

Transport Secretary announces plans to make pavements accessible for all

- new plans set out to boost safety and make journeys more accessible for disabled people and parents
- review found third of people with visual impairments and almost half of wheelchair users were not as willing to go out because of antisocial pavement parking
- consultation will set out proposals to make transport more accessible and help more people to choose active travel as part of UK's green recovery from COVID-19

Pavements could be made safer for people with disabilities, and families, under new proposals to ban antisocial parking unveiled by the government today (31 August 2020).

Parking on pavements disproportionately affects people with visual or mobility impairments, those assisted by guide dogs, and wheelchair and mobility scooter users. More than 95% of wheelchair users and people with visual impairments say they had problems with vehicles parked on pavements.

Three options are proposed in the [consultation launched today](#) – improving the traffic regulation order process to make it easier for councils to prohibit pavement parking in their areas, giving councils powers to fine drivers who park on paths, and a London-style nationwide ban on pavement parking.

However, there is still a major role for cars and other private vehicles, so any future plans will need to take this into consideration.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Parking on pavements means wheelchair users, visually impaired people and parents with pushchairs can be forced into the road, which is not only dangerous but discourages people from making journeys.

A key part of our green, post-COVID recovery will be encouraging more people to choose active travel, such as walking, so it is vital that we make the nation's pavements accessible for everyone.

Pavement parking presents a clear safety risk when parked cars occupy the pavement and force vulnerable pedestrians to move into the road.

Disabled people say pavement parking is a significant barrier to carrying out daily journeys. Recent research from the charity Guide Dogs shows that 32% of people with vision impairments and 48% of wheelchair users were less willing to go out on their own because of pavement parking, decreasing independence

and contributing towards isolation.

As many streets were built decades and centuries before the high levels of vehicles currently on roads, any measures will need to ensure the free flow of traffic and access for the emergency services.

The consultation is the government's latest step to deliver on commitments to make transport equally accessible for all users by 2030, as set out in the [Inclusive Transport Strategy](#).

Stephen Edwards, Director of Policy and Communications at Living Streets, said:

We're regularly contacted by disabled and older people who feel trapped in their homes because there is not enough room on the pavement for wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

This has impacted more people during the pandemic with blocked pavements affecting everyone's ability to physically distance.

Blanche Shackleton, Head of Policy, Public Affairs and Campaigns at Guide Dogs, said:

For many people with sight loss, cars and vans parked on the pavement make our streets stressful and dangerous to navigate. At any time, you might be forced out into the road with traffic that you cannot see.

When every journey is an ordeal, simply going out independently can become daunting.

Justine Roberts, Founder and CEO of Mumsnet, said:

Lots of us have occasionally parked a couple of wheels up on the pavement to leave space on the road without really thinking about how it might inconvenience people.

It's a topic that comes up regularly on Mumsnet, where wheelchair users and people with buggies share stories about being forced into the road or having to double back long distances.

The consultation comes as Transport Secretary Grant Shapps steps up efforts to encourage active travel – such as walking – as part of a green, post-COVID-19 recovery, and level up road quality across the country.

The government announced £2 billion in May to get more people walking and cycling, and £2.5 billion in the Budget towards repairing potholes as part of the biggest nationwide programme ever announced.

On top of this, the government is also investing more than £27 billion to improve roads across the country and boost connectivity between our towns and cities.

It is currently an offence to cause an unnecessary obstruction on the highway, which is enforceable by the police.

[Crackdown on private car parking firms will eliminate unfair fines](#)

- Communities Secretary launches crack down on rogue private parking firms
- New Appeals Charter will eliminate fines for motorists who make genuine errors or have mitigating circumstances
- Implementing a tiered system to differentiate between major and minor offences
- Increasing maximum fines for serious offences

Unfair private parking tickets will be eliminated through the introduction of new rules for private car parks, the Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP has announced today (31 August 2020).

The government has put forward proposals designed to crack down on rogue car parking firms that will form part of a new Parking Code of Practice and Framework.

The proposals include, a maximum cap for parking fines, a 10-minute grace period before a late fine can be issued and a requirement for parking firms to clearly display pricing and terms and conditions.

The new measures will be a major boost to millions of motorists in England, Scotland and Wales and will help to draw people back to their local high streets by eliminating the fear of being penalised with an unfair parking ticket.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

These new measures are a victory for the millions of motorists across the country. They will put a stop once and for all to rogue parking firms using aggressive tactics and handing out unfair parking tickets with no right to appeal, while also boosting our high streets by making it easier for people to park near their local shops without being unfairly fined

Our proposals will restore common sense to the way parking fines are issued, while cracking down on the worst offenders who put

other people in danger and hinder our emergency services from carrying out their duties.

