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CONSULTATION

Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) Levels for Decriminalised Parking Enforcement

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Foreword

Since 1997, 23 local authorities in Scotland have introduced decriminalised parking enforcement (DPE) regimes into their areas. These regimes enable local authorities to administer their own parking penalty charge schemes to encourage compliance with on-street parking controls.

Parking policies are an essential part of a local authority's traffic management strategy as they are designed to effectively manage the traffic network, improve and maintain traffic flows whilst reducing congestion.

The integration of enforcement powers and parking policy enhances a local authority's accountability to its residents, through better monitoring of the effectiveness of the parking controls in place to ensure that their parking policy is responsive to public needs.

However, parking has become a contentious issue across our towns and cities as we seek to improve the country's health and encourage active travel whilst making our streets more accessible for all.

For enforcement to be effective, penalty charges for parking infringements need to be set at an appropriate level. Following on from a rise in the maximum level of charge in 2023, we committed to a further review in the coming years. This is why the Scottish Government is seeking your views on proposals that relate to the Government's existing guidance on penalty charge levels.

Responding to this consultation

About this consultation

Consultation is an essential part of the policy making process. It gives us the opportunity to seek your opinions. This consultation details issues under consideration and asks you questions about what we are proposing.

Responses will be analysed and used as part of the policy decision making process, along with a range of other available information and evidence. Responses to this consultation will help to inform any changes to guidance on the levels of penalty charges.

How to respond

To encourage wide participation, the Scottish Government has created a number of ways for you to engage with this consultation. You can respond online, by email or by post.

Details on how you can do this are highlighted in the following table.

(Note - The consultation will also be available in alternative formats on request, including Large Print, Braille and Easy Read.)

Table of response methods

Online	You can use the response form on the Scottish Government's consultation hub, Citizen Space at: Please complete the Respondent Information Form. (Annex A).	You can save and return to your response at any time while the consultation is open. Please ensure that your response is submitted before the consultation closes at midnight on 30 January 2026. You will automatically be emailed a copy of your response after you submit it. If you choose this method, you will be
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		directed to complete the Respondent Information Form, which lets us know how you wish your response to be handled and whether you are happy for it to be made public.
Email	Send us your response in an email to: roadpolicy@transport.gov.scot Please include a completed Respondent Information Form (Annex A).	
Post	Send your response to: Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) Levels for Decriminalised Parking Enforcement Consultation Road Policy Team Transport Scotland 5th Floor 177 Bothwell Street Glasgow G2 7ER Please include a completed Respondent Information Form (Annex A).	

Deadline

The deadline for responses is 30 January 2026.

Need assistance?

If you need support in answering this consultation or have a query about the consultation process you can send your query to: roadpolicy@transport.gov.scot.

or in writing to :

Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) Levels for Decriminalised Parking Enforcement
Consultation
Road Policy Team
Transport Scotland
5th Floor
177 Bothwell Street
Glasgow
G2 7ER

Next Steps

After the consultation has closed we will analyse all of the responses received and use your feedback to help inform any required changes to guidance on the levels of PCNs. After the consultation period closes we will publish responses at <https://consult.gov.scot>, where we have been given permission to do so.

The responses to the consultation and analysis will be published in due course.

Setting the scene

Introduction

The Road Traffic Act 1991 introduced provisions enabling the decriminalisation of most non-endorsable parking offences in London and permitted similar arrangements to be introduced elsewhere throughout the UK. The relevant provisions of the 1991 Act were commenced in Scotland in June 1997 and, to date, 23 out of 32 Scottish local authorities have obtained DPE powers. Information about which local authorities have DPE powers can be found at the following link: [Parking Enforcement](#).

Under the scheme, participating local authorities administer their own parking penalty schemes including the issuing of PCNs to motorists breaching parking controls in specified areas. The DPE regime seeks to ensure that parking policies are implemented effectively and the underlying objective of DPE operation should be to achieve 100% compliance with parking controls and therefore no penalty charges.

