

Civil Parking Enforcement and Health & Care Worker Permit Scheme

Report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

1. Background

Whilst the civil parking enforcement service provides regular annual reports in line with PATROL (Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London) guidance, this report aims to update on key areas of work for the service.

Our annual reports can be viewed here:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/parking/how-parking-is-regulated/>

This report also provides an update on the Health & Care Worker Permit Scheme.

2. Customer Service

The service receives regular requests for enforcement via our “report it” webpage (<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem/report-a-parking-problem/>) this allows the service to target enforcement to meet customer needs and also provides intelligence to shape future deployment.

The service generally receives in excess of 200 customer contacts requesting enforcement every month, in total 2665 contacts were received in 2021.

Meeting customer needs is a priority for the service and forms one of the key performance indicators (KPIs). Staff rotas and working practices were reviewed in November 2021 with the intention of ensuring continued improvement to the way in which the service responds to requests for enforcement.

For the purpose of this report the service has reviewed performance through 2021 and then for December and January after new rotas had bedded in.

- **KPI1 80% of actionable customer requests attended and responded to within one week and 100% within one month**

The target of 80% of customer requests being attended within 5 days has seen significant improvement since November 2021 and is now being consistently achieved.

This is primarily due to a change in working practices to extend the hours of lone working until 1900 (where duties after 1800 would be the return journey by vehicle) this enhances the ability to address requests for early evening enforcement in more remote communities as part of a routine patrol.

The aim of responding to all requests within one month was only missed on 11 occasions in 2021.

- **KPI2 80% of faulty pay and display machines visited and feedback within 24 hours of report**

The team aims to support the pay & display asset by addressing basic machine maintenance issues such as coin and ticket jams. Performance in this respect remains an area for improvement as on average in 2021 only 63.5% (75 out of 118 reported faults) were attended to within the 24 hour period.

This is due to a number of issues including staff resource within the parking team, and also staffing shortages within the cash collection contractor. The impact of delayed cash collections resulted in more members of the public reporting machines not working when in reality they are just full and not able to take any more money.

In partnership with the wider Traffic Management Team contactless card readers are being added to key locations (approx. 10%) to reduce the need for physical cash payment along with continued promotion of “pay by phone / app” options.

- **KPI3 Achieve an average of over 85% of planned enforcement coverage**

Since the reworking of rotas an area of significant improvement is the ability to attend to planned beats.

There are 23 beats developed for the County to deliver regular enforcement to key communities, with each beat having a priority set of roads. The targets for attendance on each beat can vary depending on the size of the beat and priority. Staff vacancies, absences and the need to attend to reactive requests for enforcement impact the ability to meet this KPI.

Whilst the service continues to carry a number of vacancies, performance with the available resource has improved across the board, and whilst further improvement is sought, there has been a 21% improvement since rotas were updated.

3. Conflict Management

It is unfortunate that verbal abuse and aggression from the public is becoming a regular feature for all frontline local authority staff. The parking service shares these experiences.

It has always been of paramount importance for the service to keep staff safe and provide both managerial support and the latest technology (such as body worn video, BWV) to do so.

All Civil Enforcement Officer's (CEO's) are encouraged to report any incident to their supervisor and to ensure it is recorded on the corporate incident system, OSHENS. Each CEO will be contacted whilst at the time to ask if they are happy to continue, take a break, or be stood down for the day. Also, to ask if any immediate help/support is required. A full de-brief is then set up with the individual within 7 days to discuss the event and associated paperwork completed. This is then also followed up in their monthly 1-2-1 to ensure if anything further is required by the CEO.

In the de-brief the event is discussed and includes as a minimum the following,

- how the CEO was feeling then and now

- if medical help was required
- if the incident required reporting to the Police
- if any counselling is required
- if BWV was activated.

The CEO will give permission for the BWV footage to be viewed along with the supervisor, this is then recorded as evidential as this may be required for future use.

Each CEO has their own allocated BWV device which they are required to wear, these units are activated at their discretion. The current units utilise latest technology allowing capture of the previous 30 seconds prior to activation, this allows the detail of a quickly escalating event to be captured.

