

Hospital car park staff to wear CCTV cameras

NHS Lothian have announced that their car parking attendants will now wear CCTV cameras in a move to promote safety.

Staff working in car parks in the Western General, St John's and the Royal Edinburgh Hospitals will wear the state-of-the-art gadgets to prevent violence and aggression and increase security.


It comes after a trial project at St John's Hospital showed that they helped reduce incidents and act as a deterrent to people who know the footage may be used as a "silent witness" in legal proceedings.

A total of 25 cameras are now being rolled out across Lothian to protect a rising number of car parking staff, who are being subjected to verbal and physical abuse from angry motorists as they try to free-up parking spaces for patients and keep emergency routes clear.

The cameras were introduced after one staff member was hit with a walking stick and another had a car driven at them.

It is hoped the visible cameras, which are worn on the body, will act as a deterrent to drivers who become aggressive and abusive. They will be introduced on Monday 23 March with the support of union leaders.

We spotted this atrocious parking last year at the Western General Hospital where car parking is always in short supply.

 Alan Boyter, Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development, NHS Lothian, said: "We have a duty to protect our workforce.

"Our car parking staff are performing a vital function by

ensuring patients, visitors and staff can use our sites safely and receive the care they require.

“Any abusive behaviour towards NHS staff is completely unacceptable and we will do everything we can to protect our employees who are only doing their jobs as best they can and for the benefit of all.”

NHS Lothian began employing staff to help patients park, to reduce missed appointments, and keep essential routes clear for emergency services.

In 2013/14 the number of incidents recorded in car parks across Lothian stood at 81. That figure has risen to 141 over the last 12 months.

They include verbal abuse, assault, threatening behaviour, dangerous driving and violent behaviour.

Mr Boyter said staff in NHS Lothian will also be reminded of the need to park safely on site.

He added: “Some people seem to think that because no-one else is around to witness their unacceptable behaviour that they will get away with it. That will no longer be the case.”

If the car parking staff feel threatened in a particular situation, they simply turn on the camera which causes a light to appear as a warning that recording is in progress.

So far, the technology has been successfully used by general parking attendants, litter wardens and police officers.