

Aug 12, 2019 00:01 BST

## 8 in 10 UK airports increase pick-up and drop-off fees in 2019

With the holiday season in full flow the RAC can reveal that eight in 10 (82%) of the UK's 22 busiest airports\* have increased their short-term charges for picking up and dropping off passengers by car since last year\*\*.

Only Gatwick, Liverpool John Lennon, Bristol and Cardiff airports have kept their prices for both drop-off and pick-up the same. London Southend has introduced a £3 for 10 minutes pick-up charge while Leeds Bradford is now advertising a £37 fee for 1-24 hours parking after its initial free hour of pick-up parking.

Looking at initial drop-off fees – often referred to as ‘kiss and fly charges’, which are typically levied for dropping passengers off either outside of or as close to the front of the terminal as possible, eight airports (36%) raised these while eight (36%) put up the cost of their initial periods of pick-up parking, and as many as 16 (73%) increased the charges for subsequent periods of pick-up parking. Overall 18 (82%) have put up, or introduced, fees in some way.

### Drop-off charges

London Stansted continues to top the drop-off charges' table with a whopping £4 for 10 minutes, but London Luton is snapping at its heels having hiked its initial fee by £1 but giving an extra three minutes in the process (£4 for 13 minutes).

Six other airports charge initial fees of £3 but the time drivers dropping off get varies from a meagre five minutes at Manchester to a more generous 30 minutes at Leeds Bradford. **This gives Manchester the most expensive 'per**

## **minute' drop-off charge in the UK with its fee equating to 60p a minute.**

East Midlands has added £1 to its charges taking the airport to £3 for 10 minutes. Birmingham and Doncaster-Sheffield have also both moved up to £3, but here drivers get 15 minutes with Birmingham adding an extra five minutes compared to 2018. Birmingham also offers a free 30-minute drop-off nearby. Liverpool John Lennon also has an initial fee of £3 but here you get a more generous 20 minutes.

Edinburgh and Newcastle have both doubled their drop-off charges to £2 but Newcastle gives 10 minutes in contrast to Edinburgh's five. While Aberdeen has not increased its £2 fee, it has cut the stay from 15 minutes to 10. Six airports currently provide free drop-off facilities, most notably Heathrow and Gatwick.

## **Pick-up charges\*\*\***

The RAC's research also looked at pick-up parking. Many airports recommend car parks for picking up passengers which are closer to the terminal and are often marketed as short-stay, or an equivalent, so customers can leave their vehicles and greet passengers at the arrivals' gate.

Among the eight airports that have increased their initial pick-up parking charges for 2019, London Stansted has hiked its prices the most with a £2.50p rise to £8 for 30 minutes, making it the joint most expensive airport with London Luton for this type of parking – luckily at Luton though prices did not go up for 2019 and they have introduced a more competitive rate for electric vehicles (£2 for up to 30 minutes). On a per-minute basis, this is matched by Edinburgh which charges an initial fee of £4 for 15 minutes – again not increased from last year.

Birmingham is the third most pricy for pick-up parking at £5.50 for an hour, having increased this rate by 40p. Manchester takes fourth spot on £4.50 for 30 minutes after a 50p increase. By adding 20p to its initial cost London Heathrow has the fifth highest fee of £4.20 for 30 minutes. East Midlands added 50p taking its initial pick-up parking cost to £4 for 30 minutes – the same as London Gatwick.

London City has put its prices up by 30p to £3.50 for 10 minutes whereas

Newcastle has doubled its to £2 for 10 minutes and Jersey has put on 10p giving it the lowest fee in the UK at 80p for 30 minutes, aside from Belfast City, Leeds Bradford, Doncaster-Sheffield which are all free for different amounts of time (Leeds Bradford for up to one hour; Doncaster for 15 minutes; Belfast for 10 minutes)

### **Pick-up 'thereafter' charges**

Of the 16 airports that have hiked costs for stays beyond the initial periods of pick-up parking, Stansted's is the most striking with £4 being added to its fee for up to an hour (now £14) and £1.50 going on to its two-hour fee (now £18). **This, together with the high initial pick-up fee of £8 for 30 minutes and a drop-off charge of £4 for 10 minutes, gives it the dubious honour of being the UK's most expensive airport for collecting and setting down passengers.**

Luton's rise is also noteworthy with a £1 increase to three different time periods. It now costs £10 for 30-45 minutes; £14 for 45 minutes to an hour; and £18 for one to two hours.