All CEO's are actively encouraged to use the BWV when they feel something may escalate or they feel the need to record a conversation. They will always let the individual / member of public know that they are recording and this often de-escalates the situation. Current BWV have a front facing screen so the individual can see themselves on the camera allowing for immediate reflection on their behaviour.

Incidents remain a regular feature but are carefully managed. In the last 3 years we have had 77 reported incidents (on average 2.1 per month) with the majority relating to verbal abuse (97.3%).

Of the 77 incidents, 11 (14.3%) required escalation to the Police, the majority of these have occurred in the past 12 months. The assessment is that this is due to two factors, firstly, the team are becoming more confident in Police response and are empowered to escalate, and secondly the experiences with public for frontline staff has become more challenging as we have moved through the pandemic period.

4. Recruitment

Since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020 recruitment for all services has been challenging, as a result the parking enforcement team currently carries a number of vacancies. Most notably there are 19.5 full time equivalent (FTE) vacancies out of a design establishment of 46.5 FTE; a shortfall of 41.9%.

However, as discussed earlier in this report the team are motivated and continue to deliver a good service with the available resources. Overtime allows existing staff to provide additional hours reducing the shortfall.

The team regularly advertise vacancies and are recruiting to fill those. Adverts and incentives are being reviewed with colleagues in Human Resources and Recruitment to ensure adverts reach appropriate candidates and the opportunities offered by Devon County Council are promoted.

5. Health & Care Worker Permit Scheme

In December 2019 the Council started a pilot of a Care & Health Worker permit scheme. It allowed those care workers, enablers, medical professional, and social workers who undertake their duties at their client or patients' homes to park using

resident permit only, limited waiting or pay and display spaces for the duration of their scheduled appointment. In the absence of any available parking spaces, the permit allows the holder an exemption to use a yellow line restriction for up to an hour. The same rules apply as those issued to Blue Badge holders, but instead of 3 hours parking only 1 would be granted under the scheme.

The scheme saw a massive increase in applications from March 2020 at the beginning of the pandemic from across numerous aspects of the care and social care sector. The team prioritized resources to turn around applications for permits within 24 hours of receipt and get clocks dispatched by first class post, NHS Couriers or hand delivered to offices to be used by staff.

To assist with the extra workload on those providers and for extra measures in personal safety arising from guidance being issued the exemption for use on yellow lines was increased from 1 hour to 2 hours.

In September 2020 account managers were consulted about the effectiveness of the scheme and management of permits and time clocks for their teams via the online service, MiPermit. They were invited to comment on any changes that should be considered which they felt would improve the benefits to the users.

The overwhelming majority who replied supported the making of the scheme a permanent one. It was also noted that many felt that the 1 hour allowed on yellow lines was insufficient and there was some confusion over how long they could park in parking spaces. They asked if it could be simplified.

In 2021, the scheme was updated to further meet users needs:

- allowing up to 3 hours parking on “no waiting” restrictions (increasing from 1 hour previously permitted),
- the use of a permit be simplified and parking limited to maximum of 3 hours from the start time of the parking period set by the user as indicated on the time clock for all the current exempted restriction types namely, limited waiting, residents parking, pay & display and yellow lines (so long as there was no restriction on “loading”) when undertaking a visit to a client,
- timeclocks to be updated and of improved quality (similar to the blue badge issued to those with mobility or hidden disabilities).

Nearly 10,000 permits had been made available to service providers around the County and the scheme has been well received by social service teams, the NHS, charities and private company providers, without charge. The scheme also provided vital assistance to frontline teams as the pandemic has been managed across the county.

6. Next Steps

The next steps are to continue with recruitment to ensure that a high quality service can continue to be provided allowing enforcement to be deployed where it is most needed to serve the needs of our communities.

The service will also continue to invest in technology both in terms of staff protection and provision of paid parking, with an emphasis on reducing the need for physical payment and promotion of pay by phone / app options.

Meg Booth

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Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Highway Management: Councillor Stuart Hughes

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
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Nil

Civil Parking Enforcement and Health & Care Worker Permit Scheme - Final