Vehicle Removal, Relocation and Storage Policy

Parking contraventions, persistent evaders and the vehicle pound

London Borough of Ealing

Ealing Parking Services

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1. Introduction

1.1 The London Borough of Ealing ("the Council") is committed to a fair, transparent and proportionate approach to the removal, relocation and storage of vehicles. This policy sets out when the Council will remove a vehicle parked in contravention of parking restrictions, when it will relocate a vehicle instead, which vehicles it will not take to the pound, and how vehicles are stored, released and, if unclaimed, disposed of.

1.2 Removal is one of the most intrusive powers available to a parking authority. It is used to keep roads and footways safe and clear, to deal with persistent evaders and Blue Badge and permit fraud, and to protect parking for residents and disabled people. It is not used to raise revenue, and the Council sets no targets or incentives for the number of vehicles removed.

1.3 This policy should be read with the Council's Parking Enforcement Policy and the Equality Impact Assessment for Vehicle Removal, Relocation and Pound Services (November 2026). The operating detail for officers and the removal contractor is set out in the supporting Standard Operating Procedure, which must follow this policy.

2. Strategic context

2.1 This policy supports the Council Plan 2026–30, "Values in action", in particular:

- **Mission 5:** take decisive action to tackle the climate emergency and keep our streets clean and our roads clear. This includes the new kerbside strategy (deliverable 5.2) and the Ealing Broadway Safer Streets scheme (5.3).
- **Mission 4:** crack down on crime and antisocial behaviour, including the Male Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (4.5) and enabling communities to deliver safe local events (4.6).
- **Mission 7:** make our economy inclusive and bring down the cost of living, including access to financial support (7.2 and 7.3) and accessible services (7.4 to 7.6).
- **Mission 3:** the homelessness strategy, which this policy supports through its approach to vehicles that are being lived in.
- The guiding value **"Growth across all 7 towns"**, which requires services to work fairly in every town.

2.2 The Council's 24/7 abandoned vehicle service (Council Plan deliverable 5.4) operates under separate legislation and is outside the scope of this policy. Any night-time removal under that service should still observe the welfare, Blue Badge, wheelchair accessible vehicle and Motability safeguards in sections 7 and 13.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Approval Officer	The Head of Parking or a designated senior officer in Parking Services authorised to sanction removals, early disposals and other decisions reserved by this policy.
Authorised Officer	A Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO), Blue Badge investigator or Parking Services officer authorised to request or direct a removal.

Term	Definition
CEO	Civil Enforcement Officer employed by Greener Ealing Limited (GEL) or the Council.
Designated parking place	A parking place designated by order under sections 32, 35 or 45 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
FRV	Foreign registered vehicle.
GEL	Greener Ealing Limited, the Council's wholly owned company providing parking enforcement.
Motability vehicle	A vehicle leased through the Motability Scheme. The registered keeper is Motability Operations Ltd, not the disabled customer.
Persistent evader	A vehicle with three or more penalty charges that are outstanding, meaning unpaid after the statutory time for payment, representations and appeals has passed, or unpaid after representations and appeals have been rejected.
Relocation	Moving a vehicle to another lawful position on the same or a nearby road, free of charge, instead of taking it to the pound.
Removal Contractor	The Council's appointed contractor for removal, transport, storage and release of vehicles, currently NSL Ltd.
TRACE	The London-wide service (0300 077 0100, trace.london) that records removals and relocations so that owners can find their vehicle.
WAV	Wheelchair accessible vehicle: a vehicle adapted to carry a wheelchair user seated in their wheelchair, for example with a rear ramp, lift or lowered floor. For this policy, a privately used WAV excludes licensed taxis, licensed private hire vehicles and commercial fleet vehicles.

4. Scope

4.1 This policy applies to the removal and relocation of vehicles that have been issued a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) within the Council's civil enforcement area, both on the highway and in Council car parks and housing estate parking areas regulated by a traffic management order.

