

# Local Authority Parking and Traffic Management Operational Advice during Covid-19

Appendix 1



Version 1 – 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## Introduction

This guidance has been produced jointly by the British Parking Association, London Councils and the Local Government Association to assist local authorities to consider appropriate temporary measures in the unprecedented and very challenging circumstances around Covid-19. The authors of this advice will keep it under constant review in light of the rapidly changing situation and update & reissue as necessary. There will be appropriate publicity to accompany this advice, which will be shared with communication leads.

## Benefits of Parking Management

Parking management is an important public service, which provides benefits to motorists and the wider community. Those benefits include maintaining road safety and ensuring access to goods and services. This is extremely important, particularly for certain key workers, as local authorities aim to keep providing essential services at this challenging time.

## Enforcement

Without some level of enforcement, authorities will not be able to ensure good levels of compliance with important parking controls to manage their highways effectively.

It is therefore likely that authorities will need to continue to deploy their enforcement teams in some capacity to focus their reduced parking resources on priority areas and controls. Enforcement officers should be focused on providing help and advice about where people can and can't park and only issue a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) where absolutely necessary.

It is recommended that any enforcement activity focuses on the more serious 'higher level' contraventions and incidents of obstructive or dangerous parking that could have a more significant impact on safety and access for emergency and essential services. This would include yellow lines at junctions, loading restrictions, zig zags at crossings and obstruction of dropped kerbs.

Those local authorities that undertake vehicle removals should only do so if a vehicle is parked dangerously or obstructing traffic flow. Where possible, any vehicle that needs to be removed should be relocated to a safe, lawful position close by on street rather than removed to the vehicle pound. Removing to a pound should absolutely be a last resort.

It is likely that in residential areas, parking demand may currently outstrip supply if most residents are at staying at home. This additional pressure will need to be managed carefully to prevent obstructive parking hindering emergency services and the delivery of essential supplies and services, such as waste collection. However, to especially help those who are self-isolating, authorities should take a pragmatic approach to unlawful parking if it is not dangerous or causing an obstruction, particularly in residential controlled parking zones.

Authorities should consider maximising parking spaces in one-hour single yellow line restrictions where commuters might usually park, by relaxing those parking restrictions to enable home-working. Authorities should also consider temporary extensions to their residents permits for the next 3 months and then keep this under review.

### **Supporting NHS and Critical Key Workers**

Wherever possible it is important to provide help and support to critical key workers, especially NHS staff, the emergency services and community volunteers, frontline transport and council workers and those providing direct support helping unwell and vulnerable people in their communities.

These workers may be working longer hours and may no longer have the full range of travel choices they would normally have, such as public transport. This means that they may be struggling to find and pay for somewhere to park near their place of work or at a patient's home.

Authorities should therefore consider providing exemptions for NHS staff and critical key workers to use on and off-street parking bays without time restriction or charge. This would include any council car parks, on-street paid for parking bays and permit bays in controlled parking zones.

Where necessary at certain key locations, authorities may wish to explore opportunities to increase parking capacity by talking to closed business, shopping centres or opening parks for additional key worker parking.

If parking capacity permits, authorities may consider relaxing or reducing the hours of some controlled parking zones around hospitals, clinics and control centres to assist the activities of critical key workers.

### **Managing Critical Key Worker Exemptions**

How exemptions are managed will depend on the individual authority's parking systems and processes, as well as the availability and capacity of already stretched staff.

Where virtual permit systems exist, authorities may be able to invite key workers to register online and provide some minimal evidence of their key worker status and vehicle details, so they can be "whitelisted" either for the entire authority area or for a specific controlled area near their place of work.

Where physical permits are needed, authorities should consider emailing a temporary permit which can be self-printed and displayed within the vehicle.

It may not be possible for authorities to implement any new permit regime or may take time to make any of the suggested changes. In the interim, relevant key workers should be asked to display a notice in their vehicle advising that they are engaged in essential key worker activities.

Despite the introduction of the relaxation of controls for some key workers, it is possible that some may still receive a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN). Any key worker in receipt of a PCN should challenge this in the usual way. Authorities should treat any appeals sympathetically in accordance with this guidance and any evidence provided to support the appeal. Where possible the process should be made as simple as possible for key workers to avoid taking up their valuable time and to reduce administrative burden on already stretched authorities.

Civil Enforcement Officers should be reminded of the importance of capturing any supporting evidence that is displayed in a vehicle indicating that the driver is a key worker and engaged in important 'emergency activity'. Consideration as to whether to issue a PCN if a note is displayed should be made depending on the parking control contravened.

### **Moving Traffic Contraventions – London and Wales only**

Most moving traffic controls, such as no entries, banned turns and yellow boxes are for important safety and traffic management purposes. The continuation of enforcement is therefore likely to be important to ensure compliance. However, authorities should consider whether to continue the enforcement of non-safety critical controls.