London City upped its thereafter fees by putting on 50p and cut the staying time with £8 giving visitors 10-20 minutes, down from 30 minutes. After that it's £5 per five minutes; a change from 2018 when it was £27.50 for up to an hour. Heathrow added 30p for its 30-minute to one-hour time period, taking its fee to £7.50; it also added 50p to the one to 2-hour band, making it £12.

While Edinburgh kept its expensive initial rate of £4 for 15 minutes the same as in 2018 it has changed its tariff structure and lessened the value of its follow-on parking fees. It has done away with its £7 charge for an hour and instead decided £7 will just buy 15-30 minutes. And, it's now £10 for 30 minutes to an hour, and £16 for up to two hours (previously £14.50).

The other airports that made changes to their prices for this type of parking were: Aberdeen, Belfast City, Belfast International, Birmingham, Doncaster-Sheffield, East Midlands, Glasgow, Jersey, Manchester, Newcastle and Southampton.

### **RAC thoughts and advice**

RAC spokesperson Simon Williams said: "While flying off on holiday is one of

the most exciting times of the year, those dropping off or collecting friends or family are often left wincing at the prices charged by the UK's busiest airports for the privilege.

“Many airports charge drivers to drop off and pick up to keep the terminal entrances clear of traffic and to discourage long stays in car parks. Some might also see this as a way to encourage other forms of transport to the airport, but nevertheless these fees are still unwelcome, especially when you consider how little time most people actually spend at the airport.

“In reality, many travellers simply either do not have easy public transport access to get to the airport and even if they do, they can't always depend on it getting them to the airport in good time.

“Many drivers dropping off their friends or family will naturally only spend a minute or two doing so which makes the experience all the more painful, especially if this is at London Stansted which charges the highest drop-off fee in the country at £4 for 10 minutes.

“And, if you're on airport pick-up duty at Luton or Stansted it's far better to know the fee for 30-minutes in advance as otherwise it has the potential to cause severe shock at a whopping £8.

“Doing your research on the fees charged before heading to drop off or pick up at an airport has to be the best advice. Some airports offer cheaper parking rates in mid-term or long-stay car parks though these tend to be further away from the terminal and might require an airport bus connection. The smart option for anyone collecting is to make sure your friends or family have landed before heading into the airport to avoid the clock beginning to tick and the price starting to mount up. And, a phone call from the travellers to let you know they have collected their baggage is a good idea as long as you have hands-free phone equipment in the car.”

**RAC top five tips to avoid stress and high airport parking charges**

1	<b>Do your research</b>	Check out the parking pages on the airport's website to understand fees, payment options and stay times. Some airports may even offer lower online rates and allow you to park for a limited free period in long-term and mid-stay car parks.
2	<b>Have your payment ready</b>	Once you have found out how to pay, ensure you have payment ready to hand whether that is adequate change, a debit or credit card or pre-programme the phone payment number into your mobile.
3	<b>Identify a nearby 'holding location'</b>	It is worth checking out nearby free parking places in case your friends or relatives' flight is delayed so you can wait for the plane to land before proceeding to the terminal. If picking up, make sure you keep abreast of the flight's landing time. Do not be tempted to park on roads within the airport's boundaries as cameras often enforce no-stopping rules and may land you with a charge.
4	<b>Keep in touch</b>	Ask your friends or relatives to call you once they have collected their luggage and cleared passport control so you can park at the optimum moment. But remember if you are driving – it must be hands-free.
5	<b>Say your goodbyes before travel</b>	Say your farewells with your passengers before you get to the airport to keep goodbyes to a minimum, otherwise they may prove expensive.

While those flying abroad may not have to worry too much about drop-off or pick up charges, if they are planning on hiring cars when they land they should perhaps spend some time making sure they are protected financially in case they are unlucky enough to damage their rental vehicle. Many do not realise they can take out products such as [RAC Hire Car Excess Insurance](#) to cover them against huge excesses of between £500 and £2,000 in the event their vehicle suffers some form of damage.

In addition, [travel insurance](#) is a must to ensure holidaymakers don't lose out financially as a result of being taken ill abroad or losing or damaging valuable possessions.

