

Press release: Boost for drivers as government backs clamp down on rogue parking firms

Drivers will receive new legal protections from unscrupulous private parking operators as Communities Secretary, Sajid Javid, today (28 January 2018) confirmed that government will support new legislation aimed at raising standards in the industry.

Evidence shows that, in total, nearly 10,000 people approached the Citizen's Advice Bureau for advice on private parking tickets last year and parking firms are issuing almost 13 times more tickets than decade ago.

Drivers are increasingly complaining of inconsistent practices, substandard signage, confusing appeals processes and intimidating payment letters.

That is why the government is supporting new legislation to regulate the private parking industry.

Under the plans, which will deliver on a manifesto commitment to tackle rogue parking operators, a stringent new Code of Practice will be developed by the Secretary of State in conjunction with motorists groups and other experts.

Those falling foul of the rules would then be blocked from accessing driver data and issuing fines, effectively forcing them out of the industry.

These measures, introduced in a Bill by Sir Greg Knight MP, build on action government has already taken to tackle rogue private parking operators, including banning wheel clamping and towing, and over-zealous parking enforcement by councils and parking wardens.

Secretary of State for Communities, Sajid Javid, said:

For too long drivers have suffered from unjust fines at the hands of dodgy parking firms.

We need a fairer, clearer and more consistent system that brings the small minority of unscrupulous operators in line with those who are behaving appropriately.

That is why government is putting the brakes on these rogue operators and backing new laws that will put a stop to aggressive behaviour and provide a simpler way for drivers to appeal fines.

Industry bodies have lined up to support the Bill, which will receive its Second Reading in the House of Commons on Friday (2 February 2018).

Steve Gooding, director of the RAC Foundation, said:

Motorists will be delighted that the government is throwing its weight behind Sir Greg Knight's move to bring some much needed regulatory rigour to the world of private parking.

We all hoped the ban on clamping would end the sharp practices that had come to plague private parking, but the fact that companies are issuing millions of penalty tickets annually is clear evidence that something is still going badly awry.

Drivers don't want a parking free-for-all, but they do want a system that is fair to all parties and that's what a code of practice set by government – rather than the industry itself – should bring about.

Andrew Pester, Chief Executive of the British Parking Association, said:

We welcome Sir Greg's Bill that aims to drive consistency and fairness in the private parking sector. Our membership already complies with a robust Code of Practice which we continuously seek to improve through consultation.

A single, mandatory code of practice across the whole sector is important to ensure that unscrupulous providers don't undermine the parking sector with bad practice. As the leading authority in the sector we shall continue to work closely with government and key stakeholders to press for progress towards a positive outcome for all.

The [Parking \(Code of Practice\) Bill](#) is a Private Members Bill introduced by Sir Greg Knight MP.

The new Code of Practice will be drafted up with stakeholders, and would provide the clarity of a single set of rules for private parking, with clearer processes for appeals.

The Secretary of State would also have the power to raise a levy on the sector to fund the production, publishing and enforcement of the code.

At present, there are 2 parking trade associations, the British Parking Association (BPA) and the International Parking Community (IPC). Each has a Code of Practice that their members are required to abide by. A single code is intended to set a higher standard for practices across the sector, especially in the area of appeals against parking tickets.

Citizen's Advice Bureau statistics show that, in 2017, 5,011 (2016: 4690) people went into their local CAB branch seeking help about private parking. In addition, 4,395 (stats not available for 2016) called the Consumer

helpline.

The RAC Foundation expects that, in 2018, 6 million tickets will be issued by firms operating on private land. This is up from 4.7 million in 2017.

RAC Foundation statistics also show that, in the second quarter of 2017-18, 1,429,703 vehicle-keeper records were sold to the private parking firms to issue tickets. This was 1,177% – or almost 13 times – higher than the 111,944 records sold a decade earlier in the second quarter of 2007 to 2008.

The government is [currently consulting](#) to stop unfair practices in the issuing of County Court judgments.