



Introduction

There are over 27 million private cars in Great Britain. These account for 83% of the 34.5 million licensed vehicles in GB.

We make approximately 25 billion trips by car each year. Each trip starts from a parking space and ends at a parking space.

On average, each full licence holder drives about 700 trips each year: nearly 14 each week.

57% of parking acts at the end of a trip take place away from home: an average of 39 million every day.

Most parking takes place during the working week with the most popular reason being for work (28%). Shopping, social and recreational reasons total 27% of weekday parking.

Sources: Spaced Out: Perspectives on parking policy, DfT Transport Statistics Great Britain VEH0103, NTS0303, NTS0201

Parking on publically controlled land

Local authorities need to ensure a free flow of traffic on the roads they manage. This is in part achieved by imposing controls on where and for how long vehicles may park using powers in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTA). This Act applies throughout the UK. However, enforcement of those restrictions varies across the UK. Some local authorities in England and Wales have adopted civil enforcement powers (CPEs) under the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA) while others have not – and the situation in Scotland and Northern Ireland is different. About 200 English and Welsh councils outside London, and all those in London, operate CPEs. Others in England and Wales generally rely on the police, using traffic wardens, to enforce parking restrictions.

Under the RTA, charges for parking are not limited but they must be based solely on the need to manage parking. They must not be set to provide a source of revenue for other activities. If drivers disobey parking restrictions they can be issued with a penalty charge notice (PCN). Councils can keep proceeds from their PCNs to finance enforcement and appeals adjudication services. The law acknowledges that in the real world surpluses and deficits may be generated by both charges and penalties and provides strict rules about what surpluses can be spent on.

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Surpluses from on-street charges and on- and off-street penalties can only be used to:

- Make good previous deficits and then meet the cost of providing and maintaining off-street parking.
- If there is no requirement for these then the money can go towards: public transport, highway improvements and maintenance, environmental improvements, or, in London, anything which supports the Mayor's transport strategy.

Those councils rated as 'excellent' by the Audit Commission may be allowed to put surpluses into the general budget.

Surpluses from off-street parking charges (not penalties) can be used to achieve a council's own corporate policies.

Sources: Traffic Management Act 2004, DfT Operational Guidance to Local Authorities, Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984



Penalty Charge Notices

In 2009/10, 7.1 million on-street PCNs were issued in England – 4 million (56%) of them in London. A further 1.8 million tickets were issued for off-street parking.

In July 2007 a two-tier parking penalty regime was introduced to differentiate between 'serious' parking offences, such as parking on yellow lines, and 'less serious' offences, such as overstaying. Penalty charges must accord with legal guidance.

Drivers can challenge PCNs. One third of challenged on-street PCNs (6% of all PCNs issued) are written off on the basis of additional information provided by the motorist, or being incorrect for statutory reasons. It is possible to appeal against a ticket where an initial challenge has been unsuccessful. In recent years outside London, approximately 0.34% of PCNs have been appealed with a 29% success rate. Within London, 1.29% of tickets have been appealed with a 34% success rate.

The appeals service for London is known as PATAS (Parking and Traffic Appeals Service). Outside London appeals are heard by the TPT (Traffic Penalty Tribunal).

Sources: DfT Civil Parking Enforcement Statistics, TPT, PATAS, DfT Operational Guidance to Local Authorities



Parking in car parks on privately owned land

As well as local authority off-street car parks, there are others that are privately owned. Some are for private use only, for example, for a business's employees. In others, the public are invited to park subject to contract law. The private parking industry is not regulated. Many companies providing car parking for payment are members of the British Parking Association's Approved Operator Scheme and are obliged to adhere to a code of practice that has been approved by the DVLA. There is no legal obligation on parking companies to join this scheme.

Keeping the Nation Moving

Facts on Parking

Over and above any charges for private car parking, private operators can legally issue requests for extra payment based on a pre-estimation of loss if a driver breaks the terms of the contract laid out on signage in the car park. Such demands are commonly referred to as 'parking tickets'.

From late 2012 – following the enactment of the Protection of Freedoms Bill – drivers who wish to appeal these tickets can do so via an Independent Appeals Service established by the BPA, but only if the company which issued the ticket is part of the Approved Operator Scheme. Cases concerning contract and other law relating to parking may also be heard in court.

Sources: British Parking Association, DVLA, Protection of Freedoms Act 2012



Clamping

From 1 October 2012 the law relating to towing and clamping was also changed by the Protection of Freedoms Act. According to the Directgov website:

“...[in England and Wales] it will be illegal to clamp, tow away or immobilise a vehicle without lawful authority to do so. Anyone who breaks the law will face criminal charges and a fine if convicted.

“In effect, this will ban most clamping and towing by anyone other than the police, local authorities, government agencies such as the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) and Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) – plus other

bodies acting in accordance with statutory or other powers, such as railway stations and airports. Bodies with lawful authority to clamp and tow may continue to contract out this work to private companies.”

Vehicles that are not roadworthy or have not had their vehicle tax paid may be clamped or towed by the DVLA and VOSA.

Source: Direct.gov.uk, Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

Note: In general, parking enforcement by clamping and removal is unlawful in Scotland. In Northern Ireland clamping and removing is still a legally acceptable activity.

Parking supply

It is estimated that there are between 17,000 and 20,000 non-residential car parks in Great Britain, including those run by councils, commercial parking companies, shops, hospitals, businesses, railway stations and airports, providing between 3 and 4 million spaces.

The majority (92%) of these car parks are at ground level. The rest are multistorey.

Within these car parks 42% of parking is free at the point of use (for example, that provided by supermarkets), 50% is pay and display with the remainder being pay on entry or exit, or contract.

Sources: Parkopedia, Parking Data & Research International



The cost of parking

94% of all parking acts – including those at home – are free. Of the remaining 6%, over 82% cost less than £3 and 50% cost less than £1.

The average household spends £47 per year on non-residential parking. That is an average of £41.50 per vehicle.

By contrast, the amount spent on fuel is about £1,600 per vehicle (based on an average of 8,400 miles per year and a fuel cost of 19p per mile).

In 2010/11 English councils had an income of £1.3 billion from their on- and off-street parking activities. After deducting running costs the councils made a surplus of £511 million. After deducting capital costs, the surplus would fall to £358 million.

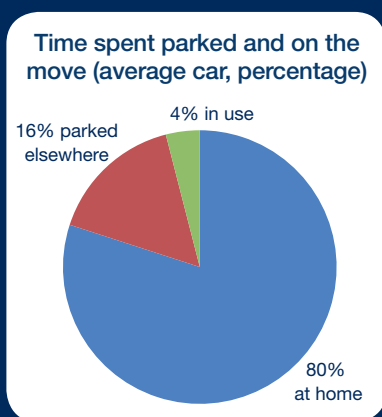
Sources: Spaced Out: Perspectives on parking policy, RAC Cost of Motoring Index, DCLG Local Authority Expenditure and Financing



Parking at home

The average car is parked at home for 80% of the time, parked elsewhere for 16% of the time and in use for only 4% of the time.

A quarter of the vehicles in Great Britain are parked on the street. Others are parked in garages or on driveways.



80% of Great Britain's 26 million dwellings were built with a front garden. Almost a third of this 80% have now been turned over to hardstanding to provide parking.

Sources: Spaced Out: Perspectives on parking policy



This factsheet was last updated September 2012.

The Royal Automobile Club Foundation for Motoring is a transport policy and research organisation which explores the economic, mobility, safety and environmental issues relating to roads and their users. The Foundation publishes independent and authoritative research with which it promotes informed debate and advocates policy in the interest of the responsible motorist.

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