- **[2019 airport drop-off charges – ranked by initial drop-off fee](#)**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Airport</b>	<b>Initial drop-off fee</b>	<b>Fees thereafter</b>	<b>Changes since 2018</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>1</b>	London Stansted	£4 for 10mins	£1 per min for 10-15mins; £25 for over 15mins (£20 charge for re-entering within 30mins of first entering.)	Initial fee up 50p	Express Set Down (Tariffs increased April 19). Free set down is a bus ride from terminal
<b>2</b>	London Luton	£4 for 13mins	£1 a minute	Initial fee up £1 but increased stay from 10mins to 13mins	Drop-off/pick-up area next to terminal. Some free for a period drop off available in mid-term and long-term car park
<b>3</b>	Manchester	£3 for 5mins	£4 for 10mins; £25 for overstay of 10mins or re-entry within 30mins	No change	Drop off area
<b>4=</b>	East Midlands	£3 for 10mins	£1 for every minute thereafter	Initial fee up £1	Rapid drop off (free parking in long-stay parking)
<b>4=</b>	London Southend	£3 for 10mins	£5 for 10-30mins	Removed free for 5mins	Short stay car park by terminal
<b>6=</b>	Doncaster-Sheffield	£3 for 15mins	£5 for 16-30mins; £7 for 30-60mins	Initial fee up £1	Express drop-off (short stay offer some free parking)

<b>6=</b>	Birmingham	£3 for 15mins	£8 for 15-20mins; each extra 15mins thereafter up to £48 for 55-60mins	Initial fee up £1 for 5mins more; thereafter tariff change: was £5 for 15mins; £10 for 15-20mins	Premium set-down. Band change in 2019. Prices quoted are for 'Premium set down' by the terminal entrance. A new drop off car park now exists which offers 30mins free drop off with 5-10min walk to terminal
<b>8</b>	Liverpool John Lennon	£3 for 20mins	£10 for 1 hour; £20 for 2 hours; £50 a day	No change	Express drop-off area. Another drop off 5mins walk is free for up to 40mins
<b>9</b>	Leeds Bradford	£3 for 30mins	£9 for 30-60mins; £18 for 1-2 hours	No change	Terminal Front express (Free parking exists for 3-4mins away from terminal)
<b>10</b>	Edinburgh	£2 for 5mins	£4 for 5-10mins; £10 for 10-15mins; £15 for 15mins-1hr; thereafter £15 per hour thereafter	Standard fee up £1; changed thereafter tariff - was £3 for 5-10mins; £5 for 10-20mins; £7 for 20mins-1hr; thereafter £9 per hour	Drop off area - ground floor of multi-storey. Free drop off for 10mins in long-stay car park with shuttle bus offered
<b>11 =</b>	Glasgow	£2 for 10mins	£4 for 11-15mins; £10 for 16-20mins, £15 for 21-30mins	Added £4 to 16-20mins; £5 to 21-30mins	New drop-off/pick-up - Drop off area by terminal
<b>11 =</b>	Newcastle	£2 for 10mins	£4 for 10-30mins	Both tariffs up £1	Express pick up and drop off. Medium term offers 15mins free
<b>11 =</b>	Aberdeen	£2 for 10mins	£10 for 30mins; £30 for 1 hr	Same initial fee for 5mins less	Express drop-off

<b>14</b>	Southampton	£2 for 15mins	£4 for 15-30mins	No change	Priority pick-up and drop off. Long stay free option provided for 30mins (with bus needed)
<b>15</b>	Belfast International	£1 for 10mins	£3 for 10-20mins; £5 for 20-60mins	No change	Drop off zone
<b>15</b>	Bristol	£1 for 10mins	£3 for 10-20mins; £5 for 20-40mins	No change	Express drop-off car park
<b>17</b>	Belfast City	Free for 10mins	£3 for 10-30mins; £6 for 30-60mins	No change	Drive up charges for short stay car park and drop-off area
<b>17</b>	Cardiff	Free for 10mins	£5 for every 10mins thereafter	No change	Drop-off zone. Long Stay 1 offers 20mins free
<b>19</b>	London Gatwick	Free at both terminals	No waiting	No change	Outside terminal
<b>19</b>	London Heathrow	Free at all terminals	Police enforcement applies for those waiting	No change	Outside terminal entrance
<b>19</b>	London City	Free drop-off	No waiting - penalty charges issued (not specified)	No change	Terminal forecourt
<b>19</b>	Jersey	Free drop-off	No parking - penalty charges issued (not specified)	No change	Drop-off zone

