

Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council – Annual Parking Report 2025/2026

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2025/26

Introduction:

Welcome to Cheshire West and Chester Council's Annual Parking Report for 2025/26.

This report highlights the work undertaken by our Parking Services Team over the past year. While parking is often a sensitive and sometimes contentious issue, we aim to demonstrate that our team's role extends far beyond the issuing of Penalty Charge Notices. Parking Services plays a vital part in promoting road safety, maintaining traffic flow, and ensuring fair access to parking across the borough.

Our primary objective is to minimise disruption and support the smooth movement of residents and visitors throughout Cheshire West and Chester. Effective parking enforcement contributes to safer communities by reducing congestion at busy junctions, which in turn helps lower vehicle emissions and improve air quality.

Although civil parking enforcement is sometimes viewed negatively, inconsiderate or unsafe parking can have a significant impact on others. Our officers provide a visible and supportive presence on the streets, working to uphold safety and accessibility for all.

Income generated from car parks supports the Council's wider objectives, including the regeneration of the borough and the upkeep of essential public infrastructure. In accordance with Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, any surplus from off-street parking is reinvested into transport-related projects, such as improvements to public transport and road infrastructure.

This reinforces that Parking Services is not a profit-driven operation, but a service committed to enhancing the borough's transport network and public amenities for the benefit of residents and visitors alike.

Parking Services operates on a self-sufficient basis, covering its own costs without reliance on external funding. Should the service run at a deficit, it may require support from other Council budgets, underscoring the importance of its financial sustainability and the essential role it plays in the borough's daily life.

Glossary of Terms:

Blue Badge - The Blue Badge Scheme provides a range of parking concessions for people with mobility problems who have difficulty using public transport. The badge enables holders to park close to where they need to be. The scheme operates throughout the UK, and is administered by local authorities who deal with applications and issue badges. The Council's blue badge team can be contacted on 0300 123 7040 or by email **enquiries@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk**

CEO: Civil Enforcement Officer. An Officer authorised to carry out enforcement of parking restrictions in a Civil Parking Enforcement area.

CPE: Civil Parking Enforcement. A description of parking enforcement carried out by Local Authorities who have been granted powers to carry out enforcement rather than the Police.

Park Mark - An award which is presented to car parks which have been vetted by the Police and which have been found to have measures in place to create a safer environment for users of the car park and their vehicles.

PCN: Penalty Charge Notice (sometimes referred to as a 'parking ticket') issued to vehicles when the vehicle is parked in breach of a parking restrictions.

TPT: Traffic Penalty Tribunal. Independent tribunal appeals for motorists and vehicle owners.



The Importance of Parking Enforcement

Parking enforcement plays a crucial role in maintaining the safety, accessibility, and efficiency of our borough's transport network. It supports a wide range of community and economic objectives, including:

Enhancing Accessibility and Fairness

Parking enforcement ensures equitable access to parking facilities by preventing misuse and promoting compliance. For example, it addresses the inappropriate use of disabled bays by non-blue badge holders and ensures that residents' parking schemes are respected. This helps maintain access for those who genuinely need it and supports the integrity of local parking arrangements.

Supporting Local Businesses

Effective on-street enforcement reduces congestion, which benefits local businesses by facilitating timely deliveries and improving customer access. By encouraging turnover of parking spaces, enforcement increases the availability of short-stay parking, making it easier for shoppers and visitors to find a space and support local commerce.

Promoting Community Safety

Parking enforcement contributes to safer streets by keeping key areas, such as junctions and pedestrian crossings, clear of obstructive vehicles. This improves visibility for drivers and pedestrians, reducing the risk of accidents. Enforcement is particularly important near schools, where 'keep clear' zones help protect children and parents during busy drop-off and pick-up times.

Maintaining Traffic Flow

By discouraging inconsiderate and disruptive parking, enforcement helps keep roads clear and traffic moving. This leads to more predictable journey times and enhances the reliability of public transport, making it a more attractive option for residents and visitors.





Understanding Civil Parking Enforcement

Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) is the process by which local authorities are granted powers to enforce parking regulations, a responsibility that was previously held by the Police. These powers are obtained through an application to the Department for Transport, allowing councils to manage parking enforcement within their jurisdiction.

