

Press release: Boost for drivers as government backs single appeals service

- Parking Bill now heads to the House of Lords
- The Bill now includes amendment to create 'one-stop shop' for motorists to appeal private parking fines
- New code of practice will also be developed to tackle rogue private parking firms

Thousands of drivers are set to benefit after the government backed a 'one-stop shop' for appeals for private parking fines today (23 November 2018).

The [Parking \(Code of Practice\) Bill](#), which will deliver on a manifesto commitment to tackle rogue parking operators, received backing of the House of Commons. It will make it easier for drivers to challenge unfair tickets from rogue private parking firms.

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

A new single, independent appeals service will mean drivers handed unfair tickets from private parking operators will have the clarity and confidence in knowing where to turn to appeal. These changes will tackle bad practice, bringing consistency and fairness for drivers and the industry.

Local Government Minister, Rishi Sunak MP, said:

Millions of drivers use private car parks every day, and far too many of them are receiving unjust fines at the hands of rogue firms.

We need a fairer, clearer and more consistent system that puts the brake on the unfair practices being experienced by too many drivers.

I am delighted that MPs have unanimously backed these changes and that the government is on track to create a better system for our nation's motorists.

Industry bodies also gave support for the amendment to create a single appeals service.

Steve Gooding, Director of the RAC Foundation, said:

We particularly welcome the proposal for a single, independent

appeals service, which, together with a single, clear code of practice should establish a better, clearer framework and a level playing field that is fairer for all.

Andrew Pester, the British Parking Association's Chief Executive, said:

We welcome Sir Greg Knight's amendments which chime with our call for a single standard body, single code of practice and a single independent appeals service.

This framework provides a unique opportunity to deliver greater consistency and consumer confidence – and as a not-for-profit association we are focused on working closely with government and others, including consumer groups, to push for a positive outcome for all.

A stringent new Code of Practice will also be developed by the Secretary of State Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP in conjunction with motorists' groups and other experts.

These measures build on action the 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.

The [Parking \(Code of Practice\) Bill 2017-19](#) was passed by MPs at its Third Reading in the House of Commons and will now enter the House of Lords.

The Parking Bill will cover England, Wales, and Scotland – creating consistency for motorists anywhere in Britain.

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.

An amendment today expanded the existing levy under the Bill described above to cover the costs of appointing and maintaining a single appeals service.

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.

Press release: Boost for drivers as government backs single appeals service

The government backs a 'one-stop shop' for motorists to appeal private parking fines.

Speech: Smart meters are the smart choice, now and in the future

Dial-up internet access, VHS and rotary phones are quite rightly consigned to history, and now we can order anything at a click of a button and can stream Netflix from your smart TV while booking our next holiday on your smart phone.

Given this technological revolution in our daily lives, it's quite frankly baffling that many of us still think it's normal to grab a torch, sweep away cobwebs and hunker down under the stairs to get readings from our ancient, dusty electricity and gas meters. But if you don't face this hassle, you risk an estimated bill way out of line with your actual energy use, potentially paying more or less each month causing cash flows and direct debits to fluctuate, making it difficult for families to budget.

It doesn't have to be like this. The smart choice is a smart meter. Customers across Great Britain have already chosen to install more than 12 million smart meters in their homes and small businesses. These devices give them real-time information about their energy use in pounds and pence and provide meter readings to suppliers automatically, putting an end to estimated bills. Smart meters give people control over their energy use, help them make choices to save money and give households more information so they can switch to cheaper deals. Better information also encourages consumers to take more savvy actions, such as buying more energy efficient appliances or switching to LED lighting.

Our intelligent, data driven, and smarter energy system is taking shape and smart meters are the key link in the chain to make this a reality. Not only will a smarter system deliver cheaper energy for consumers it will also help us meet our climate change commitments by ensuring our energy use is more flexible and efficient. A resilient energy system will also accommodate more

renewable generation and provide clean power for the growing fleet of electric vehicles.

The report by the National Audit Office today highlights the progress of the rollout so far as well as raising some concerns about the technology and costs. What it doesn't acknowledge is how the UK has led the world in evolving its energy market to meet the needs of customers, and smart meters are the next step. Our rollout covers all household and small business energy needs – gas, electricity and prepayment – and will meet their requirements both now and in the future. Yes there will be some temporary teething problems with a technological overhaul of this ambition and scale, but these are small speed bumps in our journey to a smart energy revolution that will change our lives for the better.

The business case for smart meters remains overwhelmingly positive with nearly £17 billion worth of savings forecast for everyone from this technology alone. When you consider there are up to £40 billion of benefits a smarter system will deliver between now and 2050, and you can see why we remain determined to meet our commitment of everyone being offered a smart meter by the end of 2020.

But I am aware of consumers' concerns so I want to reassure consumers that we are not complacent and issues with switching will start being resolved as meters are moved into our new national smart metering network. There will always be shifting sands in a first of its kind programme of this size and significance, and we are working hard to iron out operational issues as it progresses. Pushing back the rollout now – as some have suggested – would only delay millions of households from enjoying the substantial benefits of moving to a smarter energy system, and take the wind out of the sails of a rollout which is adding nearly half a million new meters a month.

By 2030 this tiny seemingly inconsequential device, tucked away in a corner of your kitchen, will wipe £1.2 billion per year off people's bills – an average annual saving of £47 per household.

If we all got one and use it to better inform our energy use, we could save enough to power every home in Aberdeen, Cardiff and Manchester for a year – every year.

Years from now, getting a reading from the analogue meter in a cupboard under the stairs will seem as strange as unhooking your landline to connect to the internet or playing your favourite song on a cassette player. Smart meters will make our lives simpler and easier and our bills more affordable, now and in the long-term. They are clearly the smart choice.

News story: Armed Forces Minister praises Quick Reaction Alert Force on RAF Coningsby visit

In the last month alone RAF Typhoons have scrambled on four occasions to respond to Russian aircraft posing a risk to civilian flights. Since the beginning of 2016, there have been 13 scrambles from RAF Coningsby either responding to Russian military aircraft or a possible airborne terrorist threat.

Armed Forces Minister Mark Lancaster said:

As we've seen in recent years our world-leading RAF stand ready to protect our skies at a moment's notice.

Be it intercepting Russian aircraft probing the boundary of our airspace or responding to a potential terrorist threat, their rapid response ensures our airspace and our people are safe.

At the Lincolnshire base, Mark Lancaster met with the Typhoon pilots and engineers who make up Quick Reaction Alert Force and took part in a simulation of the rapid scrambles they undertake whenever an alert is launched.

The RAF work closely with NATO partners to monitor Russian long-range aircraft moving through international airspace and are ready 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to scramble to intercept and escort such aircraft whenever they fly within NATO air policing areas or pose a risk to civilian flights by not communicating with Air Traffic Control.

The Armed Forces Minister also received an update on Project Centurion, the programme being undertaken at RAF Coningsby to transfer attack capability from Tornado to Typhoon, making it a world-leading multi-combat aircraft.

Press release: Knighthood conferred and Privy Council Appointments: November 2018



Knighthood

The Queen has been pleased to approve that the honour of Knighthood be conferred upon The Rt. Hon. John Hayes CBE MP.

Privy Council Appointments

The Queen has been pleased to approve that Christopher Pincher MP and Mark Tami MP be sworn of Her Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council.

- John Hayes MP is the Conservative MP for South Holland and The Deepings and former Minister of State for Transport
- Christopher Pincher MP is the Conservative MP for Tamworth
- Mark Tami MP is the Labour MP for Alyn and Deeside

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