Metropolitan University has had a needs-based assessment of parking permit applications since 2009. Applicants are required to research their alternative travel options and provide details of any personal circumstances that may require them to drive to work. Points are awarded for different elements of the application including personal circumstances, business need and the alternative options available for the journey to work. The grade of the staff member is not considered in the review of applications, to ensure decisions are fair across staff grades.**

## To charge or not to charge?

All but one organisation represented at the workshops charged staff for car parking permits. Charging for workplace parking:

- provides income for operating and maintaining car parks;
- supports the objectives of a workplace travel plan by offering a deterrent to driving to work.

When developing a policy that will charge users, the following questions could be considered when deciding on what the level of charging will be:

- **Charging objectives:** the objective of charging may include covering the costs of administration of the scheme, raising revenue to cover travel plan initiatives and/or employing a Travel Plan Co-ordinator; or covering the overall costs of a car park.
- **Setting the charge in relation to alternative travel options:** Setting parking charges at a similar or higher rate to local public transport fares may help to achieve travel plan objectives of reduced car use.

- **Charges in neighbouring car parks:** Setting of charges should consider charges for other car parks in the area. To protect spaces for staff or visitors to a site, the charges should be higher than alternative car parks as they will deter use by the general public. To raise revenue from use by the general public, charges should be the same or lower than neighbouring car parks.
- **Incentives for efficient use:** There may be potential to offer discounted rates to staff who car share, and/or use the car park less often.

Several different approaches to workplace parking charges were taken by organisations that participated in the workshops. The primary charging method of all organisations represented was to apply an annual fee which is deducted from salary each month.

The table below sets out the most common approaches and advantages / disadvantages of each, as discussed by workshop participants.

Charging regime	How it works	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Flat annual fee</b>	Staff are required to purchase an annual parking permit and are charged a standard annual fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Real-world” approach to charging charges the same for everyone: aligns with approach to public transport fares</li> <li>• Can provide a deterrent to driving to work if charges are set high enough.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No discount for lower earners</li> </ul>
<b>Set percentage of salary</b>	Staff are charged a set percentage of salary for an annual permit (typically 0.5 or 1%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher earners pay more, which may make charging seem more acceptable as a policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offers a discount to lower earners for parking which is not available on public transport – therefore low earners have an incentive to travel by car</li> </ul>
<b>Charge based on salary bands (e.g. up to £15k, 15-25k, 25-35k etc.)</b>	Parking charges are graded so that those in higher salary bands pay more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher earners pay more, which may make charging seem more acceptable as a policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some may resent paying more for parking than others.</li> <li>• Those towards the top of each salary band will pay a lower proportion of salary than those at the lower end of the salary band</li> </ul>
<b>Paying according to the emissions of the vehicle used</b>	The amount charged for parking is based on vehicle emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports policies for encouraging use of lower emission vehicles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower emission vehicles tend to be newer models and therefore more expensive – lower earning staff may end up paying more.</li> <li>• Parking is a space issue – low emission vehicles do not necessarily take up less space</li> </ul>

## The value of a pay-as-you-park approach as part of a workplace travel plan

A key weakness of providing an annual parking permit is that users may feel they need to use the permit as often as possible to get value for money. An equivalent is an annual gym membership – it’s only value for money if you go regularly. With an annual permit, a staff member who drives four days a week and cycles one day a week pays the same as a staff member who drives every day.

In the context of a workplace travel plan, a charging system which encourages staff to drive less often would better support the objective of reducing car use, relieving parking pressure.

Development of smartphone technology, flexible public transport ticketing and on-demand transport services such as Uber mean that people are increasingly able to “mix and match” transport options according to their journey needs and be less tied to private car travel. A flexible approach to charging for workplace parking aligns with this shift to a more flexible use of a range of travel options.

There are various ways in which a more flexible charging approach could be applied, which are outlined in the table below.