4.2 It does not apply to abandoned, untaxed or nuisance vehicles dealt with under the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978 and related powers, which are subject to separate procedures, or to private land not under Council control.

4.3 Where Council land is not regulated by a traffic management order, the Council cannot remove vehicles under this policy, but may ask the police to use their powers.

5. Legal framework

5.1 The Council's powers derive from the following:

- **Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984**, sections 99 to 103: the power to make regulations for removal, and the provisions on disposal and the recovery of charges.
- **Removal and Disposal of Vehicles Regulations 1986** (as amended), in particular regulation 5C, which allows removal of a vehicle in a civil enforcement area once a

PCN has been served. Regulation 5C also sets the minimum waiting periods in designated parking places (section 13).

- **Traffic Management Act 2004**, Part 6 (civil enforcement), section 87 (the duty to have regard to the Secretary of State's statutory guidance) and Schedule 9 (setting of London charges by London Councils with the Mayor's approval).
- **Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions (Approved Devices, Charging Guidelines and General Provisions) (England) Regulations 2022** (SI 2022/71).
- **Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions (Representations and Appeals) (England) Regulations 2022** (SI 2022/576), Part 4 (representations and appeals about removed vehicles).
- **London Local Authorities and Transport for London Acts 2003 and 2008**, where they provide additional powers for London authorities. The Council does not currently use the persistent evader powers in Part 5 of the 2008 Act (see paragraph 5.2). Legal Services should confirm any other sections relied on.

5.2 Part 5 of the London Local Authorities and Transport for London Act 2008. If the Council decides to use its powers under Part 5 of the 2008 Act, this policy will be amended to reflect those additional powers, and the Equality Impact Assessment will be reviewed at the same time, before the powers are used.

- **Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970**, section 21, and **Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984**, section 117 (Blue Badge misuse and the power to inspect and retain badges).
- **Equality Act 2010**, section 149 (the public sector equality duty), and the **Human Rights Act 1998** (in particular Article 8 and Article 1 of the First Protocol).
- **Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977** (goods left in vehicles), the **Protection of Freedoms Act 2012** (private land), and **UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018**.

6. Principles and priorities

6.1 Every removal must be lawful, necessary and proportionate. Officers will consider whether relocation or a PCN alone would achieve the same result, and will take into account any information about vulnerability that is apparent or given to them.

6.2 Removals will be prioritised in the following order:

Priority	Circumstance
1	Vehicles causing danger or serious obstruction, including on zig-zags, school keep-clear markings, bus stops, dropped kerbs, footways and cycle tracks, or blocking emergency access.
2	Persistent evaders, including foreign registered vehicles, and vehicles without registration plates or displaying false plates.
3	Vehicles displaying a fraudulent, stolen, cancelled or misused Blue Badge, or a fraudulent parking permit or other parking device.
4	Other contraventions where the vehicle is preventing residents, disabled people or loading from using the space, and no other action would resolve the problem.

7. Vehicles that will not be taken to the pound

7.1 Vehicles displaying a valid Blue Badge. These will not be taken to the pound. Where one is causing danger or obstruction it will be relocated to the nearest safe, lawful place, within sight where possible, and TRACE will be told. Immobilisation of these vehicles is prohibited by regulation 14(1) of SI 2022/71.

7.2 Privately used wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs). These will not be taken to the pound, whether or not a Blue Badge is displayed. Where one is causing danger or obstruction it will be relocated nearby. A PCN will be issued as normal.

7.3 Motability vehicles. Where a vehicle is known to be a Motability vehicle (for example, because the officer or the Council has identified it), it will be relocated rather than removed wherever possible. Removal to the pound requires Approval Officer authorisation. Motability Operations will be notified promptly, and the vehicle will never be disposed of early.

7.4 Diplomatic vehicles. These will be relocated only where causing danger or obstruction, in line with Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office guidance.

7.5 Emergency and statutory vehicles on duty, including police, fire, ambulance and vehicles carrying out emergency or statutory works.