The shift from police-led enforcement to local authority control enables police resources to be focused on more serious criminal matters, while ensuring that parking regulations are effectively upheld at a local level.

Benefits of Local Authority-Led Enforcement

There are several advantages to having civil parking enforcement managed by the Council:

Local Knowledge: Council officers possess detailed understanding of the borough's geography, traffic patterns, and community needs—insight that may not be available to other public services.

Resource Efficiency: Police forces face significant demands and must prioritise serious and urgent matters. Delegating parking enforcement to the Council ensures this important function is not overlooked.

Improved Accessibility: Local authorities offer multiple channels of communication, making it easier for residents to raise concerns, seek information, or resolve issues related to parking.

Community Engagement: Residents often feel more comfortable engaging with Council officers, who are seen as approachable and community-focused, compared to the formal nature of police interactions.

Operational Control: Parking enforcement is a critical service. When managed effectively by the Council, it prevents widespread disruption for motorists and sures the borough's transport infrastructure operates smoothly.



Dispelling Common Parking Myths

Misunderstandings around parking regulations can often lead to motorists inadvertently receiving a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN). While planning ahead and consulting the relevant local authority is always advisable, parking restrictions are clearly supported by the Highway Code, road signage, and markings. These resources provide all the necessary information to help drivers make informed decisions about where and when to park.

Below are some of the most common parking myths, and the facts that correct them:

Myth 1: Parking restrictions don't apply on Sundays or Bank Holidays

Fact: Parking restrictions apply 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, unless signage explicitly states otherwise. Always check nearby signs before parking.

Myth 2: I have a 10-minute grace period before a PCN is issued

Fact: A 10-minute grace period only applies in specific circumstances where parking is permitted, such as:

- Pay and display car parks – 10 minutes can be added to the expiry time shown on the ticket.
- Limited waiting bays – 10 minutes can be added to the permitted waiting time indicated on signage.

The grace period does not apply in the following locations:

- Single or double yellow lines
- Loading bays
- Taxi ranks or bus stops

Myth 3: I can park for 20 minutes while loading

Fact: There is no fixed time limit for loading. As long as loading is continuous and the vehicle is parked in a permitted loading area, the activity may take as long as necessary.

The confusion often arises from the observation period used by Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) to determine whether loading is genuinely taking place:

- Private cars – typically observed for a minimum of 5 minutes.
- Heavy goods vehicles – may be observed for up to 20 minutes due to the nature of the goods being handled.

The Parking Services Team

Cheshire West and Chester Council's Parking Services Team is comprised of 30 directly employed Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs), responsible for both on-street and off-street Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) across the borough. The team operates seven days a week, including Bank Holidays and out-of-hours periods, with flexible working patterns to ensure consistent enforcement coverage throughout the day.

Each CEO is assigned a specific patrol area, referred to as a "beat", at the start of their shift. These assignments vary daily to ensure officers are familiar with all parts of the borough and the full range of parking restrictions in place.

Training and Professional Standards

All CEOs are trained in accordance with the requirements of the Traffic Management Act 2004, and also receive instruction in personal safety and conflict management. Officers are required to:

- Wear a designated uniform (without name identification for confidentiality)
- Carry valid photographic identification
- Use appropriate equipment, including handheld devices with GPS functionality for issuing PCNs
- Maintain radio communication with colleagues and the central office for real-time updates and support

This ensures that enforcement is carried out professionally, consistently, and safely.

Local Accountability and Community Focus

Unlike some authorities that outsource parking enforcement to private contractors, all CEOs in Cheshire West and Chester are directly employed by the Council. This approach ensures:

- Greater accountability
- A deeper understanding of local issues
- Consistent training and service standards
- A more community-focused and responsive service

Customer Support and Notice Processing

The Parking Services Team is supported by a dedicated customer service centre, which handles over 13,000 parking-related enquiries annually. In addition, a Notice Processing Team of five fully trained Council staff manage:

- Appeals against Penalty Charge Notices
- Parking permit applications
- General enquiries and correspondence

This integrated approach ensures that both enforcement and customer service are delivered to a high standard, with a strong emphasis on fairness, transparency, and local knowledge.

How Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) Operates

Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) is implemented through a legal mechanism known as a **Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)**. These orders define the parking restrictions in specific areas, which are then communicated to motorists via road markings and signage. When a vehicle is found to be in contravention of these restrictions, a **Penalty Charge Notice (PCN)** may be issued by a Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO).

