



London Borough
of Hounslow

Annual Parking & Traffic Enforcement report

August 2011

Foreword



I am delighted to present London Borough of Hounslow's first Annual Parking and Traffic Enforcement Report. This follows a number of other firsts for Hounslow since my commencement as Lead Member for Community Safety and Regulatory Services: including a comprehensive Parking and Enforcement Policy agreed and launched in May 2011; a new parking management information system and industry recognition for CCTV enforcement.

This demonstrates that the Parking and Traffic Enforcement Services (PTES) in Hounslow is improving. We must not, however, rest on our laurels. Motorists and road users continue to be some of the most demanding with regard to transparency in the parking representation and appeal decision making process. And, the industry itself continues to be tagged with a misconception that parking is only about revenue raising.

The "objectives of civil enforcement", as contained in the Department for Transport's Operational Guidance to Local Authorities on application of the Traffic Management Act 2004, advise that the aim is to increase compliance with parking restrictions. The guidance specifically directs authorities not to view enforcement in isolation of traffic management strategies nor as a revenue raising mechanism. Whilst we may not be able to dissuade all of this notion it is hoped that this report provides residents with the comfort that Hounslow's Parking Service is being monitored vigilantly by Members and Officers alike to ensure that best practice is followed at all times.

The Parking Service's policies have been developed to provide the motorist every opportunity to conform to the traffic and parking regulations. As such we have reported the top ten 'hot spots' - that is, the areas of highest contraventions identified and enforced. This should enable motorists to note where contraventions are most likely to occur and take action to avoid similar errant parking. It is my sincere hope that next year these will not be the same problem areas at the top of the list.

Finally, we have tried to keep the report concise and interesting to encourage greater readership and for it to be suitable for the many forms of new media available. It should however; meet the minimum reporting requirements outlined in the Traffic Management Act 2004 (published Feb 2008) guidance (paragraphs 113-117).

Councillor Ed Mayne
Lead Member for Community Safety and Regulatory Services

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Introduction

The Parking and Traffic Enforcement Service in Hounslow delivers the following services:

- enforcement of traffic regulations,
- repair and maintenance of parking facilities,
- administration of permits, and
- blue badges, freedom passes and taxi cards.

The London Borough of Hounslow is required to produce an annual report about its enforcement activities within six months of the end of each financial year. This report includes information about the financial, statistical and other data on Civil Parking Enforcement activity.

This report focuses on the services regulated by the Traffic Management Act (TMA) 2004 and includes information about income received from on-street parking charges and on and off street enforcement activity and car park charges.

Any parking surplus generated, excluding income from car park charges, is governed by legislative restrictions contained within section 55 (as amended) of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 and contributes to the cost of transport inclusion services.

The report will show that there has been financial improvement during the performance period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011 when compared to the same period in 2009/10. The report also highlights the improvements in systems and procedures introduced over the past year and how this is likely to impact on service delivery.

Any queries on this report are contained in FAQs or you can email environmentalcomplaints@hounslow.gov.uk

Parking Policy

The London Borough of Hounslow has a comprehensive Parking Enforcement Policy outlining the roles and responsibilities of the Parking and Traffic Enforcement Service. The purpose of the document is to:

- Communicate clearly Hounslow Council's parking enforcement policy to motorists, who live, work in, commute through or visit the Borough,
- Ensure that Hounslow Parking & Traffic Enforcement's staff apply the policy as required,
- Assist Hounslow Parking & Traffic Enforcement's staff in the decision making process, ensuring consistent high quality decision making, and
- Help ensure that a consistent approach to initial advice and all parking matters by officers across the Borough.

The document is available by visiting the Council's website

http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/index/transport_and_streets/parking.html

London Parking Trends 2010/11

General Enforcement Activity

The Chair of London Councils' Transport and Environment Committee, Cllr Catherine West, said: 'the slow economic growth has resulted in less traffic on the roads, easing the pressure on parking spaces which has meant less illegal parking'. She also added that "tough economic times may mean that drivers decide they cannot afford to risk incurring a penalty charge notice

PCN's

The total number of Parking Contravention Notices (PCNs) issued in London for illegal parking, driving in bus lanes and moving traffic contraventions has fallen by 22 per cent, from 6.1 million in 2007/8 to 4.8 million last year (2010/11).

Illegal Parking

The number of tickets issued for illegal parking fell by nearly 130,000 from 4.1m in 2009/10 to 3.8m in 2010/11.

Bus Lane

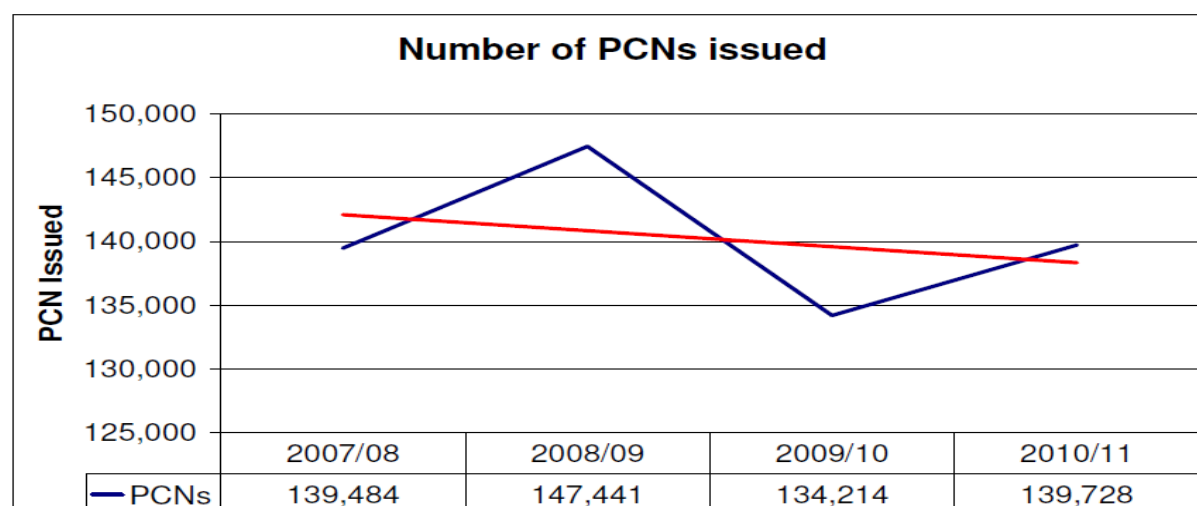
Bus lane contraventions also fell for the sixth year in succession from nearly 750,000 in 2004 to less than 250,000 last year. This is despite more London boroughs enforcing such lanes.

