

Civil parking enforcement (CPE) starts across Suffolk on 6 April 2020

What is CPE?

Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) is when a local authority takes on responsibility from the police to enforce against illegal parking. This process means parking violations becoming civil offences. CPE applies to both on-street parking (roads and highways) and off-street parking (public car parks run by the local authority).

Why is CPE being introduced across Suffolk?

CPE allows local councils to better promote safe and sensible parking, while also tackling local parking issues concerning residents. It also allows the police to focus more heavily on tackling safety, threats, harm and more serious crimes.

CPE has operated successfully in Ipswich since 2005, and the transfer will see the other four districts also take on this responsibility.

Through councils employing qualified enforcement officers who can dedicate their time to tackling illegal parking, it means this becomes a higher priority; bringing benefits such as road safety, minimising congestion and improving accessibility on local roads.

By promoting better parking, CPE can take a more targeted approach to dealing with the following parking issues:

- Road or pavement obstructions causing danger for other road users and pedestrians.
- Drivers blocking streets preventing emergency vehicle access – especially when time is critical.
- Avoidable congestion which harms local business and the environment.
- Overstaying in car parks, which can reduce can put people off using local businesses when they can't find a space – harming the local economy.

In Suffolk, the move has been widely supported by the public and local businesses.

How is CPE being managed in Suffolk?

Suffolk County Council (SCC) has civil parking enforcement powers and is working with local councils to implement CPE.

Local councils, which already employ parking service teams to manage their public car parks will extend their role to include on-street parking.

East Suffolk, Ipswich Borough and West Suffolk Councils will undertake enforcement in their own areas.

Ipswich Borough and West Suffolk Councils will work with Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils to undertake enforcement in these two areas. See the [parking enforcement areas](#).

Will the police still be able to take action after 6 April?

The police will retain powers to enforce:

- dangerous or obstructive parking;
- vehicles parked on pedestrian crossings and zig zag lines;
- moving vehicle violations, such as speeding and going through 'no entry' signs.

Most parking violations, however, will become civil offences dealt with by the local authority.

What will be the impact on illegal parking?

CPE will lead to a significant improvement in parking practices across the county, promoting the benefits of good parking and enforcing where necessary. It will reduce unsafe parking, make sure emergency vehicles can get through, reduce impact on local businesses by improving turnover of parking spaces and reduce environmental impact by tackling congestion and idling engines.

How many officers will be patrolling across Suffolk?

Across Suffolk there will be 62 civil enforcement officers patrolling (including Ipswich).

What areas will be patrolled and how often?

All areas where there are traffic regulations.

Teams will be focused on areas where illegal parking has the most impact on road safety and congestion. Busy town centre streets are likely to be checked every day. Patrolling will be carried out throughout the year.

What type of traffic regulations will be enforced?

CPE applies to parking rules, including stopping and waiting. Some traffic regulations will continue to be enforced by the police (see above).

What is the penalty for drivers who park illegally?

There are two levels of Penalty Charge:

- £70 for the more serious offences, such as parking on yellow lines
- £50 for less serious offences, such as overstaying in a limited waiting bay.

Both charges are reduced by 50% if paid within 14 days.

What should I do if I receive a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN)?

The back of the ticket will give information about how to make a payment and, if necessary, how to challenge the charge.

Can a Penalty Charge Notice be challenged?

Yes. A vehicle owner can dispute a Penalty Charge Notice at three stages:

- 'Informal challenges' or 'informal representations' against the PCN before the authority has served a Notice to Owner (NtO);
- 'Formal representation' to the authority once a NtO has been served
- Through an independent adjudicator, if a formal representation is rejected and a Notice of Rejection is issued.

How is the challenge considered?

The informal and formal representations are considered by a qualified notice processing team employed by the issuing authority. These teams are trained to understand, consider and respond to challenges.

It is not possible for elected councillors nor staff not employed in the notice processing team to be involved when considering a challenge.

An appeal against a Notice of Rejection issued by the authority is considered by an independent adjudicator. At any stage, it is possible that the Penalty Charge Notice could be withdrawn.

When is a Notice to Owner served?

When a vehicle is observed violating parking regulations. This will either be handed to the driver, attached to the vehicle or sent in the post.

The vehicle owner then has 28 days to pay the charge.

What happens if a Penalty Charge Notice or Notice to Owner is not paid?

If payment for either of these is not received within 28 days, nor successfully challenged, the issuing authority will issue a Charge Certificate, which could lead to enforcement agents taking action to recover the debt.

In addition to the penalty charge being collected, the costs of administration and collecting the debt are also collected from the owner of the vehicle.

Will cars be clamped, or towed away?

It is possible for vehicles to be clamped or towed away, in rare circumstances.

The most likely would be if more than three Penalty Charge Notices had been issued for the vehicle which haven't been paid, nor successfully challenged.

Is CPE just a way to make money?

The aim of CPE is to achieve 100% compliance of parking regulations.

If that was to occur there would be no income from penalty charges. However, if drivers choose to park illegally, they should expect to receive a Penalty Charge Notice.

Fines associated with parking will be retained in Suffolk to support the cost of enforcement. Any surplus will be spent on local transport and environmental improvements.

Are cars allowed to park on pavements?

No. If a vehicle is parked on a pavement where there are relevant parking regulations in place, a Penalty Charge Notice will be issued.

Parking regulations include the pavement and verge. Where parking regulations are not present, this becomes a police matter.

What other instances of poor parking will be addressed?

Enforcement action can be taken against vehicles that are parked across a dropped kerb. Enforcement action will only be considered against a vehicle parked across a driveway if requested by the owner of the property.

Enforcement action can also be taken against vehicles that are double parked or parked more than 50cm from the edge of the road.

I will struggle to park close to home due to regulations. What can I do?

Nobody has a right to park outside their home, but the chance of being able to are increased where there is a residents' parking scheme in place, or when a resident has purchased a permit.

Where there is a significant demand for parking, it may be possible to introduce new resident parking schemes. Yellow lines aid road safety, traffic flow and ease congestion and drivers are not permitted to park on yellow lines.

Where can I report illegal parking from 6 April?

You will be able to report areas and incidents of illegal parking, which officers can respond to as required.

Please use the parking enforcement areas first to identify the council responsible for enforcement. Illegal parking can be reported using the following:

East Suffolk Council: use the website www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/parking

Ipswich Borough Council: use the website www.ipswich.gov.uk/content/report-parking-problem

West Suffolk Council: use the website www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/parking