Beyond Issuing PCNs

CEOs perform a wide range of duties beyond enforcement, including:

- Assisting with road closures
- Reporting defects in road surfaces or signage to the Highways team
- Providing guidance to motorists on parking restrictions
- Supporting public safety by liaising with emergency services when needed

CEOs are a visible and approachable presence in the community, often assisting members of the public with directions and general enquiries. Their local knowledge and daily interaction with residents contribute to a safer and more informed environment.

Observation Periods Before Issuing a PCN

Before issuing a PCN, CEOs may observe a vehicle to determine whether an exemption, such as loading or unloading, is taking place. Observation times vary depending on the type of vehicle and the nature of the activity:

- **Private motor vehicles:** Typically observed for a minimum of **5 minutes**, as loading usually involves smaller items.
- **Heavy goods vehicles (3.5 tonnes or above):** May be observed for up to **20 minutes**, due to the complexity and volume of goods being handled.

However, certain locations, such as **bus stops, taxi ranks, and loading-restricted areas**, do not permit loading, and observation periods may not apply.

The Council also reserves the right to **reduce or remove observation periods** in areas where persistent contraventions occur. For example, repeated misuse of parking near cash points may prompt stricter enforcement to address local concerns.

Performance and Commitment

Each CEO walks an average of **10 miles per shift**, with most shifts lasting around **8 hours**. This reflects the high level of commitment and physical effort required to carry out their duties effectively.



Parking Contraventions Across the Borough – 2025/26

The following is a summary of parking contraventions recorded throughout Cheshire West and Chester during the 2025/26 financial year. This data reflects the enforcement activity carried out by the Parking Services Team and highlights areas where compliance with parking regulations has been an ongoing challenge.

On Street	Issued
01 Parked in a restricted street during prescribed hours.	13,215
02 Parked or loading/unloading in a restricted street where waiting and loading/unloading restrictions are in force.	3,145
05 Parked after the expiry of paid for time	796
06 Parked without clearly displaying a valid pay & display ticket or voucher	3,148
07 Parked with payment made to extend the stay beyond initial time	88
12 Parked in a residents or shared use parking place or zone without clearly displaying either a permit or voucher or Pay Display ticket issued for that place.	3,155
16 Parked in a permit space without displaying a valid permit.	34
19 Parked in a residents` or shared use parking place or zone either displaying an invalid permit or voucher or pay and display ticket, or after the expiry of paid for time	16
21 Parked in a suspended bay/space or part of bay/space .	66
22 Re-parked in the same parking place or zone within the prescribed time period	136
23 Parked in a parking place or area not designated for that class of vehicle.	345
24 Not parked correctly within the markings of the bay or space.	639
25 Parked in a loading place during restricted hours without loading.	1152
26 Parked in a special enforcement area more than 50 cm from the edge of the carriageway and not within a designated parking place	4
27 Parked in a special enforcement area adjacent to a dropped footway	398
28 Parked in a special enforcement area on part of the carriageway raised to meet the level of a footway, cycle track or verge	19
30 Parked for longer than permitted.	12,470
40 Parked in a designated disabled person's parking place without clearly displaying a valid disabled person's badge.	1,290
42 Parked in a parking place designated for police vehicles	4
45 Parked on a taxi rank.	1,325



47 Parked on a restricted bus stop/stand.	553
48 Stopped in a restricted area outside a school.	248
49 Parked wholly or partly on a cycle track	168
62 Parked with one or more wheels on or over a footpath or any part of a road other than a carriageway	184
99 Stopped on a pedestrian crossing or a crossing area marked by zigzags	279

Off Street	Issued
70 Parked in a loading place or bay during restricted hours without loading	58
71 Parked in an electric vehicles' charging place during restricted hours without charging	1,256
80 Parked for longer than permitted	413
81 Parked in a restricted area in a car park	193
82 Parked after the expiry of paid for time	688
83 Parked in a car park without clearly displaying a valid pay & display ticket or voucher or parking clock	5,237
84 Parked with payment made to extend the stay beyond initial time	55
85 Parked in a permit bay without clearly displaying a valid permit.	389
86 Not parked correctly within the markings of a bay or space	3,562
87 Parked in a disabled person's parking space without clearly displaying a valid disabled person's badge in the prescribed manner	3,542
91 Parked in an area not designated for that class of vehicle.	372
92 Parked causing an obstruction	8
95 Parked in a parking place for a purpose other than that designated	152

Bus Lane and Moving Traffic Enforcement Powers

The Council continues to use its civil enforcement powers to improve traffic flow, public transport reliability, and road safety across the borough.

