

*These notes refer to the Hospital Parking Charges Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (c.24) which received Royal Assent on 12 May 2022*

# Hospital Parking Charges Act (Northern Ireland) 2022

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## **EXPLANATORY NOTES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. These Explanatory Notes relate to the Hospital Parking Charges Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 which received Royal Assent on 12 May 2022. They have been prepared by the Northern Ireland Assembly Bill Office in order to assist the reader in understanding the Act. They do not form part of the Act and have not been endorsed by the Assembly.
2. The notes need to be read in conjunction with the Act. They are not, and are not meant to be, a comprehensive description of the Act. So, where a section or part of a section or Schedule does not seem to require any explanation or comment, none is given.

### **BACKGROUND AND POLICY OBJECTIVES**

3. The Member believes free parking at hospitals will reduce the burden on patients and visitors who are already physically, psychologically, and financially impacted by the experience of ill health. Additionally, it will reduce the financial burden on Health and Social Care ('HSC') hospital workers, many of whom the Member notes are underpaid for their work in the health service. Finally, abolishing hospital parking charges will promote equality of access for rural patients and workers who may not have the same access to public transport as their urban dwelling counterparts.
4. Furthermore, the Member considers there to be inconsistencies between HSC Trusts regarding car parking regulation and pricing for patients, visitors and staff, despite attempts by the Department of Health to seek greater consistency.
5. The Act has a single policy objective:
  - a. To prohibit the imposition by Health and Social Care hospitals of charges for car parking.

### **OVERVIEW**

6. The Act has 3 sections and no schedules. A commentary on each of the sections follows below. However, where a section or part of a section does not seem to require an explanation or comment, none is given.

## **COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS**

### ***Section 1 Amendment:***

Specifies that no person may impose or recover a monetary charge for the parking of a vehicle at a hospital upon workers, patients and visitors when attending in a relevant capacity and in accordance with any reasonable conditions or restriction that apply.

### ***Section 2 Commencement:***

Provides for the Act to come into operation 2 years after Royal Assent.

### ***Section 3 Short title:***

Gives the Act its short title which is the Hospital Parking Charges Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.

## **HANSARD REPORTS**

7. The following table sets out the dates of the Hansard reports for each stage of the Act's passage through the Assembly and the date Royal Assent was received.

<i>STAGE</i>	<i>DATE</i>
First Stage	18 October 2021
Second Stage	22 November 2021
Committee's report on the Act - Report number NIA 145/17-22	24 February 2022
Consideration Stage	9 March 2022
Further Consideration Stage	21 March 2022
Final Stage	24 March 2022
Royal Assent	12 May 2022