

Acquisition case study – Q-Park at Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton



Introduction

Taunton & Somerset NHS Foundation Trust was facing major problems at Musgrove Park Hospital due to a lack of parking provision for its staff and visitors. What little parking was provided was of a poor standard, in need of maintenance and lacked the use of modern equipment. Furthermore, a single car park attendant had to handle the operation without any support and the NHS Trust lacked the budget to allow for improvements. Consequently visitors and outpatients were advised to use public transport as opposed to travel to the hospital by car. Local residents were also disgruntled as traffic congestion also affected surrounding streets including main roads and nearby residential areas. The local newspapers were further running regular reports stating high levels of dissatisfaction regarding the parking at the hospital.

Q-Park's solution

Q-Park constructed a new 700 space multi-storey car park providing spaces for staff and visitors. Surface car parks were also reconfigured and improved with a disabled car park being provided outside the front entrance to the hospital. New site wide signage was introduced along with variable message signage (VMS) for the visitors' car parks, keeping motorists aware of space availability. A customer service centre was constructed in a new building also close to the hospital entrance. New barrier controlled parking equipment allows patients and visitors to pay at the end of their stay as opposed to searching for coins and predict their duration under a Pay and Display scenario.



Q-Park also introduced a bespoke permit system to administer staff parking requirements. It provides centralised permit-processing where staff can submit applications and renewals on-line and is linked to the Trust's parking requirements for authorising and prioritising staff parking requests. The Trusts' Green travel Plan is applied through the system with aspects such as car share arrangements being available and payments can be made via Direct Debit.

Providing additional parking spaces alone don't resolve the problem; Q-Park's key to tackling the on-site congestion was to appoint highly visible, uniformed Parking Hosts who provide continuous patrolling of the external hospital campus, guiding motorists and assisting patients or visitors as required. They also ensure that main vehicle thoroughfares and ambulance bays are kept clear. Upholding cleaning and maintenance standards are further part of their daily roles.



Outcome

Traffic congestion, frustration and the stress caused by parking have all been alleviated. Staff, patients and visitors able to park in a safe, secure, bright and welcoming new multi-storey or re-surfaced ground parking areas with the free flowing of traffic, even at peak periods. Q-Park has also been able to demonstrate to the Trust and local authorities that a well-designed and planned park car will play a major role in satisfying Green Travel Plans. A strict PFI mechanism is operated where service standards remain high. A successful and strong partnership relationship continues with the NHS Trust and the car parks have also been awarded the prestigious Park Mark and European Safer Parking Award (ESPA).