Bus Lane Enforcement

Since September 2019, Cheshire West and Chester Council has enforced bus lane restrictions using Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras.

Enforcement is active at five key locations in Chester, targeting unauthorised vehicle use in designated bus lanes.

Bus Lane Enforcement Locations:

- Wrexham Road x 2
- Hough Green x 2
- Upper Northgate Street
- Chester Bus Interchange Access Road (St Oswald's Way)
- Sealand Road

All bus lanes are clearly signed and operate 24 hours a day, unless otherwise stated. PCNs of £70 are issued for contraventions, reduced to £35 if paid within 21 days

Moving Traffic Enforcement Locations:

- Junction of Nuns Road and New Crane Street, Chester (No right turn into Nuns Road, restriction time: Monday to Friday, 4:30pm–6:00pm)
- Junction of Nuns Road and Grosvenor Road, Chester (Must turn left into Grosvenor Road, restriction time: Anytime)
- Junction of Canal Street and Northgate Street, Chester (No right turn into Northgate Street (except buses), restriction time: Anytime)
- Civic Way, Ellesmere Port (No entry except buses, restriction time: Anytime)

Policy Objectives and Revenue Use

The enforcement programme supports:

- Safer roads and junctions
- Reduced congestion
- Improved air quality
- Enhanced public transport reliability

Revenue from PCNs is ring-fenced for transport-related improvements, including enforcement operations, public transport support, and environmental initiatives.



Bus Lane and Moving Traffic Contraventions – 2025/26

Contravention	PCNs
32 Failing to proceed in the direction shown by the arrow on a blue sign	2,033
34 Being in a bus lane (during the hours of operation of the bus lane)	4,106
50 Performing a prohibited turn	3,333
51 Failing to comply with a no entry restriction	745

Blue Badge Holder Parking Provisions

Cheshire West and Chester Council remains committed to supporting accessibility and inclusive travel across the borough. The Council provides a range of parking concessions for **Blue Badge holders**, in line with national guidance and local policy.

Free Parking in Council-Owned Car Parks

Blue Badge holders may park **free of charge for up to four hours** in any **Council-owned pay and display car park**, provided:

- A valid Blue Badge is clearly displayed.
- A time clock is set and displayed to indicate the time of arrival.

Microchip Sticker for Pay-on-Exit Car Parks

To facilitate access to **pay-on-exit car parks**, Cheshire West and Chester Council offers a **microchip sticker** for Blue Badge holders who are borough residents. This allows:

- **Up to four hours of free parking** in pay-on-exit car parks (excluding Delamere Street, Chester).
- Entry and exit via ANPR-controlled barriers using the microchip.

How it works:

- Residents must apply for the microchip by submitting a copy of their Blue Badge.
- The microchip is posted with instructions for use.
- It must be affixed to the badge and presented at the barrier.
- The microchip expires at the same time as the badge and must be reapplied for upon renewal

Drivers must always check **local signage** for any specific restrictions or conditions that may apply.

Dedicated Blue Badge Car Parks

The Council operates **car parks** dedicated exclusively to Blue Badge holders:

- **Frodsham Street, Chester**
- **Hamilton Place, Chester**
- **Baron's Quay Road, Northwich**
- **Central Palace Drive, Northwich**

These locations offer convenient access to town centres and key amenities.

On-Street Parking Concessions

Blue Badge holders may also park on **single or double yellow lines** for up to **three hours**, provided:

- The badge and time clock are correctly displayed.
- There are no loading restrictions in force at the time.
-

This concession supports access to areas where designated bays may not be available.