In areas with DPE, stationary traffic offences cease to be criminal offences enforced by the police and instead become civil penalties administered by local authorities. Enforcement of certain parking offences such as obstructive or dangerous parking remains the responsibility of Police Scotland.

Parking policies are an essential part of a local authority's traffic management strategy and should be designed to manage the traffic network effectively, improving or maintaining traffic flow and reducing congestion. This improves road safety and the local environment and encourages, where appropriate, increased use of more sustainable and healthy forms of travel.

The integration of enforcement powers and parking policy should enhance local authority accountability to its residents for overall parking policy, as well as enabling better monitoring of the effectiveness and value of parking controls to ensure that such parking policy is responsive to public needs. A breach of parking rules within an area where DPE is in force will require payment to the local authority of a penalty charge. Proceeds from on-street parking enforcement is not an additional revenue source for local authorities and is used to finance their parking enforcement procedures. Any surplus accrued by local authorities from their DPE regimes is ring-fenced and may only be used for certain transport-related purposes, including the provision and maintenance of off-street parking, the provision or operation of (or facilities for) public passenger transport services or for road improvement projects in the local authority area.

In 2021, the Scottish Government undertook a public consultation on proposals that relate to the Government's existing guidance on penalty charge levels and also the amount of the penalty charge for the parking prohibitions contained in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 ([Consultation on Penalty Charge Notices for Parking Enforcement - Scottish Government consultations - Citizen Space](#)). Feedback obtained from this consultation is available at the following link: [Penalty Charge Notices for Parking Enforcement - Consultation Analysis Report | Transport Scotland](#).

Purpose of this consultation

This consultation focuses on penalty charges for parking enforcement. The level of parking charges are currently set in accordance with guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers. The long-standing guidance was updated most recently in February 2023 when the maximum level of charge was increased from £60 up to £100, effective from April 2023.

This consultation will consider matters including views on whether the current level of charges are appropriate, whether they should be increased or whether the Scottish Ministers guidance that sets the maximum levels should be removed, which would have the effect of leaving local authorities to set their own maximum levels. This could result in different local authorities setting different levels of charges.

We are keen to hear the opinions of stakeholders and interested parties on the levels of charges and whether this level should change.

We hope that members of the public respond to this consultation where possible. We appreciate that some of the consultation questions are technical in nature (or apply to duties applicable to local authorities) but the level of PCNs could have a direct impact on numerous individuals. As such, we would encourage everyone to respond to any or all of those areas where you feel you have a contribution to make.

Current/Future Maximum Levels for PCNs

In early 2023, Scottish Ministers reviewed guidance that is in place which sets a limit on the amount local authorities can charge for PCNs related to parking offences under DPE. At that time, a commitment was made to review that level after 2 years in operation and we are now seeking your views on this.

The Scottish Ministers guidance allows authorities to choose between a lower or higher tier for PCN charges, with the maximum levels capped at £80 (reducing to £40 if paid within 14 days) and £100 (reducing to £50 if paid within 14 days). The maximum amount that could be charged after the issuing of a charge certificate increased to £120 or £150.

While the guidance may constrain local authorities, it is designed to ensure consistency and fairness across Scotland when setting charges that reflect local circumstances, enforcement costs and compliance goals.

Question 1: Do you agree or disagree that the current maximum levels for PCNs, currently set at £80 & £100 (reducing by 50% if paid within 14 days) are appropriate?

Question 2: Which of the following four options would be your preferred choice:

- a) the current level of £100 (reducing to £50 if paid within 14 days);
- b) £120 (reducing to £60 if paid within 14 days);
- c) at a (potentially different) level set independently by each local authority; or
- d) something else, please provide an explanation.

Question 3: Option C for question 2 would mean removing current Scottish Ministers guidance on maximum PCN levels, leaving each local authority to set their own maximum levels independently. Do you anticipate any positive or negative effects should option C be implemented?



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