**2019 airport pick-up charges – ranked by initial pick-up fee**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Airport</b>	<b>Initial cost</b>	<b>Fees thereafter</b>	<b>Change since 2018</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>1=</b>	London Luton	£8 for 30mins	£10 for 30-45mins; £14 for 45mins-1hr; £18 for 1-2hrs	Thereafter fee up by £1	Multi-storey car park. Longer stay options available
<b>1=</b>	London Stansted	£8 for 30mins	£14 for 1hr; £18 for 2hrs	Initial fee was £5.50 for up to 30mins; thereafter was £10 for 1hr; £16.50 for 2hrs	2019: Based on Orange and Green Zones which Stansted describes as 'Ideal for picking up passengers arriving to the UK'. Turn up prices quoted, pre-booking available. Free options are a bus ride from terminal
<b>3</b>	Birmingham	£5.50 for 1hr	£11 for 2hrs	Increased initial fee by 40p; 80p increase for up to 2hrs.	Car Parks 1, 2, 3 - No 30mins option. Turn-up prices quoted. Other options available. Birmingham states: "If you're meeting passengers then our Car Parks 1, 2 and 3 are the most convenient"
<b>4</b>	Manchester	£4.50 for 30mins	£7 for 1hr; £10 for 2hrs	Initial fee up by 50p; thereafter was £6.50 for 1hr; £9.50 for 2hrs	T1 and T3 arrivals. Turn up and park prices quoted. Pre-booking available
<b>5</b>	London Heathrow	£4.20 for 30mins	£7.50 for 30mins to 1hr; £12 1-2hrs	Initial cost was £4 for up to 30mins; thereafter was £7.20 for 30m-1hr; £11.50 for 1-2hrs	Short stay car parks for each terminal. Airport recommends Short Stay car park for all terminals for picking up. Drive-up prices quoted, pre-booking available. Other parking options available

<b>6</b>	Edinburgh	£4 for 15mins	£7 for 15-30mins; £10 for 30mins to 1hr; £16 for up to 2hrs	Thereafter tariff band change: was £7 for 15-30mins; £10 for 30mins to 1hr; £16 for up to 2hrs	Multi-storey pick-up zone on ground floor of multi-storey next to terminal. Free drop off only permits up to 10mins free, and is a bus ride from terminal
<b>7=</b>	East Midlands	£4 for 30mins	£5 for 1hr; £9.50 for 2hrs	Added 50p to all fees	Short stay 1. East Midlands says: "If you're just staying long enough to pick someone up, you should use either the Short Stay car park, or the Long Stay 2 car park."
<b>7=</b>	London Gatwick	£4 for 30mins	£8 for 31-60mins; £13 for 1-2hrs	No change	Short stay – both terminals. Roll-up prices are quoted. Pre-booking available. Long stay offers 2hrs free, but requires bus ride to terminal
<b>9</b>	London City	£3.50 for 10 mins	£8 for 10-20mins; £5 per 5mins thereafter	Initial costs were £3.20 for 10mins; £7.50 for 10-30mins; £27.50 for up to 1hr	Pick-up zone in car park. For stays of 20mins or less. The Pick-up Zone is for stays of 20mins or less. If you need to stay for longer than 20mins, you can park in the 1hr bays in our Orange zone, located at the front of the Onsite car park.

10	London South end	£3 for 10mins	£5 for 5-30mins; £7 for up to 1hr; £12 for up to 2hrs	First year recorded	Short stay car park. Southend: "There are a couple of options for those who are looking to pick passengers up or drop them off. Our conveniently located Short Stay car park is just a few steps from the terminal, so it's a good but paid for option to get passengers as close to the terminal as possible"
11	Liverpool John Lennon	£3 for 20mins	£10 for 1 hr; £20 for 2hrs	No change	Express drop-off and pick-up. Liverpool airport states: "For passengers who are being dropped off or picked up, there are two car parks to choose from - the Express Drop Off & Pick Up car park (fees apply) ". Airport also recommends Short Stay for picking up and dropping off, with prices from £6 for up to 40mins. Drop Off 2 offers 40mins free parking and is a 10-min walk to terminal