Designated Blue Badge Bays

Throughout the borough, the Council maintains a network of **designated Blue Badge bays** in both on-street and off-street locations. These bays are:

- Clearly marked and signed
- Free of time restrictions for Blue Badge holders
- Strategically located near shops, services, and transport hubs

Important Notes for Badge Holders

- The **onus is on the driver** to check signage and ensure compliance with local restrictions.
- Misuse of a Blue Badge may result in enforcement action, including PCNs or referral for investigation.
- Full terms and conditions are provided in the **booklet issued with the badge**, which outlines permitted use, time limits, and restrictions.



Car Park Rates and Comparisons

Cheshire West and Chester Council continues to offer competitive parking rates across its borough, particularly in comparison to other historic and metropolitan cities in the UK.

Value for Money

Parking charges in Council-owned car parks are regulated and set locally, ensuring they remain affordable for residents, visitors, and businesses. This approach supports accessibility while balancing the need to manage demand and maintain infrastructure.

Compared to cities such as Manchester, Liverpool, and York, Chester's parking rates are notably lower. For example:

- A full-day stay in New Market Car Park or Delamere Street Car Park in Chester is significantly cheaper than equivalent stays in central Liverpool or York.
- In York, a city with similar historic and tourist appeal, central car parks charge considerably more for 24-hour stays.

Private car parks in Chester also tend to charge more than Council-operated facilities, reinforcing the value of public provision.

Benefits of Council-Owned Parking

- Transparent pricing set by the local authority
- Revenue reinvested into transport infrastructure and environmental improvements
- Consistent enforcement and maintenance standards
- Support for local businesses and tourism through affordable access

The Council remains committed to maintaining fair and accessible parking options, ensuring that residents and visitors can enjoy the borough's amenities without excessive cost.



Parking Permits

Cheshire West and Chester Council offers a range of parking permits to support residents, businesses, and visitors. Full details and application processes are available on the Council's website, but below is a summary of the most commonly used permits.

Residents' Parking Permits

Residents' parking schemes are available in Chester, Frodsham, Northwich, Helsby, and Ellesmere Port. These schemes are typically introduced following consultation with local residents in areas where parking pressure is high due to proximity to town centres or transport hubs.

To qualify for a residents' permit, applicants must:

Permanently reside at an address within a designated parking zone

Own or have regular use of a non-commercial vehicle that is kept at the address

Permits are issued at the Council's discretion and are subject to availability. There is no automatic entitlement to a permit or renewal.

Permit Priority Levels

Applications are assessed based on a priority system (not applicable to Ellesmere Port):

- First Priority – Households within the zone with no existing permit
- Second Priority – Households within the zone applying for a second permit, or with off-street parking deemed inadequate
- Third Priority – Households outside the zone, or with off-street parking deemed inadequate

Only if space is available will second and third priority applications be considered. A waiting list may apply, and assessments can take up to six weeks

Visitor Permits

Residents in permit zones can also apply for visitor permits, which are available in two formats:

- All-day permits
- Two-hour permits

These are issued virtually and can be activated online for specific dates and times. Ellesmere Port residents may also apply for annual visitor permits for specific vehicles

Dispensation Permits

Dispensation permits are available for commercial vehicles needing to park in restricted areas to carry out essential work, such as:

- Building maintenance
- Emergency plumbing or electrical repairs
- Glazing or demolition work

Season Tickets

Cheshire West and Chester Council offers **season tickets** for regular users of Council-owned car parks, providing a convenient and cost-effective alternative to daily pay-and-display charges.

Available Locations

Season tickets are available for the following car parks:

Chester:

- Frodsham Street
- Little Roodee
- Watergate
- Garden Lane
- Brook Street
- New Market

Frodsham:

- Station Car Park
- Moor Lane Car Park

Northwich:

- Memorial Hall
- Verdin
- Watermans
- Victoria Club
- Cumberland Car Park

Ellesmere Port:

- Civic Centre
- Shrewsbury Road
- Wellington Road
- Westminster Road

Ticket Options and Flexibility

Season tickets can be purchased on a:

- **Monthly**
- **Six-month**
- **Annual** basis

There are two standard usage options:

- **5-day ticket** (Monday to Friday)
- **7-day ticket** (Monday to Sunday)

In **Ellesmere Port**, additional flexibility is available. Users can tailor their permit to specific days of the week (e.g., Monday, Tuesday, and Friday), and charges will reflect the selected days. This is particularly useful for part-time workers or those with hybrid work patterns.



Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs)

- A Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) is issued when a vehicle is found to be in contravention of parking or traffic regulations. PCNs are typically placed on the vehicle or sent by post and include details of:
- The alleged contravention
- The location and time
- Instructions on how to pay or challenge the notice

Differential Charging System

The Traffic Management Act 2004 (Part 6) introduced a differential charging system for PCNs from 31 March 2008. This system categorises contraventions into Higher and Lower bands based on severity:

- Higher Band: More serious contraventions, such as parking on double yellow lines during restricted hours or in a disabled bay without a valid Blue Badge.
- Lower Band: Less serious contraventions, such as overstaying in a pay-and-display bay or failing to display a ticket correctly.

The level of charge is determined by the contravention code and is not at the discretion of the Council

Current Charges (Outside London)

As of 2025, the national standard rates for PCNs outside London remain:

- £70 for higher-level contraventions (reduced to £35 if paid within 14 days)
- £50 for lower-level contraventions (reduced to £25 if paid within 14 days)

Challenging a PCN

Motorists have the right to challenge a PCN if they believe it was issued incorrectly. The process includes:

- Informal Challenge – Usually made within 14 days if the PCN was placed on the vehicle.
- Formal Representation – If the PCN was issued by post or the informal challenge is rejected.
- Appeal to Tribunal – If the formal representation is rejected, the motorist can appeal to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal.

Challenges must be supported by evidence and submitted within the specified timeframes

Below is a table indicating the number of higher and lower level PCNs issued for parking contraventions.

	On Street	Off Street	Total	% of PCN
Number of Higher Level PCNs Issued	26,069	5,818	31,887	54%
Number of Lower Level PCNs Issued	17,223	10,107	27,330	46%
Total	43,292	15,925	59,217	



Top ten locations for parking PCN issue in 2025/26

Location	Issued
Town Centre Car Park (Ellesmere Port)	3,279
City Road (P&D) (Chester)	2,784
Marina Drive (Ellesmere Port)	1,195
Frodsham Street Car Park (Chester)	1,136
Civic Centre Car Park (Ellesmere Port)	1,110
New Market Car Park (Chester)	1,093
Bridge Street (Chester)	1,065
Bishop Street Car Park (Chester)	1,000
Winsford Shopping Centre Car Park (Winsford)	950
Volunteer Street Residents Parking (Chester)	894

PCN Payments:

Number of paid PCNs issued in 2025/26:

PCN type	Number issued	Number paid	% Paid
Parking	59,217	46,505	78%
Bus Lane	4,106	2,910	71%
Moving traffic	6,111	5,313	87%
Overall	69,434	54,728	79%

PCN payment per rate

PCN type	Total	% of number paid
Paid at discount rate	47,772	87%
Paid after discount rate	6,956	13%

During this period, 79% of parking PCNs were paid—placing us at the higher end of the national average (70–85%). This reflects the effectiveness and accuracy of our Parking Services team in ensuring legitimate enforcement and efficient processing.

Appeals Process for Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs)

If an individual receives a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) and believes it was issued in error or has valid reasons for the alleged contravention, they have the right to appeal.

Appeals are handled as a civil matter and do not require legal representation. Appeals must be submitted to the Council's Parking Services either online or by post. Full instructions are provided on the reverse side of the PCN.

Appeal Stages:

Informal Challenge

Must be submitted within 28 days of the PCN being issued.

Formal Representation

If the PCN remains unpaid after 28 days, a Notice to Owner is sent to the registered keeper of the vehicle. This notice outlines the grounds on which a formal appeal can be made.

Traffic Penalty Tribunal

If the Formal Representation is rejected and the appellant disagrees with the decision, they may escalate the appeal to the Independent Adjudicator. This must be done within 28 days of receiving the Council's rejection notice.

Charge Certificate

If no payment or appeal is made within 28 days of the Notice to Owner, a Charge Certificate is issued. This increases the penalty from £70/£50 to £105/£75.

County Court Registration

Continued non-payment may result in the matter being registered with the County Court, incurring an additional registration fee.

Enforcement Action

If payment is still not received, Enforcement Agents may be instructed to recover the debt. This will include their fees and any further charges.