Fresh measures proposed in the new Code and Framework include the creation of a mandatory single Appeals Service and Appeals Charter for motorists to turn to if they are unfairly fined. Under options set out in the Appeals Charter, motorists could be able to appeal their fine and see it reduced to a maximum of £20, or cancelled entirely if:

- they have a mitigating reason for overstaying their parking ticket such as their vehicle breaking down
- they have made a genuine innocent error, like keying in a digit in their number plate incorrectly
- they have a valid ticket, permit or Blue Badge but failed to display it correctly

The consultations also propose:

- A new, tiered approach to parking fines with a cap for less serious offences between £40 and £80 depending on the parking charge system chosen (but both lower than the current £100 cap), and a new, increased fine of up to £120 for drivers who wrongly park in disabled bays or ambulance bays
- A compulsory 10-minute grace periods before firms can issue a late fine
- A compulsory 5-minute cooling-off period in which a motorist can consider the terms and conditions and change their mind about parking
- A crackdown on parking firms using aggressive or pseudo-legal language to intimidate motorists into paying fines
- A requirement for parking firms to clearly display pricing and terms and conditions of parking, contact details and how to appeal a charge

High Streets Minister Simon Clarke MP said:

We want to get people back onto the high street to shop local and support small businesses, and these proposals mean motorists will be able to do so without having to worry about being landed with an unjust ticket and no way to appeal.

These measures will drive up standards in the parking industry by clamping down on rogue operators and offering a safety net so that responsible motorists who make an innocent mistake are not penalised unfairly for doing so.

Unlike existing voluntary codes set by industry, the new Code and Enforcement Framework will be mandatory and provide a single set of rules to follow. Rogue firms which break the Code could be barred from requesting Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) data, making them unable to pursue motorists for their charges through the post.

Steve Gooding, Director of the RAC Foundation said:

The publication of the government's consultation document alongside the BSI's draft code of practice is a major milestone in bringing the provisions of Sir Greg Knight's Parking Act to life.

It is clearly important that we get the code of practice, and the framework within which it will sit, right, so I would encourage everyone with an interest to respond with their views.

Scott Steedman, Director of Standards at BSI said:

In our role as the National Standards Body, BSI brought together industry experts and consumer groups to reach consensus on a new standard to support better parking practice in the operation and management of parking facilities on private land.

This new standard, called PAS 232 Privately managed parking – Operation and management, is available for public comment until 12 October 2020. Once all the comments have been reviewed by the steering group, we plan to publish the standard at the earliest opportunity.

Sir Greg Knight, Member of Parliament for East Yorkshire who piloted the Parking (Code of Practice) Bill through Parliament and onto the Statute Book said:

I am delighted that a new statutory Code of Practice on parking now moves a step closer to being introduced. This whole process is intended to stop unfair and dodgy practices arising. The new Code of Practice, when implemented, will, I believe, make the process of parking fairer and more transparent for all concerned.

The Parking (Code of Practice) Act became law in March 2019 and builds on action the government has already taken to tackle rogue private parking firms, including banning wheel clamping and towing and stopping over-zealous parking enforcement by councils.

The consultation for the new [Parking Code of Practice](#) will be published on the BSI website and will run until 12 October.

The consultation for the new [Parking Enforcement Framework](#) will be published on GOV.UK and will also run until 12 October.

The Parking (Code of Practice) Bill was a Private Members Bill introduced by Sir Greg Knight MP, supported by the government and received Royal Assent in March 2019. It covers England, Wales, and Scotland – creating consistency for motorists everywhere in Britain.

Currently there are 2 parking trade associations, the British Parking Association and the International Parking Community. Each has a Code of Practice that their members are required to abide by, but there is no single set of rules, so motorists are vulnerable to bad private parking practices such as deliberately poor signage and unfair parking fines.

The government is proposing that the New Appeals Charter will reduce parking charges to between £0 and £20 for the issues below:

- Significant Evidence of mitigation or genuine, legitimate reason – fine cancelled
- Non-evidenced mitigation – if accepted, fine reduced to between £0 and £20 dependent upon the circumstances
- Evidenced vehicle breakdown – fine cancelled for motorist and recovery vehicle
- Failure to display permit/Blue Badge/pay and display ticket (copy then supplied) – fine reduced to between £0 and £20.
- Keying error at pay and display machine – Minor (one letter wrong, removed or swapped or numbers and letters in the wrong order but still recognisable) – fine cancelled
- Keying error at pay and display machine – Major (motorist enters their partner's registration, multiple keying errors or only partial number plate entered) – fine reduced to between £0 and £20

The government is also proposing a new tiered system for parking fines. There are 2 options for this, with 3 or 2 tiers proposed. The 3-tier system could operate as follows:

- Upper Level Breach up to a cap of £120 (discounted to £70 when paid within 14 days) for the most serious breaches which put motorists or others in danger or relate to anti-social behaviour with a direct impact on the vulnerable or business revenue, including:
 - Parking in an accessible bay (Blue Badge bay)
 - Parking where parking not permitted such as in an ambulance bay or outside fire escape.
 - Obstructive or dangerous parking to the detriment of others
 - Parking in service/loading areas and/or yellow box, hatched areas
- Middle Level Breach up to a cap of £100 (discounted to £60 when paid within 14 days) for breaches which, while not as serious as the upper level, still impact upon businesses, landowners, the environment and genuine customers or car park users:
 - Parking in a reserved bay (parent and toddler)
 - Parking on pavement where parking is not permitted
 - Parked in Staff Parking Only area
 - Overstay of maximum free period or paid-for tariff.
 - Vehicle exceeds maximum weight and/or height and/or length permitted in the area
 - Parking across multiple bays

- Lower Level Breach up to a cap of £80 (discounted to £50 when paid within 14 days) for poor parking or issues which cause inconvenience to other car park users:
 - Parking in bays for other classes of vehicles such as motorcycles or scooters, bicycles or taxis.
 - Use of an expired permit
 - Re-parking / returning within period prohibited
 - Parking where parking not permitted such as grass verges or landscaped areas
 - Parking with engine running where prohibited
 - Permit displayed not valid for area occupied

Alternatively, it could result in a 2-tier system that would mirror that found in local authority parking regulation. This local authority system operates as follows outside of London:

- Upper level breach between £60 – 70 (discounted to £30 – 35), including:
 - Parked in a suspended bay/space or part of bay/space
 - Parked in a residents' or shared use parking place without clearly displaying either a
 - permit or voucher or pay and display ticket issued for that place
 - Parked in a restricted area in a car park
 - Parked in a designated disabled person's parking place without clearly displaying a
 - valid disabled person's badge
- Lower level breach between £40 – 50 (discounted to £20 – 25)
 - All other contraventions would fall into this penalty charge level.

For London, penalty charges are set by the London local authorities acting jointly and by Transport for London, with the approval of the Mayor (and provided that the Secretary of State does not object.) There are 2 tiers as set out below with a higher penalty charge level and different contraventions that fall into each level. Again, lower-tier councils can choose a slightly lower charge, as long as they apply it consistently:

- Upper level breach between £110 – 130 (discounted to £55 – 65)
- Lower level breach between £60 – 80 (discounted to £30 – 40)

[Missing but not forgotten](#)

Today marks the ninth “International Day of the Disappeared”. This is a day for people across the world to pause and think of those who are missing.

To lose any loved one is painful. But to lose a loved one and never know their fate or resting place is heart-breaking. This has been the agonising reality for many families across the Western Balkans for more than two decades

As many as 40,000 people disappeared during the conflicts of the 1990s on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. Some 11,000 are still missing. This remains one of the most painful legacies of those conflicts.

As we remember the Disappeared, we pay tribute to all those who have worked so tirelessly to find and identify the victims of the conflict and to bring some comfort to their grieving families.

Amidst the prolonged pain and suffering there is also a remarkable story. More than 70 percent of those reported missing at the end of the fighting have been accounted for. No other post-conflict region has achieved such a high rate of identification.

One reason for this is the use of new technology that has revolutionised the process of identifying human remains. This uses DNA samples from extended family members as well as immediate family, and will enable further progress in closing this painful chapter of the legacy of conflict.

The United Kingdom has been privileged to support and work with government bodies and local and international organisations. They endeavour to give families hope that their loved ones will be found and identified, and give them closure.

Families of the missing have a powerful story to tell. Their voices and actions have continued to help support others who are dealing with this issue. We remain humbled by their courage and determination. As His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales said when meeting them in London, "their dignity and humanity is a lesson to us all, and a reminder that reconciliation is not simply a theoretical abstract concept".

At the Western Balkans Summit in London in July 2018, in a [Joint Declaration](#) regional leaders committed to ensure impartial and effective investigations into missing persons cases; resolve as many cases as possible; actively engage families in the process; and refrain from politicising the issue. We remind everyone of these commitments today.

We remain committed to helping intensify efforts to locate and identify those still missing. Ever closer bilateral and regional cooperation will be crucial to resolving outstanding cases. A key part of this is the Missing Persons Group established by the Missing Persons Institutes of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia with the International Commission for Missing Persons (ICMP). The Group's plan sets out actions that the countries will undertake to account for the remaining missing persons cases, including the launch of a landmark public database.

We commend the Missing Persons Institutes' determination to work together across borders and to put families at the heart of the process. We urge them

to maintain this sense of purpose and urgency, to bring comfort to families still searching.