Moving Traffic Penalties

Moving traffic fines rose by nearly 100,000 to 571,590. This in the main is due to parking authorities recently adopting responsibility for this type of enforcement from the Metropolitan Police.

Hounslow Parking Trends 2010/11

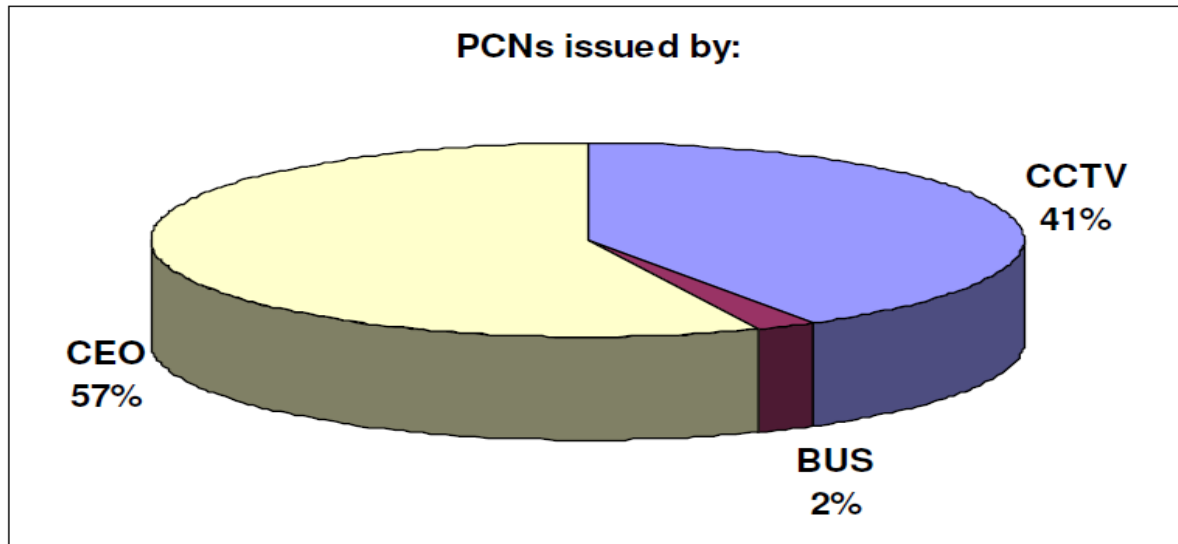
Parking enforcement activity in Hounslow tends is similar to the London-wide trends above. In 2008/9 there were 147,411 contraventions. In 2010/11 these reduced by over 5% to 139,728. Despite the introduction of CCTV the number of PCNs issued has not increased. The following table shows the number of PCNs issued by London Borough of Hounslow between 2007 and 2011.



The general downward trend (indicated by the red line in the table above) of PCNs issued reflects increased compliance with the parking and traffic regulations. This ultimately is what the Traffic Management Act (2004) seeks to achieve.