7.6 Occupied vehicles, and any vehicle in which a child or animal is present.

7.7 Vehicles that appear to be lived in. These will not be removed without a welfare assessment and referral to Housing Needs under the agreed protocol, except where there is immediate danger. Where removal is later approved, belongings will be secured and the decision recorded, including how proportionality was considered.

8. Persistent evaders

8.1 A persistent evader vehicle may be removed when it is found parked in contravention and a PCN has been served for that contravention.

8.2 Foreign registered vehicles meeting the persistent evader criteria will be treated as persistent evaders. Removal is often the only effective means of securing payment from them, and the same criteria apply as for UK vehicles.

8.3 Before removal, the officer will check that the outstanding PCNs relate to the vehicle in front of them. Where there are signs of cloning, such as a mismatch of make, model or colour, or a keeper reporting cloning, the vehicle will not be removed as a persistent evader and the case will be referred to the police.

9. Blue Badge misuse and fraud

9.1 A vehicle may be removed where it displays:

- a counterfeit, copied, altered or stolen Blue Badge;
- a badge that has been cancelled, reported lost or stolen, or belongs to a holder who has died;
- a valid badge that is being misused, for example where the holder is not present and is not being collected or dropped off; or
- an organisational badge where the organisation no longer exists.

9.2 Before the vehicle is removed, the officer will inspect and, where there are reasonable grounds, retain the badge using the powers in section 21 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, so that the evidence is kept and the badge is not returned to the vehicle at the pound. The case will be referred to the Council's Blue Badge investigators to consider prosecution.

9.3 Badges still in the vehicle at the pound. Where a vehicle has been removed for Blue Badge fraud or misuse and the badge is still in it, the pound will be instructed to secure the badge when the vehicle arrives, so it cannot be returned to the person collecting. The badge will be photographed where it was found, placed in a sealed evidence bag, logged and held securely, and passed to the Council's Blue Badge investigators within two working days. Only a person with the power to retain badges will take it into retention: a civil enforcement officer (including pound staff whom the Council has authorised for this purpose), a Blue Badge investigator or a police officer. The person collecting the vehicle will be given a receipt explaining why the badge has been kept and how to ask for it back if they believe it is genuine and valid.

9.4 An expired badge belonging to a genuine holder is not the same as fraud. Officers will use discretion, consider the holder's welfare, and normally issue a PCN rather than remove the vehicle.

9.5 Blue Badge questionnaire. Where a vehicle has been removed for Blue Badge misuse or fraud, the person collecting it will be asked to complete a short questionnaire about the use of the badge found in the vehicle. Completing it is voluntary and does not affect the release of the vehicle, which depends only on the evidence and payment set out in section 15. The form will explain why the information is collected and how it will be used, in line with UK GDPR. Where an offence is suspected, the Council's Blue Badge investigators may invite the person to an interview under caution in line with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.

9.6 Before removing a vehicle parked in a disabled bay without a badge (code 40), the officer will check carefully for a badge that has fallen or been displayed face down.

10. Fraudulent parking devices

10.1 A vehicle may be removed where it displays a counterfeit, altered or otherwise fraudulent resident permit, visitor permit or voucher, pay and display ticket, cashless parking session or other article purporting to be a valid parking permission.

11. Danger and obstruction

11.1 A vehicle parked in contravention that is causing danger or obstruction, or preventing access for emergency vehicles, may be removed immediately after a PCN has been served, subject to section 13. The contraventions most likely to justify removal include:

Code	Description
01 / 02	Parked in a restricted street during prescribed hours, or where waiting and loading restrictions are in force, where this is causing obstruction
25	Parked in a loading place during restricted hours without loading, where the bay is needed

Code	Description
26	Parked more than 50cm from the edge of the carriageway and not within a designated parking place
27	Parked adjacent to a dropped footway
40	Parked in a disabled person's parking place without displaying a valid badge (see paragraph 9.6)
47	Stopped on a restricted bus stop or stand
48	Stopped in a restricted area outside a school
49	Parked wholly or partly on a cycle track or lane
61 / 62	Parked with one or more wheels on or over a footway
99	Stopped on a pedestrian crossing or zig-zag markings

11.2 Vehicles in suspended bays (code 21) will normally be relocated under section 12 rather than taken to the pound.

12. Relocation

12.1 Where a vehicle needs to be moved for highway works, events, filming, emergencies or other temporary restrictions, it will normally be relocated free of charge to the nearest available lawful position rather than taken to the pound. A PCN may still be issued.

