**Parking Services – going fully cashless for pay and display parking**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

Why is Parking Services going cashless?

The majority of users parking in either our car parks, or in on-street bays, across the city, are paying by cashless payment methods, and this continues to grow year on year. Evidence demonstrates that:

* The number of PayByPhone transactions have increased from 1.5m in 2018/19 to 2.9m in 2022/23.
* Card transactions at ticket machines have increased from 200,000 to 332,000 in the same period.
* At our two busiest car parks (Eldon Square MSCP and Eldon Garden MSCP), approx. 95% of the transactional value in 2022/23 came from PayByPhone or card payment at a ticket machine
* Across all locations for 2022/23, approx. 79% of all the income received came from PayByPhone or card payment at a ticket machine, despite over 40 locations being coin only

We therefore want to ensure that no matter which Newcastle City Council car park or on-street parking bay customers park in, cashless options are available. Only our Multi-Storey Car Parks (MSCPs), and several larger surface car parks currently have card machines. Therefore card machines will be introduced in all locations for the benefit of our users.

It is no longer financially viable to continue with cash payments, due to the following:

* Increased cost for ticket machine upgrades to allow for both cash and card
* The disproportionate cost for cash collection, counting and banking services given the reducing volumes of coin transactions and increasing volume of cashless payments
* The long-term future of the internal coin collection service is unknown - Parking Services is its only customer therefore not sustainable
* Encouragement by the banking industry to cease the depositing of coins
* As growth of cashless continues, so to do the associated banking fees per cashless transaction that we pay. It is not sustainable to see this expenditure increase, whilst not reducing / stopping the cash collection cost which has fewer users year on year

Support for users

Prior to consulting with the wider public, we consulted with both the Newcastle Disability Forum and the Elders Council to understand any concerns raised by the elderly and disabled groups who were cited as being disadvantaged. We have developed an Integrated Impact Assessment that considers and addresses issues and concerns raised by disadvantaged groups. The following support will be provided:

* Video tutorials on how to use card machines and PayByPhone can be found at [Car Parks and On Street Parking | Newcastle City Council](https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/parking-and-permits/car-parks-and-street-parking)
* Where possible, a member of staff will meet customers who require assistance on-site. Please call 0191 278 7799 for assistance
* We have increased staff availability so that we can support customers over the phone on 0191 278 7799
* For those without bank accounts, there are a number of pre-paid bank cards available from a variety of providers. For more details on pre-paid bank cards visit <https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/everyday-money/budgeting/prepaid-cards-explained>
* Our Central Library also offers a range of support – including how to use a smart phone, how to download an app, and how to make a PayByPhone payment. They can also assist providing computers and basic ICT support to enable customers to search for information such as pre-paid bank cards.
* The council also provides free classes for general help regarding ‘getting online.’ Courses can be booked either by calling 0191 277 8842 (Mon to Fri, 10am – 2pm), or online <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/libraries-culture/using-library-computer/get-online-newcastle>
* For customers with a disability who are unable to use any of the payment systems, or need further assistance, please email [parking.cs@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:parking.cs@newcastle.gov.uk)

What are the benefits of using cashless payment technologies?

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| **PayByPhone** | **Card at machine – check in when arrive and check out when leaving**  (please note the value from arriving until parking charges end on same day is reserved against the card) | **Card at machine – pre-pay (pay on arrival specifying at the time of arrival how much/long you want to pay/stay for)** |
| Available in all parking locations | Available in all car parks where there are no maximum stay restrictions. Available for same day parking only | Available in all parking locations |
| * Don’t have to carry loose change * Don’t have to queue to use a ticket machine, or use a ticket machine at all * Don’t have to display anything on the vehicle * Can extend remotely if a parking session is due to expire | * Don’t have to carry loose change * Don’t have to display a ticket on the dashboard (details go to the Civil Enforcement Officers handheld device) * Don’t have to guess how long you want to stay for * Don’t have to rush back * Don’t lose money if you return early. e.g. have to return after only 10 mins, check out and are only charged for the 10 mins. * Won’t receive a Penalty Charge Notice for overstaying * Blue badge holders receive 1 hour of free parking * Get charged to the exact minute parked to the exact penny | * Don’t have to carry loose change * Can’t overpay in maximum stay restrictions as exact change is not needed * Can’t unnecessarily overpay into the following day * Don’t have to display a ticket on the dashboard (details go to the Civil Enforcement Officers handheld device) |

How do I use the payment methods

* PayByPhone will be available everywhere and is predominately used through an App, but can also be used by ringing a telephone number or via text message. Please see [Car Parks and On Street Parking | Newcastle City Council](https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/parking-and-permits/car-parks-and-street-parking) for videos and instructions
* Card payment at a ticket machine is available everywhere, but depending on where you park will determine which system is available:
  + Pre-pay – where you pay by card on arrival for the time you want to stay for – is available everywhere. Please see [Car Parks and On Street Parking | Newcastle City Council](https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/parking-and-permits/car-parks-and-street-parking) for videos and instructions
  + Check in check out (check in by card payment when you arrive and check out again with your card when leaving) is available at all car parks where there are no maximum stay restrictions. Please see [Car Parks and On Street Parking | Newcastle City Council](https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/parking-and-permits/car-parks-and-street-parking) for videos and instructions

How do I get an hour free if I’m a blue badge holder?

Charges for blue badge holders only apply to car parks (off street parking). Parking on street for blue badge holders continues to be free of charge.

In our car parks, blue badge holders receive 1 hour of free parking:

* Where check in check out is available, you check in on the blue badge check in check out button and likewise use the same button when later checking out, and 1 hour is deducted from the charge applied
* Pre-pay – on arrival press the blue badge pre-pay button and choose how long you want to stay for and 1 hour is deducted from the charge
* PayByPhone – on the expiry of your parking session, the Civil Enforcement Officer will give one hour’s grace in addition to the time paid for.

Do I have to have a smart phone?

A smart phone is not needed to use PayByPhone – bookings can be made via calling the phone number using any phone, although we recommend that the app is an easier and quicker method once set up.

In addition, customers don’t have to use PayByPhone as payment can be made by card at ticket machines

I don’t have a bank card

* For those without bank accounts, there are a number of pre-paid bank cards available from a variety of providers. Pre-paid cards operate in a similar way to pay-as-you-go mobile phones, with cash being used to top up a card in advance. They can be used in the same way to other payment cards, but the card is not linked to a bank account, and people can only spend the money loaded onto them, so there is no opportunity to over-spend or run up debt. There may be nominal fees associated with some pre-paid bank cards. Whilst the Council is not able to make recommendations about the suitability or availability of financial products, the Government’s Money and Pension’s Service can offer information. For more details on pre-paid bank cards visit <https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/everyday-money/budgeting/prepaid-cards-explained>