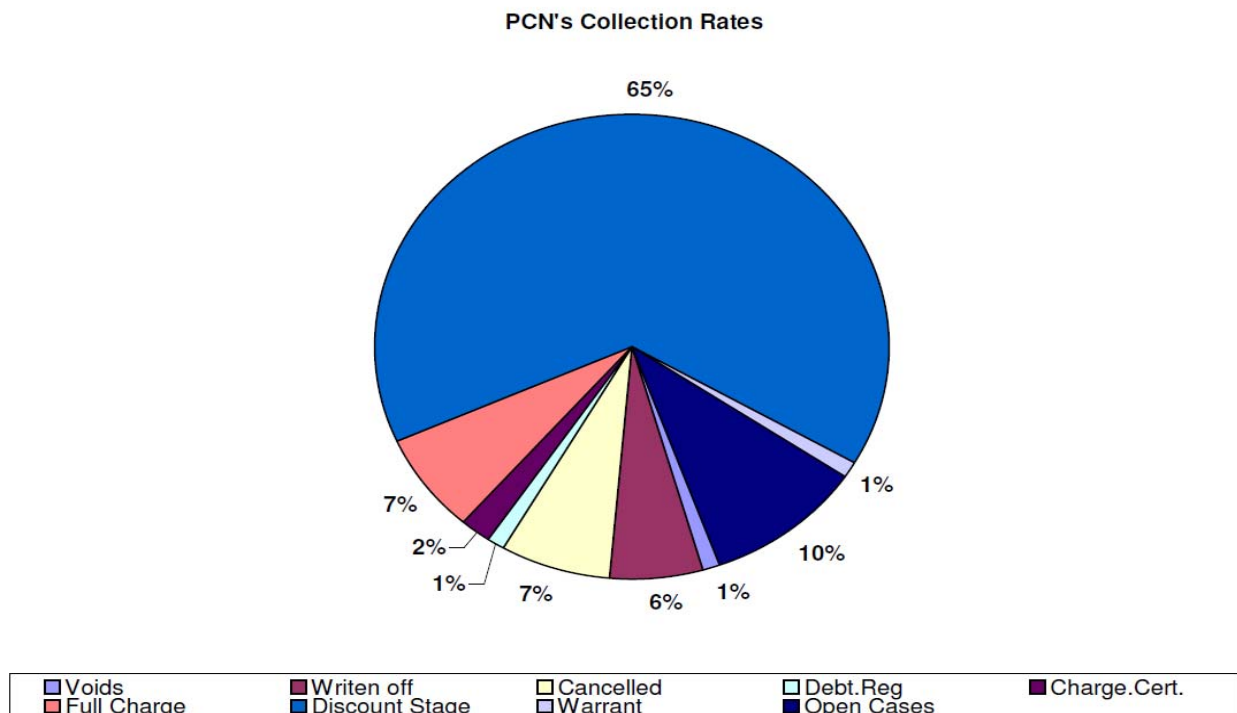
How tickets are issued

The chart below is based on 2010/11 data and shows that 57% of PCNs were issued by Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs), 41% by CCTV cameras and 2% by bus lane cameras.



Collection of Fines Performance

Compared to other London local authorities, Hounslow performs in the upper quartile for its collection of parking fines. The chart below shows that for the years 2010/11, 77% of PCNs issued were fully enforced i.e. payment was received. 65% of motorists who received a PCN paid within 14 days and therefore were charged a discounted rate.

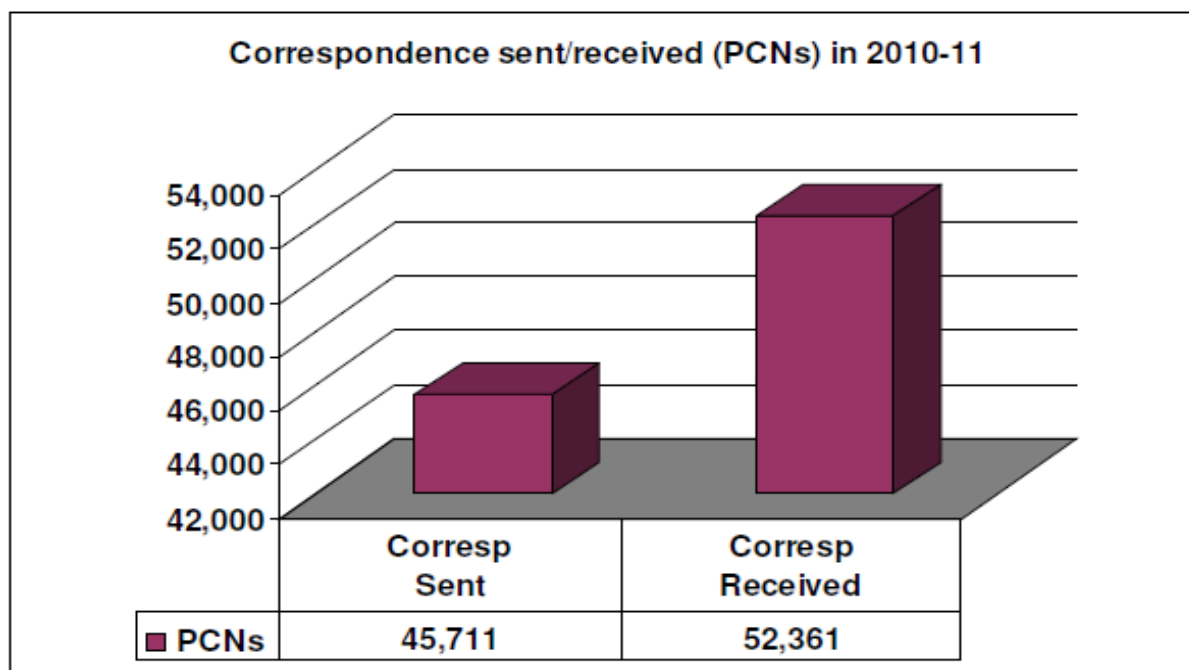


7% of PCNs were cancelled as a result of representations and appeals made by motorists where it was agreed that the PCN had been issued incorrectly or there were other significant mitigating circumstances. However, 7% of PCNs could not be collected due to lack of information to trace the owner/registered keeper of the vehicle or where the DVLA held no record of the vehicles concerned.

Representations and Appeals

The Council receives significant numbers of correspondence querying or challenging PCNs. In 2010/11 we received 52,361 items of correspondence and responded on 45,711 occasions. In many cases the Council receives more than one letter or email per PCN challenge.

The Traffic Management guidelines allow for the Council to write once at each key stage of the process as long as all the points being made are addressed. For example if 5 emails are sent concerning a single PCN during the discount stage the Council may respond on one occasion as long as it addresses all the issues raised.