12.2 Temporary restrictions will be signed in advance, with notice in community languages for major events and festivals.

12.3 The officer will record the original and new locations with photographs and notify TRACE.

13. On-street removal process

Requests and authorisation

13.1 Removals may be requested by CEOs, Blue Badge investigators and Parking Services officers. Every removal must be sanctioned by an Authorised Officer travelling with the removal vehicle or by an Approval Officer. A CEO travels on the removal truck and authorises each removal at the roadside.

Checks before removal

13.2 Before authorising removal, the officer will:

- confirm that the PCN has been correctly served;
- check whether the vehicle is reported stolen, and whether it is a persistent evader (with the cloning check in paragraph 8.3);
- check for a Blue Badge, whether the vehicle is a WAV or a diplomatic vehicle, and whether it is known to be a Motability vehicle (section 7);
- carry out a welfare check: that no person, child or animal is inside; whether mobility aids, medication or child car seats are visible; whether the vehicle appears to be lived in; and whether removal would leave a vulnerable person stranded.

Waiting periods

Situation	Earliest removal after the PCN is served
Designated parking place: failure to pay, display or leave by the end of the paid period, where the vehicle is a persistent evader	15 minutes (regulation 5C)
Designated parking place: as above, any other vehicle	30 minutes (regulation 5C)
Permit bay without a valid permit (code 16)	30 minutes, unless the vehicle is a persistent evader, pending Legal Services advice
Outside a designated parking place, or causing danger or obstruction	Immediately

Night-time removals

13.3 Between 10pm and 6am, removals will only be carried out for danger or very high priority cases, with Approval Officer authorisation. The officer must be satisfied that removal will not leave a vulnerable person stranded.

Evidence

13.4 The officer will take date- and time-stamped photographs showing the vehicle with the PCN, the vehicle in context with signs and markings, and all four sides of the vehicle including the wheels. The removal will be recorded on body-worn video. The contractor will complete a condition report before removal and again on arrival at the pound.

Driver returns

13.5 If the driver returns before the vehicle has been lifted onto the removal vehicle, it will normally be released at the roadside without a release fee, although the PCN remains payable. It will not be released at the roadside if it is a persistent evader or is displaying a fraudulent Blue Badge or parking device.

13.6 If the driver returns after the vehicle has been lifted, the removal will normally continue. The officer will still consider halting it in the circumstances recognised in Department for Transport guidance, including a doctor on call, a pregnant person or a parent of a disabled child, emergency workers reporting for duty, attendance at a funeral, a police request, or where the person would otherwise be left in a vulnerable situation. The officer will record what was said and the decision taken.

13.7 A PCN will not be cancelled at the roadside. The driver will be told how to make representations.

Notifications

13.8 Every removal and relocation will be notified to TRACE as soon as possible, and recorded on the Council's parking system.

14. The removal contractor and the pound

14.1 The removal contractor is NSL Ltd. Vehicles are stored at the vehicle pound, East Lane Business Park, Wembley HA9 7NA, which is shared with the London Borough of Brent.

Pound hours and contact details are set out in Appendix A, and directions are on the Council's website. The location of the pound is never withheld.

