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| **Sunday 22 March 2020** |

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|  | Guidance for London Local Authority Parking Management and Covid-19 |

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**Introduction**

This guidance has been provided to assist London’s Local authorities to consider appropriate temporary measures in these very challenging circumstances around Covid-19. London Councils will keep this under review in light of the rapidly changing situation and update 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 reducing congestion, maintaining road safety, improving air quality, whilst helping to ensure access to goods and services. This is extremely important, particularly for certain key workers, as London’s local authorities aim to keep London moving and 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, wherever possible provide help and advice about where people can and can’t park and only issue a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) where necessary.

It is recommended that 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 traffic flow. This would include yellow lines at junctions, loading restrictions, zig zags at crossings and obstruction of dropped kerbs.

Those boroughs 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 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 the delivery of essential supplies and services, such as waste collection. However, to especially help those who are self-isolating, boroughs should take a pragmatic approach to unlawful parking if it is not dangerous or causing an obstruction, particularly in residential controlled parking zones.

**Exemptions for Key Workers**

Wherever possible it is important to provide help and support to key workers, such as NHS staff, the emergency services and community volunteers, 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 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, boroughs may consider relaxing or reducing the hours of some controlled parking zones around hospitals, clinics and control centres to assist the activities of key workers.

**Managing 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 boroughwide 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 take authorities some time to implement these new processes. In the meantime, relevant key workers should be encouraged to carry-on observing controls and, where this is not possible, to display a self-made notice in their vehicle advising that they are engaged in essential activities.

Despite the introduction of the relaxation of controls for some key workers, it is possible that some may receive a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN). Any key worker in receipt of a PCN should challenge this is 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.

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 whether to issue a PCN if a note is displayed should be made depending on the parking control contravened.

**Moving Traffic Contraventions**

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.