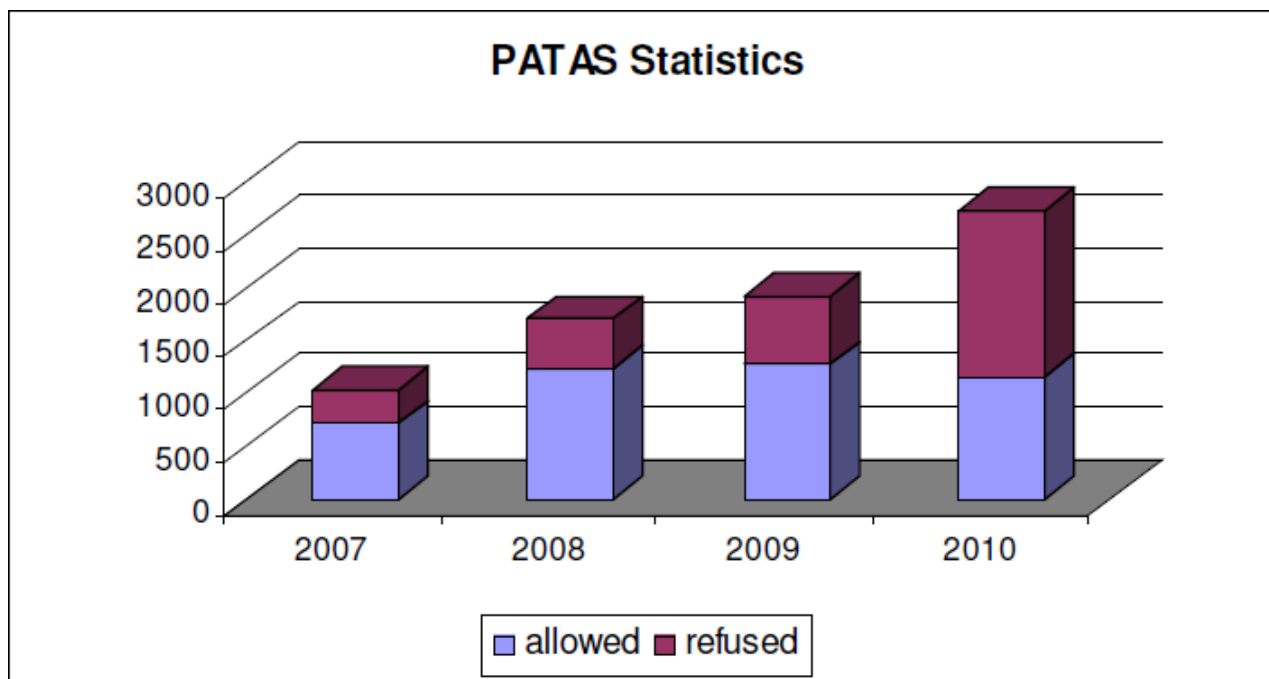


Appeals to the Parking and Traffic Adjudication Service (PATAS)

Across London only 1% of all the penalties issued resulted in an appeal being lodged with the independent adjudicators at the [Parking and Traffic Appeals Service \(PATAS\)](#).

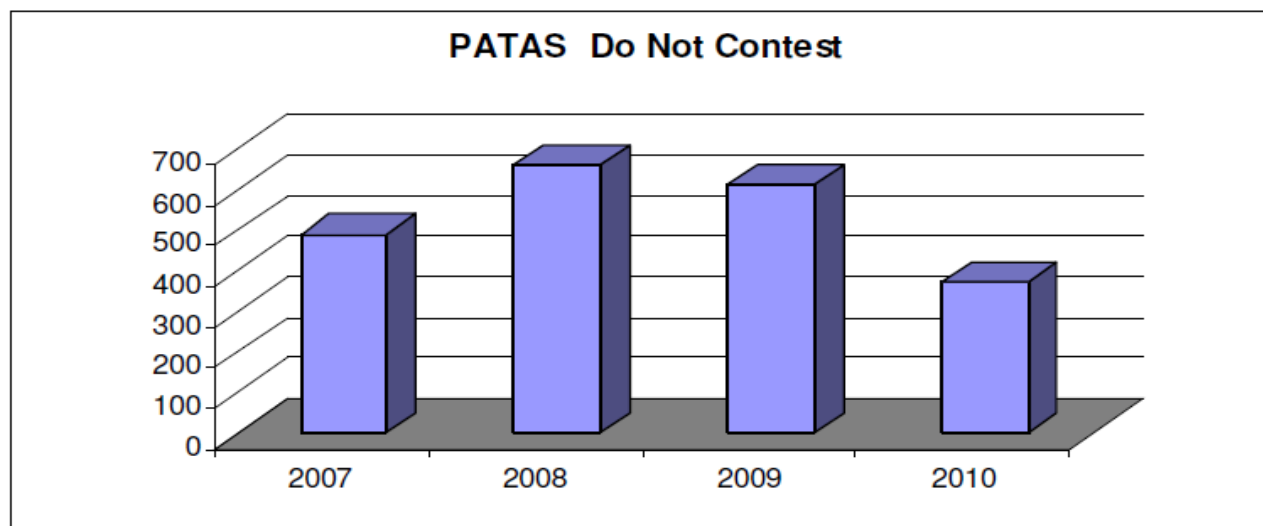
In total, PATAS dealt with 69,132 appeals in 2010/11, an increase of 13 per cent on the previous year. The total number of appeals won by motorists fell from 63 per cent in 2009/10 to 50 per cent in 2010/11.

Hounslow contests cases that are heard by PATAS. During the last four years the number of cases where PATAS found in favour of the Council has increased from 35% of cases to 54%.



In previous years Hounslow's success rate at PATAS was low, and the number of cases it chose not to contest was also relatively high (see table below). Significant strides have been made in the past year to deal with all correspondence received and to work with staff to ensure that all points raised by motorists contesting PCNs are appropriately addressed.

In addition investment in a new parking management system has ensured that, correspondence is appropriately logged, tracked and monitored. This has resulted in the improvements outlined and reduction in the PCN appeals that are uncontested.



Overview and Developments in Parking Operations at Hounslow

CCTV Parking and Traffic Enforcement

CCTV Enforcement cameras are deployed across the borough for enforcement of:

- Bus Lanes/Routes
- Main roads within the Borough
- Areas of non-compliance unless a constant presence is assigned to the location
- Areas isolated by location

CCTV enforcement was an area of concern for motorists in 2010/11. A report in July 2010 included a number of recommendations which resulted in improved signage and prior notification to neighbourhoods where new cameras are to be installed. The new Parking Enforcement Policy introduced this year also clarifies criteria for CCTV use.

There are currently 55 CCTV Enforcement cameras across the Borough. CCTV cameras that are used for parking and bus lane enforcement have a dual use of public safety and bus lane enforcement. All LB Hounslow CCTV used for enforcement are certified for use as “approved devices” by the Department for Transport (DfT). The Council also operates two Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) CCTV cameras. These cameras are able to capture evidence without the need for a CCTV operator, one is a dedicated bus lane enforcement camera and the other is on a CCTV vehicle.