Flexible approach	How it works	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Scratchcards / vouchers</b>	A staff member buys scratchcards in bulk. When they are used, the staff member scratches off or writes in the date of use. A parking voucher scheme is in operation at Pennine Acute NHS Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relatively cheap and simple to implement</li> <li>• Offers an alternative to an annual permit for those who park less often</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be open to abuse if processes are not in place to prevent multiple use, especially if vouchers are easily copied</li> </ul>
<b>Monthly charges based on access control reports</b>	Access control systems (barriers or Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras) record the number of times a vehicle enters the car park. Staff are charged according to the number of entries, using system data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recording of the number of car park entries is automated, making best use of system reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open to abuse. For example, it may be possible to “tailgate” another vehicle through a barrier to avoid the charge</li> <li>• Likely to require significant admin time to download and interpret system reports and process charges through payroll</li> <li>• An expensive option if access control systems are not already in place</li> </ul>
<b>Rebate on an annual permit</b>	Reports from access control systems are reviewed annually. Staff who enter the car park less often are given a rebate on their annual permit fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above, but the amount of administration required is less</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also open to abuse as above</li> </ul>

## Implementing a workplace parking policy: approach to consultation

When considering the introduction of a new car parking policy or changes to an existing policy, it is helpful to consult with staff, managers and Unions on the proposed changes. This will enable staff to have insight into the difficult decisions that need to be made when developing/ updating a policy, and ensure that they feel that they have input into shaping the policy. The approach to consultation will vary dependent on the organisation but the following could be considered:

- **One-to-one discussions** with senior managers and Union representatives to understand operational car parking requirements of departments, and any concerns that they may have regarding parking policy changes.
- **Group discussions:** A good way to consult multiple individuals at once, but must be skilfully moderated - such sessions can be dominated by individuals and may therefore not be as useful as one-to-one discussions.

- **A survey** (online, supported by hard copy questionnaires): Organisations will need to decide whether they wish to consult everyone (for example staff and students) and whether students should be allowed to provide feedback on a parking policy affecting staff and vice versa. Equally, consideration will need to be given to how much non-car users are able to influence car parking policy.

When designing a survey, consideration needs to be given to how changes to a policy will be presented. For example it is useful to include a statement about the current policy, with questions about potential changes then provided.

Several workshops participants noted that it was essential that staff and student unions are engaged from the outset. A suggested approach was to set out that a fair and consistent parking policy is preferable to a free-for-all approach which can penalise staff who are not able to get to work early.

### Information to collect through surveys for a workplace car parking consultation



#### Background information

Type of site user: employee / student / employee of another organisation

Hours worked

Usual mode of travel to site

Existing car parking permit holder

Typical hours of arrival/departure



#### Views towards 'exclusion zones'

Type of site user: employee / student / employee of another organisation

Hours worked

Usual mode of travel to site

Existing car parking permit holder

Typical hours of arrival/departure



#### Views towards charging for parking

Views on what a reasonable parking fee

Preferred method of charging e.g. annual, pay as you use etc.

Potential changes in travel behaviour in response to parking charges



#### Views towards needs-based criteria

Views on what a reasonable parking fee

Preferred method of charging e.g. annual, pay as you use etc.

Potential changes in travel behaviour in response to parking charges

## How TfGM can help

Travel Choices is a free, expert service which supports economic growth by helping businesses take advantage of sustainable travel options, such as public transport, cycling, walking and car sharing.

Adopting sustainable travel can help organisations save money, increase their resilience, become an employer of choice and encourage healthier, more productive workforces.

Around 600 businesses are already signed-up to the network and benefitting from the following services delivered by the Travel Choices team (pictured below):

- Monthly newsletter
- Workshops
- Access to sustainable travel grants
- Self-help advice sheets and case studies online
- Self-help delivery and servicing plan toolkit online
- CarShareGM matching tool
- Cycle training and maintenance classes

- Pool bike loan scheme
- Cycle Champion scheme

The following extra services are available for businesses which meet specific criteria, such as have 100-plus employees or are based in a key employment area:

- One-to-one individual advice from an expert advisor
- Personalised Travel Plan advice for staff and staff awareness events
- Staff travel survey and analysis service
- Public transport ticket offers
- Travel Champions training