As we remember today, we recommit to supporting the significant work that still needs to be done. We keep our eyes firmly on the goal of resolving the remaining thousands of outstanding cases. We will continue to work for justice for the victims of conflict, for peace of mind and closure for their families, and for enduring reconciliation across this beautiful region.

Co-authored by Nicholas Abbott, Her Majesty's Ambassador to Kosovo, Matthew Field, Her Majesty's Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sian MacLeod, Her Majesty's Ambassador to Serbia, Karen Maddocks, Her Majesty's Ambassador to Montenegro and Helen Walker-Flemming, Chargé d'Affaires, British Embassy in Croatia

[Joint Statement on the use of violence and repression in Belarus](#)

World news story

Joint Statement by the Missions of the United States, the United Kingdom, Switzerland and the European Union on behalf of the EU Member States represented in Minsk on the use of violence and repression in Belarus



Recalling our earlier comments and statements, we stand in solidarity with the people of Belarus who demand respect for fundamental freedoms and basic human rights through free and fair elections. We are struck by the continued peaceful demonstrations across Belarus. They show the determination and courage of the Belarusian people to seek democratic change.

Since the elections, we have witnessed the brutal and disproportionate use of force by the law enforcement authorities against peaceful protesters and ordinary citizens. We have seen evidence of numerous injuries stemming from such use of force. We have been made aware of countless incidents of abuse

and humiliation of detainees. We stand in solidarity with all the victims of violence and abuse. We join the families of the victims in their sorrow. It is with grief and in disbelief that we have witnessed the loss of life, the suffering, and violations of human dignity and justice in Belarus.

We condemn the disproportionate use of force and urge the Belarusian authorities to stop the violence and the threats to use military force against the country's own citizens and release immediately and unconditionally all those unlawfully detained. Intimidation and prosecution based on political grounds need to stop. We call on the Belarusian authorities to respect the country's international obligations on fundamental democratic and human rights. We expect a complete and transparent investigation into all alleged crimes and abuses in order to hold those responsible to account. Only this will pave the way for a peaceful resolution of the crisis based on an inclusive national dialogue.

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Foreign Secretary commits to more effective and accountable aid spending under new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Taxpayers will see more value from aid spending following reforms to the independent body that scrutinises UK aid, the Foreign Secretary announced today (29th August). Following the merger of the Foreign Office and the Department for International Development, the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) will be told to prioritise producing tangible, evidence-based recommendations to ministers to drive effective overseas development spending.

Dominic Raab has commissioned a review of ICAI to begin this autumn, almost ten years after the body was first established. The review will make sure ICAI's remit, focus and methods are effectively scrutinising the impact of UK aid spend, in line with the aims of the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), which launches this Wednesday (2nd September).

The merger of the UK's diplomacy and development offices was announced in June as an opportunity for the UK to have even greater impact and influence on the world stage as we recover from the coronavirus pandemic, and prepare to hold the G7 presidency and host COP26 next year.

The Prime Minister has committed to giving UK aid new prominence within our

international policy under the new department. Following the merger, the Foreign Secretary will be empowered to make decisions on aid spending in line with the UK's priorities overseas, harnessing the skills, expertise and evidence that have earned our reputation as a leader in the international development community.

The Foreign Secretary said he wants ICAI to become "a committee for what works" in development. The FCDO will use the rigorous evaluation conducted by ICAI to determine how UK aid can be better spent, based on what the evidence shows is most effective for tackling poverty and global challenges like diseases, climate changes and humanitarian disasters.

The review will also look at how ministers can engage more with ICAI, to make sure the watchdog's independent recommendations lead to better decision-making and significant, lasting change at every level of the new department.

ICAI's remit will continue to include UK aid spent by other government departments, such as the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, and the Department of Health and Social Care.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

"We are integrating our aid budget with our diplomatic clout in the new FCDO to maximise the impact of our foreign policy.

"That's why I want to reinforce the role of ICAI, to strengthen further transparency and accountability in the use of taxpayers' money and relentlessly focus our Global Britain strategy on policies and in areas that deliver the most value."

The review, expected to start later in September, will be carried out by senior FCDO officials in consultation with ICAI, alongside independent external experts. It will also take into account the outcomes of the Integrated Review, which is currently looking at the UK's foreign, defence, security and international development policy. The findings of the ICAI review are expected to be published at the end of 2020.

ICAI was established in 2011 to provide additional assurance to the UK taxpayer that UK aid is being spent well, has an impact globally and provides value for money. The watchdog supports Parliament in holding the UK Government to account on its aid spending.

Previous ICAI reports have led to improvements in the ways UK aid is spent and monitored. It has, for example, it has led to more robust collecting and reporting of results for DFID's maternal health programmes. It also led to DFID providing greater support to other government departments that spend aid.