CCTV mobile unit

As part of the Council’s efforts to improve safety around schools and to deal with contravening vehicles that would be difficult to enforce using CEOs on foot, a mobile CCTV unit began operation in February 2011.

In the 12 month period from 1st February 2010 to January 31st 2011 there were 183 Penalty Charge Notices (PCN) issued to vehicles parked on “School Keep Clear” markings around schools.

In the first 5 months of operation of the CCTV vehicle there have been 128 PCNs issued. The vehicle is able to capture illegally parked vehicles while it is driving and therefore the presence of the vehicle is expected to improve the safety around schools during dropping off/picking up times. Additional compliance is also expected in dealing with other illegally parked vehicles causing disruption to the local residents living near the schools.

Staffing Experience and Training

As of 1st August 2011 all on-street Civil Enforcement Officers have at least 6 months experience in parking enforcement. All staff have received training in the Traffic Management Act 2004, customer service and dealing with confrontational situations. CEOs are Hounslow Council staff.

NSL are the Council’s contractor and are responsible for operating the CCTV cameras. All CCTV operators are BTEC Level 2 trained in CCTV operations (public space surveillance) and prior to this have on-street experience as Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs).

With regard to correspondence, Hounslow Council staff are responsible for Notice Processing and all have a minimum of 12 months experience in handling PCN challenges, representations and appeals. A number of staff successfully achieved an NVQ accredited Level 2 qualification in "Notice Processing Development and Management".

Hounslow's staff are trained using a rigorous mentoring process with key learning milestones linked to performance appraisal targets. Training is also reinforced by a guide in the use of the various Parking Services information systems. The Council is also developing a formal programme to ensure that all staff are accredited to a minimum NVQ level standard regardless of roles and responsibility. This training will be provided by an independent organisation following an open tender process.

Assaults on officers

An unacceptable aspect of parking enforcement is the verbal and physical abuse some staff are subjected to. The number of assaults on staff in 2009/10 was 21 and this number dropped in 2010/11 to 14. Often the lack of evidence has hampered police and the Council in obtaining successful prosecutions. In order to protect our staff further, trials of individual video recording devices were completed early in 2011 and we aim to make these devices available to our patrol staff later in the year.

Moving Traffic offences

The Council is currently in the process of formally adopting the powers to enforce moving traffic offences (box junctions, banned turns, no entry's etc) and it is hoped this will begin in January 2012. Parking services will publicly advise motorists in the Borough prior to implementation in line with the Parking Policy. This has been carried out by the Met Police and this will continue to be a joint initiative.

Season tickets

During 2010 the Council undertook a six month trial on a scheme at a number of car parks that allows motorists to pay for parking in advance with the benefit of discounts on normal hourly tariffs. The success of this scheme has resulted in the introduction of yearly, half yearly and quarterly season tickets. For more information please visit the council's website -

http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/index/transport_and_streets/parking/seasontickets.htm

Pay by phone

Cashless parking was introduced in 2009 and rolled out across most of the Borough during 2010. Motorists are now able to pay for parking by phone and, top up for their parking where necessary, thus avoiding PCNs incurred for pay and display overstay.

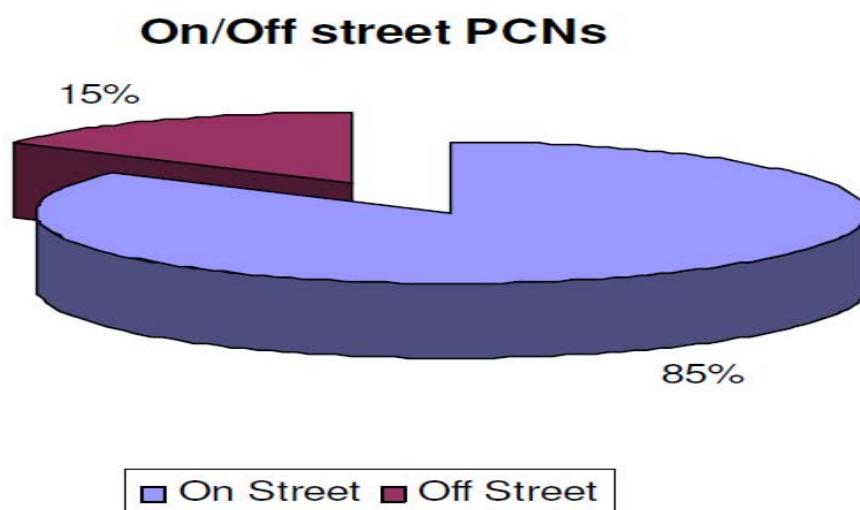
Removals and relocations

Approximately 1200 vehicles were removed to the Council's pound or relocated to the nearest convenient place as part of our enforcement activity during the year. Vehicles are generally removed if they are involved in persistent offences, blocking driveways or dropped kerbs, obstruction of highways or footways. The removal protocol is contained within the new Parking and Enforcement Policy available on our website.

Improvements in enforcement monitoring

Hounslow is seeking to provide as much information to motorists to help them avoid receiving PCNs in the first instance.

The chart below shows that the Council continues to place greater emphasis on the smooth flow of traffic and obstruction to pedestrians caused by pavement parking rather than focussing on parking in car parks.