14.2 The removal operation runs Monday to Saturday, with a call-out service for urgent removals. The pound must meet the following standards, which are written into the contract:

- step-free access from the street to the counter, with seating and a safe waiting area;
- translation or interpreting for customers who do not speak English well, free to the customer, which may be a telephone interpreting service or a reliable AI translation tool;
- any printed information given to customers to use Council-approved wording in plain English;
- urgent access at any time, free of charge, to medication, mobility aids, wheelchairs, child car seats and other essential items, with an out-of-hours telephone number;
- a staffed counter, CCTV and a safe, well-lit waiting area;
- recovery vehicles and methods suited to the size and type of vehicle being removed, chosen by the contractor using its operational judgement;
- staff trained in equality, hidden disabilities, Blue Badges, recognising WAV and Motability vehicles, safeguarding, cultural awareness and conflict management.

14.3 Any damage claim will be investigated by the contractor and recorded by Parking Services. The condition reports, photographs and video will be used as evidence.

15. Release of vehicles

Evidence of identity and ownership

15.1 A vehicle will be released only when the person collecting it produces all of the following:

- **the V5C registration certificate** for the vehicle, as evidence of ownership;
- **a full driving licence** (a UK licence, or another licence that is valid for driving in Great Britain);
- **proof of address** dated within the last three months (a utility bill, council tax bill, bank statement, tenancy agreement or benefits letter, including electronic copies); and
- **proof of a valid insurance policy** covering the person to drive the vehicle away from the pound.

15.2 Where the standard documents cannot apply, the following will be accepted instead, subject to the same checks:

- instead of the V5C: for a newly bought vehicle, the V5C/2 new keeper slip and a purchase receipt; or a V62 application with proof of payment; for Motability vehicles, the Motability agreement and named-driver evidence; for hire, lease and company vehicles, written authority from the hire, lease or fleet company; for motor traders, trade insurance listing the vehicle;
- where the person collecting does not hold a driving licence, or will not be driving, a passport or national identity card, with the vehicle driven away by a licensed and insured driver or collected by a recovery company the owner arranges;
- a partner, carer or family member may collect the vehicle with the owner's written authority, producing their own licence and insurance and the owner's V5C.

15.3 Documents in different names (for example after marriage or a change of name, supported by a deed poll or certificate) will be accepted and handled discreetly.

15.4 Where someone cannot produce the evidence, the contractor will refer the case to Parking Services, which will respond on the same working day. People without internet access can present documents in person.

15.5 The vehicle must also be taxed and roadworthy to be driven away. If it cannot lawfully be driven, the owner must arrange for it to be collected.

Charges and payment

15.6 Charges are set London-wide by London Councils and approved by the Mayor of London. The current charges are set out in Appendix A. Before release, the owner must pay the release fee, any storage charges and the PCN issued at the time of removal, at the rate applicable on the date of payment (the discounted rate applies if paid within the discount period).

15.7 Storage charges apply from the second day. They will not build up for any period when the pound is closed to the public.

15.8 Payment can be made at the pound by cash or debit or credit card, including contactless. Someone else may pay at the pound on the owner's behalf. No card surcharge applies.

Information given on release

15.9 Every person collecting a vehicle will be given, in writing and in an accessible format, the statutory notice of their right to make representations and to appeal (section 16). Where it seems appropriate, they will be signposted to the Council's hardship and financial support.

Access to vehicles at the pound

15.10 An owner who needs to retrieve documents to prove ownership, or essential items such as medication, mobility aids or child car seats, will be given accompanied access by two members of staff. Access to essential items is available at any time and free of charge. Items removed will be recorded.

16. Representations and appeals

16.1 Anyone whose vehicle has been removed may make representations to the Council on the grounds set out in regulation 11 of SI 2022/576, including that there were no grounds for removal, that the vehicle had been taken without the owner's consent, or that the charges paid exceeded the amount applicable. Representations should be made within 28 days of the notice given on release.

16.2 The Council will decide representations within 56 days. If it does not, they are treated as accepted. If representations are rejected, the person may appeal to the independent adjudicator at London Tribunals.