<b>11</b> =	Glasgow	£3 for 20mins	£6.50 for 1 hr; £11 for 90mins; £12.50 for 2hrs	New thereafter tariff. Was £6 for 1hr; £12 for 2hrs	Multi-storey car park 2. Advises the use of 'car park 2' (short stay) for pick up where it is longer than 10mins. Otherwise, dedicated pick up/drop off zone is £2 for up to 10mins. Long stay option available with limited free period
<b>13</b>	Aberdeen	£2.50 for 15mins	£6.50 for 1hr; £11 for 1.5hrs; £16 for 2hrs	Initial cost was £2.50 for 15mins; thereafter was £6 for 1hr; £10.50 for up to 3hrs	Short stay car park - ideal for picking up. Pre-booking options available
<b>14</b>	Newcastle	£2 for 10mins	£4 for 10-30mins; £5.50 for 30-45mins; £7 for 45-60mins; £8 per hr thereafter	Added £1 to all fees up to an hour. Removed £12 for 2hrs and introduced per hour fee after 60mins	Express drop-off and pick up as recommended. Short & mid-term car park also available
<b>15</b>	Southampton	£2 for 15mins	£3 for 15-20mins; £6.50 for up to 1hr; £10 for up to 1.5hrs	Increased thereafter fees from £3.50 for 15-30mins; £5.00 for 30-60mins; £7.50 for 1-2hrs	Short Stay car park (roll-up rates). Southampton Airport states: "Our short stay car park is also the perfect place for picking up or dropping off passengers"
<b>16</b> =	Belfast International	£1 for 10mins	£2.50 for 10-20 mins; £3.50 for 20-30 mins; £5 for 30-60mins; £9.00 up to 2hrs	Increased two thereafter bands: was £3.50 for 30-60mins; £8.00 up to 2hrs	Short Stay is what airport recommends for greeting arriving passengers
<b>16</b> =	Cardiff	£1 for 10mins	£2 for 20mins; £3 for 1hr; £6 for 2hrs	No change	Short Stay 'picking-up' car park. Long stay option offers 20mins' free parking.

18	Bristol	£1 for 20mins	£3.50 for 20-30mins; £6 for 30-60mins; £8 for 1-2hrs	No change	Short Stay & Pick-up car park. This is what the airport recommends for greeting arriving passengers
19	Jersey	80p for 30mins	£1.60 for 1 hr; £3.20 for 2hrs	Initial cost up by 10p; thereafter fees were £1.60 for 1hr; £3.20 for 2hrs	Arrivals car park. Free 10-min wait in Pick-up zone available
20	Belfast City	Free for 10mins	£3 for 10-30 mins; £6 for 30-60 mins; £10 for 1-2hrs	1-2hrs was £9	Short stay car park. Designed for both drop-offs and pick-ups. Belfast City says: "The Short Stay car park at George Best Belfast City Airport is the best option for when you need to meet and greet a passenger from Arrivals or for short journey."
21	Doncaster-Sheffield	Free for 15mins	£4 for up to 30mins; £6 up to 1 hr; £10 up to 2hrs	Thereafter fees up: were £4 for up to 30mins; £6 up to 1hr; £10 up to 2hrs	Short stay pick-up car park. Pick-up also available outside terminal, but cannot leave car
22	Leeds Bradford	Free for 1hr	£37 for 1hr to 24hrs	No change	One-hour free parking zone. 3-4min walk from terminal. Airport advertises this as ideal for picking up passengers

### Notes to Editors

\* These airports were chosen as they carry more than 1m passengers per year.

\*\* Data collected by the RAC through research of official airport websites during August 2019

\*\*\* Pick up charges are based on the scenario where drivers park their vehicles and leave them to meet someone in the arrivals area. These typically are referred to as 'short stay' car parks, though some airports may market them differently. Our data is based on parking tariffs which the airports recommend drivers to use to pick-up via their websites.

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## **Notes to Editors**

### **About the RAC**

First formed in 1897, the RAC has been looking after the needs of its members for more than 120 years.

Today it has approximately 10m members and is one of the UK's most progressive motoring organisations, providing services for both private and business motorists. Whether it's [roadside assistance](#), [insurance](#), [buying a used car](#), [vehicle inspections and checks](#), [legal services](#) or up-to-the-minute [traffic and travel information](#) – the RAC offers a solution for all motoring needs. The RAC is committed to making motoring easier, safer, more affordable and more enjoyable for drivers and road users.

The RAC supports the interests of its members and UK drivers at a national level. This includes voicing concerns about the increasing cost of motoring, particularly the price of fuel and the high level of tax levied on it, advancing levels of road safety, and supporting the needs of all drivers, from young to old.

The RAC's annual [Report on Motoring](#) – first published in 1989 – is one of a kind and provides a clear insight into the concerns and issues facing today's motorists.

For the very latest news on UK fuel prices, check [RAC Fuel Watch](#). It provides a comprehensive guide to the latest UK unleaded petrol and diesel prices – both at the wholesale level and at the pump - and tracks these prices daily to help drivers check if the price they pay to fill up is a fair one.

For more information about the RAC, visit the [RAC website](#).

## Contacts



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