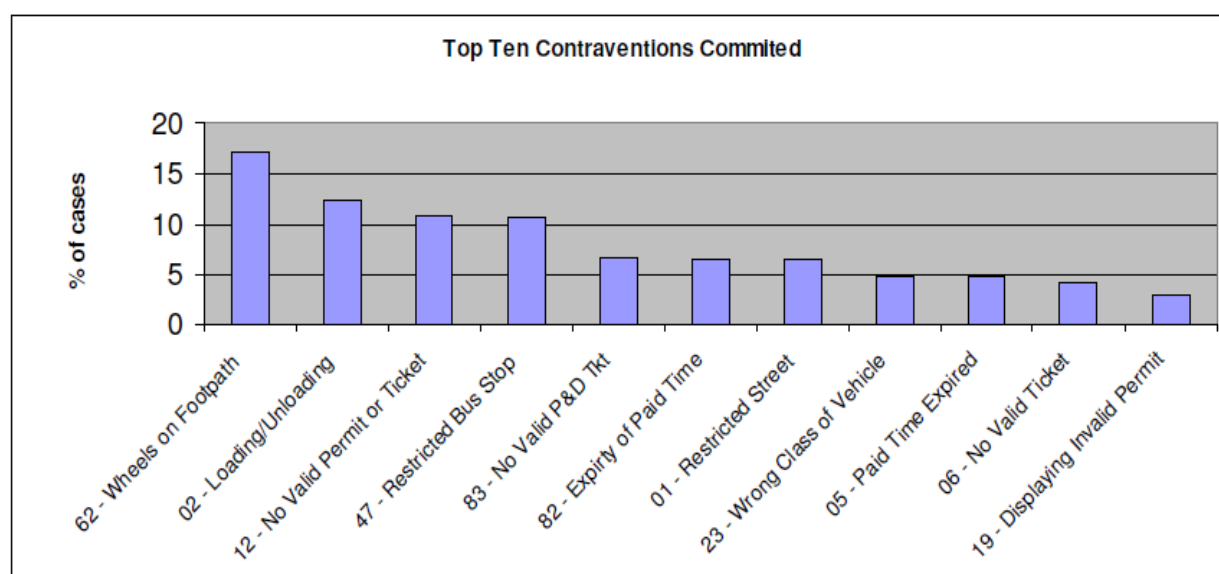
Different Fines based on Seriousness

PCNs are issued in two bands. Higher banded PCNs are for offences considered serious such as footway or 'zig zag' mark parking where there are safety implications. Lower banded PCNs are for offences where parking may be permitted but there issues such as staying over paid for time.

In 2010/11 98,403 higher band PCNs were issued. In 2010/11 41,325 lower band PCNs were issued.

Types of contraventions committed

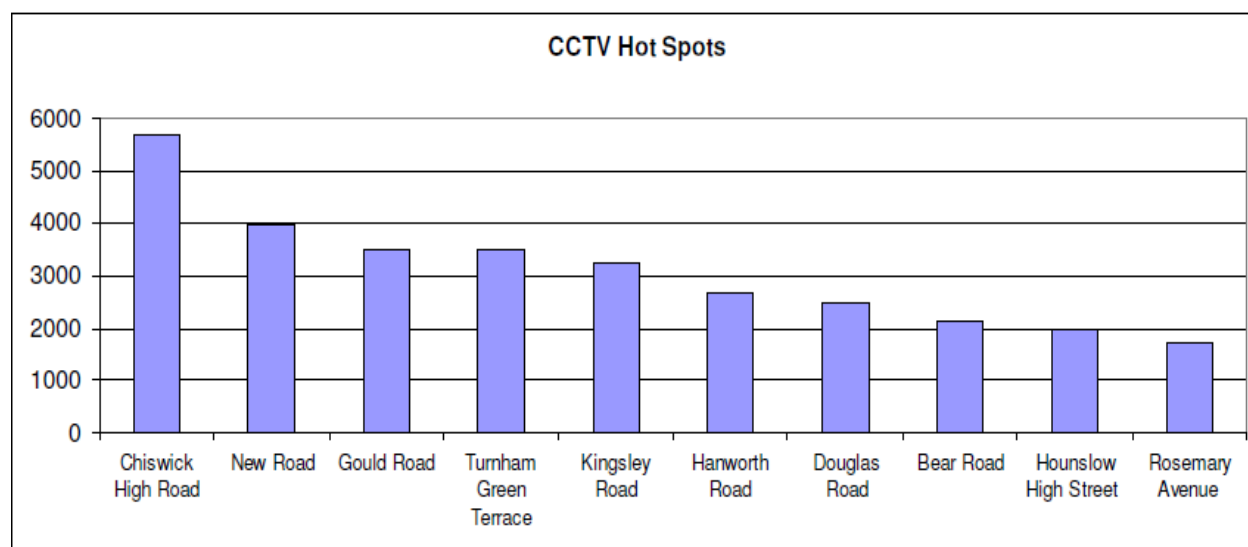
Our aim in publishing these enforcement statistics is to inform residents about what we are doing and why, but also to assist motorists to change their parking habits. The top ten contraventions occurring in Hounslow during 2010/11 are shown in the graph below:



The highest number of PCNS related to vehicles competing for footway space with pedestrians. This type of parking is banned in London since 1973 to protect the safety of pedestrians and to safeguard the condition of the pavement. Some motorists have complained that the increasing sizes of vehicles means that the roads and streets are not wide enough for them to park. However, the council owes a duty of care to pedestrians that include children, mothers with buggies, the disabled and wheel chair users.