The Council considers the actions of Civil Enforcement Officers when reviewing challenges but ensures all appeals are assessed impartially and afresh. This process is carried out by a trained and qualified team within Parking Services, in accordance with legislation and regulatory requirements.

Comprehensive guidance on the reasons for receiving a PCN is available on the Council's website and detailed on the following pages.



Statutory Exemptions

Certain statutory exemptions apply to Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs), meaning that under specific circumstances, a PCN may be cancelled.

Emergency Vehicles

Emergency vehicles are exempt from PCNs when parked in restricted areas while on duty. Although it is rare for a PCN to be issued to such vehicles due to the comprehensive training provided to Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs), any issued PCNs will be cancelled if the exemption applies.

Loading and Unloading

Vehicles engaged in continuous loading or unloading activities may be exempt from restrictions, including parking on double yellow lines. This exemption applies only when the activity is uninterrupted and necessary due to the nature of the goods being handled. For example, large or heavy items that require the vehicle to remain present during the process.

Examples of acceptable loading/unloading exemptions include:

- Removal vans
- Builders transporting tools or materials

Examples of unacceptable use of the exemption include:

- Leaving a vehicle to collect documents
- Unloading shopping or personal items

First Occasions

A "first occasion" refers to instances where a PCN is cancelled because a valid permit, pay and display ticket, or Blue Badge was not correctly displayed, but evidence later confirms its validity.

Cancellation may be considered under the following circumstances:

- Supporting evidence is provided
- Proof confirms the individual held a valid permit or Blue Badge at the time
- The individual has no prior history of PCNs
- Exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated





Mitigating Circumstances:

Mitigating circumstances can be broken down into two categories, foreseeable circumstances and unforeseeable circumstances (avoidable /unavoidable).

Foreseeable:

These are circumstances where the driver was aware of the possibility of a contravention happening but chose to ignore or disregard it.

In each of these circumstances below, a PCN will not be cancelled:



Unforeseeable:

These are mitigating circumstances which are beyond a drivers' control.

Providing proof can be obtained, the Council will consider cancelling where a situation has arisen causing the contravention to occur.

An example of this would be a medical emergency, providing the condition is not pre-existing.



Challenges & Representations

	Totals
Informal Challenge	7,728
Formal Representation	1,204

Cancellations by exemption

Exemptions	Cancelled	% Issued of Overall PCN
Mitigating Circumstances	2,259	3%
Standard Exemptions	126	>1%
First Occasion	1,965	3%
CEO Error	517	>1%
Processing Error	54	>1%
	4,921	7%

14% of PCNs remain outstanding and the Council undertakes the proper recovery action to ensure these are brought to an appropriate conclusion.



Traffic Penalty Tribunal (TPT)

The last platform an appeal can take place is a Traffic Penalty Tribunal (TPT). This can be sought once the initial challenge has been rejected and all relevant processes have been exhausted.

The appellant can make a claim to the Independent Adjudication Service once their formal representation has been rejected. They must apply for this within 28 days of the formal representation being rejected by the Council.

The appellant has three choices when taking this course of action. They can either submit an appeal in writing or attend a hearing to submit their case. Alternatively, they can request a telephone hearing which will usually last around 15 minutes; evidence has to be gathered and sent to the IAS for the adjudicator to oversee before the tribunal takes place in all actionable processes.

Evidence will be gathered by both parties prior to the hearing to give the adjudicator sufficient time to read through the case.

Below table shows the number of penalties where a TPT appeal has been made and the outcome.



Outcome	Total % of Appeal	
Allowed	5	7%
Not Contested	14	20%
Open	0	0%
Refused	52	73%
Total	71	
% from overall PCN		0.1%



Income and Expenditure

Income and expenditure for the financial year 2025/2026

<i>Income and Expenditure Account</i>			
	On Street £	Off Street £	Total £
Income			
Penalty Charge Notices	1,609,314	467,220	2,076,534
Sub-total			2,076,534
Expenditure			
Staffing			1,805,720
Transport			47,619
ICT & Stationery			206,243
External Professional Services			94,304
Sub Total			2,153,886
Net Deficit/(Surplus)			77,352

Income from Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) is used to help fund the costs of parking enforcement and debt recovery. In the year reported, the Council recovered approximately 96% of these costs through PCN income, reflecting a highly effective and efficient enforcement service.