16.3 Where representations or an appeal succeed, the release fee and storage charges will be refunded in full.

16.4 The Council will also consider compelling reasons put forward, including disability, financial hardship, caring responsibilities, care experience, domestic abuse and bereavement.

17. Storage, disposal and disclaimed vehicles

17.1 Unclaimed vehicles will be disposed of only after the statutory notices have been served on the registered keeper and the notice period has passed. No vehicle will be disposed of within 35 days of removal. Every disposal requires Approval Officer authorisation.

17.2 Where no keeper can be traced, including foreign registered vehicles, the contractor and the Council will take further tracing steps (using PCN records, international keeper enquiries where available, and the police) before disposal is authorised.

17.3 Early disposal of a vehicle whose value is less than the charges due will only take place with Approval Officer authorisation, after a final notice to the keeper, and never for a Motability vehicle or a vehicle displaying a Blue Badge.

17.4 An owner may disclaim a vehicle and hand it over for disposal by proving ownership, completing a disclaimer form and surrendering the keys and V5C. Release and storage charges will then not be payable, but the PCN and any outstanding PCN debt remain payable. Owners may collect loose personal belongings with accompanied access.

17.5 A former owner may claim any proceeds of sale remaining after the charges have been deducted, within 12 months of disposal.

17.6 Valuable documents and items found in vehicles before disposal (loose items worth more than £100) will be recorded and held by the Council as an involuntary bailee. Notice will be given under sections 12(1) and 12(3) of the Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977 before the items are sold or disposed of. Where no keeper can be traced, items will be held for two months.

18. Safeguarding and data protection

18.1 Officers and contractor staff will report any concern about a vulnerable adult, a child or domestic abuse through the Council's safeguarding procedures.

18.2 Keeper details and records will be handled in line with UK GDPR. No keeper's address will be disclosed to a third party, and particular care will be taken where a survivor of domestic abuse may be at risk.

19. Equality

19.1 In applying this policy, the Council will have due regard to the public sector equality duty. The Equality Impact Assessment (November 2026) identifies the main risks for disabled people, older people, people on low incomes, people with limited English, women alone at night and people living in vehicles. Its actions are reflected throughout this policy.

19.2 Information about removals, the pound and how to challenge a removal will be available in plain English, easy-read and the main community languages, and in print for people who are not online.

20. Monitoring, reporting and review

20.1 The contractor will report daily (by 9am, covering the previous day) on vehicles removed, requests not completed with reasons, TRACE registrations, and incidents.

20.2 Each month, Parking Services will report removals and relocations by reason, contravention code, ward, day and time; time taken to collect; disposals; and cases involving Blue Badges, WAVs and Motability vehicles. Representation and appeal outcomes, complaints and damage claims will be reviewed every quarter for equality themes. A summary will be published in the Annual Parking Report.

20.3 This policy will be reviewed annually, together with the Equality Impact Assessment, and sooner if legislation, the contract or the pound changes.

21. Disclaimers

21.1 Provided the procedures in this policy have been followed, the Council accepts no liability for compensation following the removal or disposal of a vehicle or its contents, without prejudice to any legal right of the owner.

21.2 Nothing in this policy fetters the Council's discretion to consider individual cases on their merits.

Appendix A: Charges and pound details

This schedule may be updated by the Head of Parking without re-adopting the policy, whenever charges or operating details change.

Charge	Amount
Release fee (removal)	£280
Storage (per day, from the second day)	£55
Disposal	£100
Penalty charge	Payable in addition, at the applicable rate

Source: London Councils charges approved by the Mayor of London (MD3328), effective 7 April 2025.

Pound details	
Address	East Lane Business Park, Wembley HA9 7NA
Nearest station	North Wembley (about half a mile)
Counter opening hours	9am to 7pm [days, including Sundays and bank holidays, to be confirmed with NSL]
Telephone	020 8453 3395
Out-of-hours access to essential items	020 8453 3395
Find a removed vehicle	TRACE: 0300 077 0100 or trace.london