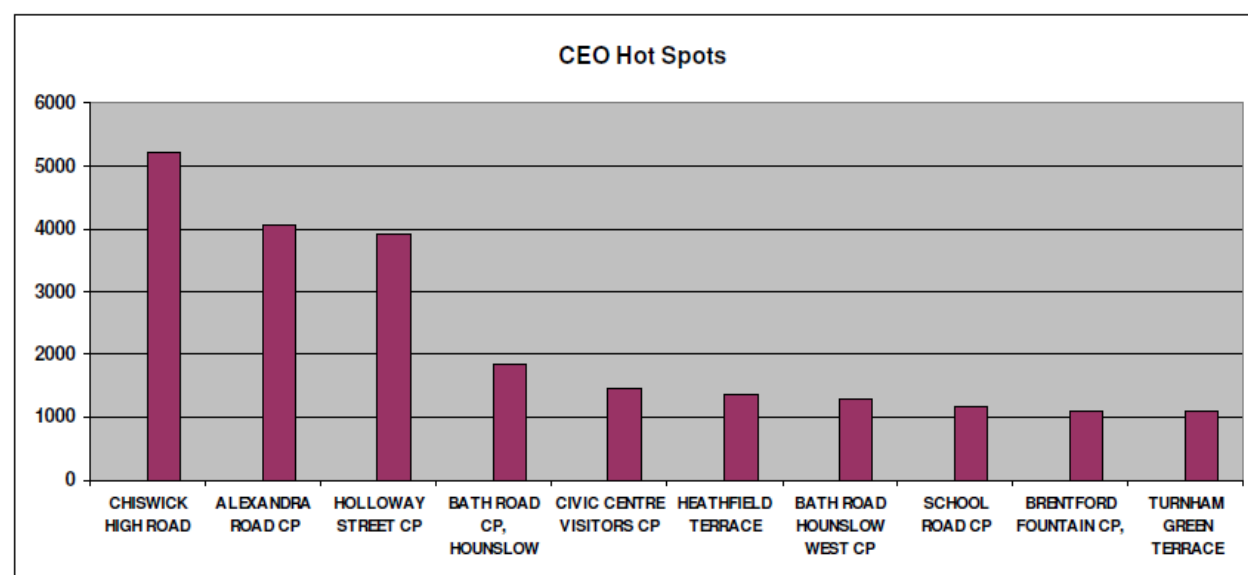
CCTV Hotspots

The chart below shows the location and number of PCNS issued by the fixed CCTV cameras.

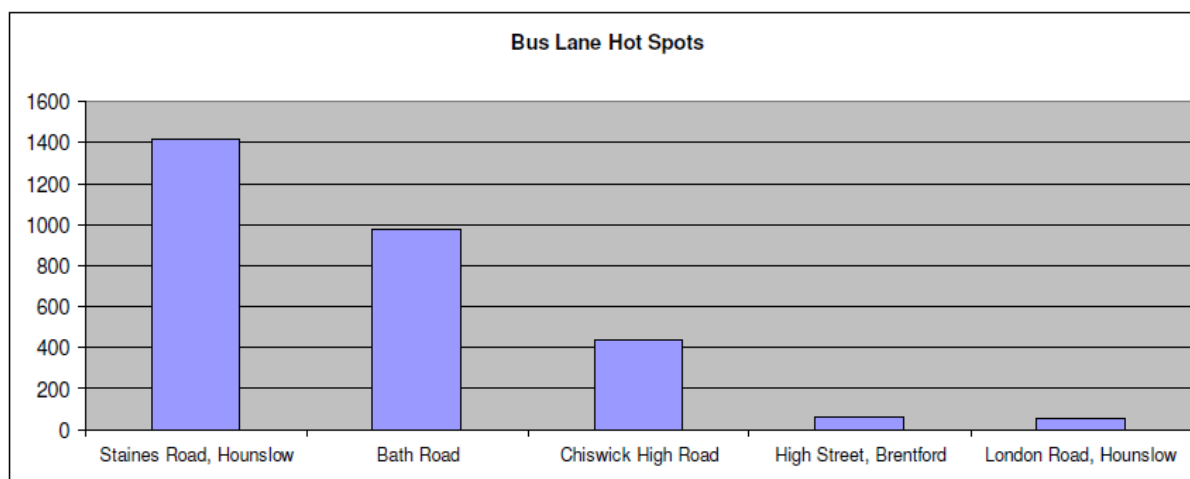


CEO Hotspots

The chart below shows those roads where the majority of PCNs were issued by CEOs:

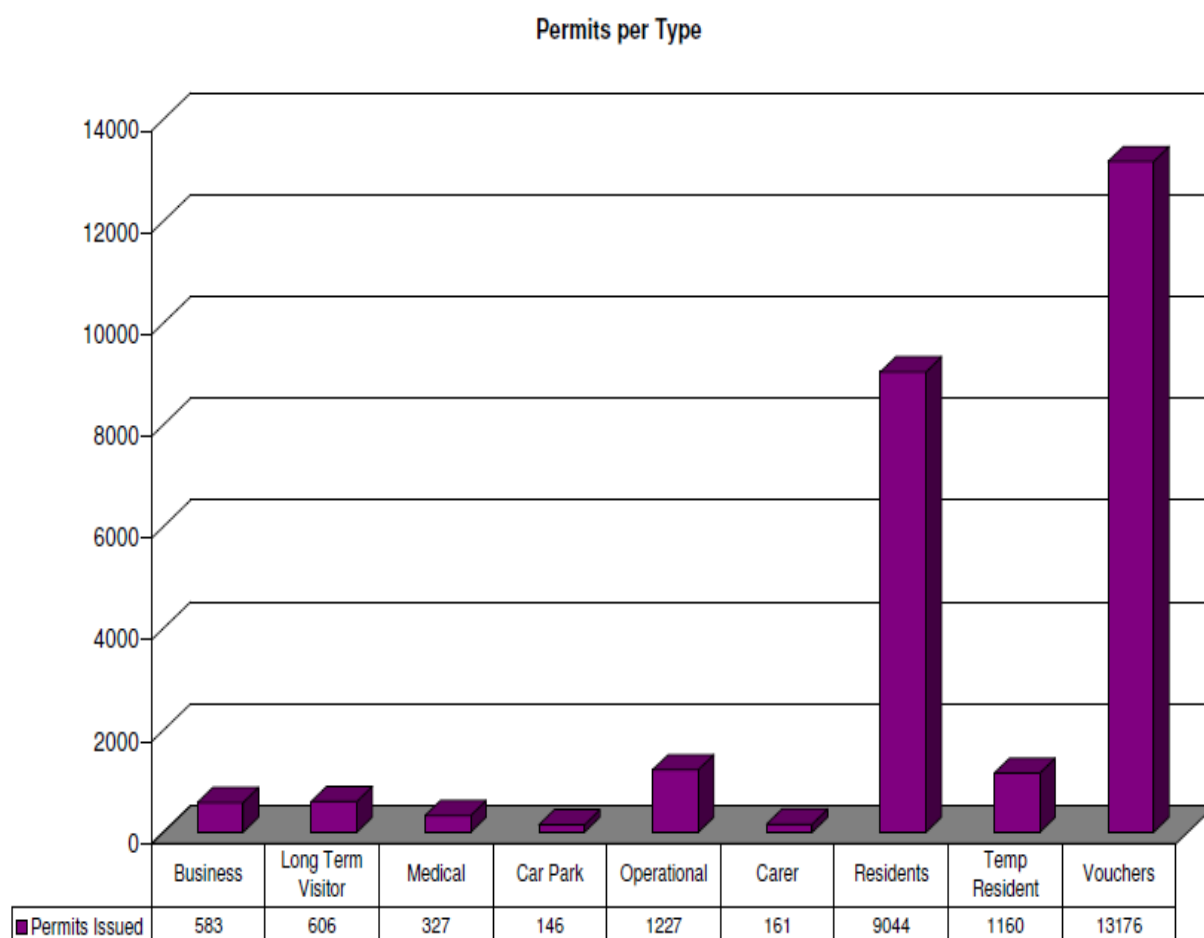


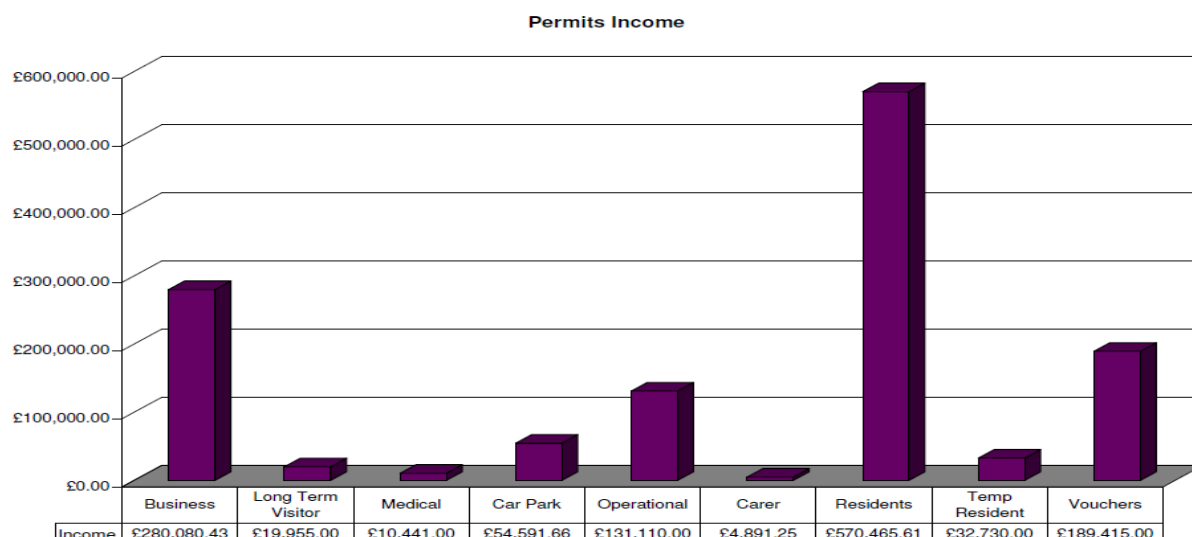
Bus Lane Hotspots



Permits

The council issued approximately 13,000 permits in 2010/11. 79% were Resident's permits, 4% were to business users and 17% were for "other users". The number of permits and income received from for 2010/11 are shown below.





Financial Summary

Civil parking enforcement is a means of achieving transport policy objectives to ensure the smooth flow of traffic, reduce accidents, and to ensure that roads and pavements are safe for pedestrians and road users. Authorities need to forecast revenue and expenditure annually, but raising revenue is not the overarching objective of Parking. To this end parking authorities cannot set targets for revenue or the number of PCNs they issue.

The following is a summary of income and expenditure for Hounslow's parking service for the performance year 2010/11.

	2009/10 Actual	2010/11 Budget	2010/11 Actual	2010/11 Variance to budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
On Street Parking Income and Expenditure				
PCN Income	4,534		4,866	
Machine Collections	2,168		2,351	
Permits and other	1,719		1,984	
Total Income - On Street Parking	8,421	8,749	9,201	452
Total Expenditure - On Street Parking	-3,546	-3,492	-3,542	-50
Net Surplus - On Street Parking	4,875	5,257	5,659	402
Off Street Parking Income and Expenditure				
Total Income - Off Street Parking	2,179	2,204	2,038	
Total Expenditure - Off Street Parking	-1,877	-2,155	-2,214	
Net Income/ Expenditure - Off Street Parking	302	49	-176	-225
Concessionary Fares	-5,078	-6,481	-6,471	10
Net Income/ Expenditure	99	-1,175	-988	187

The surplus income from Enforcement and Parking in the main is used to finance the costs of Concessionary Fares initiatives such as Freedom passes for those reaching retirement age, administration of Blue Badges and meeting the costs of Taxi Card and other disabled persons transport costs.

In 2010/11 the authority made a contribution of about £402,000 to the parking reserve account from the gross surplus over budget made from on-street parking activities. The Parking Reserve Account is used to update and maintain Controlled Parking Zone and similar infrastructure across the Borough.