



# Cleaner, brighter, safer car parks

## Safer Parking Scheme Survey 2013



### Background

Short face to face interviews with car park users were conducted in a representative sample of car parks holding the Park Mark award. In total 642 car park users participated in the research.

The survey questions covered the following areas:

- Awareness of the Park Mark scheme
- How often they use the car park
- Factors that influence their choice

- Potential improvements

Car parks were segmented by market sector and by area as follows:

Market Sectors	Area
Airport	North East
Education	North West & North Wales
Hospital	Midlands
Leisure	South East
Park & ride	South West & South Wales
Public	Scotland & Northern Ireland
Retail	South London, Surrey & Hampshire
Station	East Anglia & East Midlands
Town centre	North London, Hertfordshire & Buckinghamshire

### Motorists' views

In choosing where to park drivers use a wide range of criteria, but choice is influenced by how easy it is to access a location and find a parking space, as well as how safe they feel in the car park.

Preferences were for a car park close to their destination and a space that comfortably accommodates their vehicle. Pricing and tariffs were less important, although niggles around number of pay machines and machines out of order were annoyances mentioned by respondents at almost half the car parks surveyed. It was a significant issue at one of the car parks on the day.

Once motorists were made aware of the Safer Parking Scheme and Park Mark all said they would be more likely to use an accredited car park in the future knowing that it had been vetted by the police.



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When asked what would improve the car park for them most respondents mentioned issues relating to their current personal experience of the venue. The accreditation criteria, lighting, cleanliness and security, were mentioned by fewer people confirming these are no longer issues.

## Frequency of use

Frequency patterns were varied in some car parks, while others had more consistent usage.

Locations with a high proportion of daily users were Stanmore underground train station (50%), University of Hull (47%) and Manchester's Q Park park and ride (43%).

Locations with high numbers of weekly users were Chichester's Westgate car park near a leisure centre (70%), Dundee's Greenmarket car park (39%) near the

station and shopping, Gravesham hospital (37%) and Cardiff's Marriott Hotel car park (36%).

Norwich airport (55%), X-scape in Braehead (41%) a leisure centre, and Stamford town centre (35%) had the highest proportions of occasional car park users. Stamford also had the highest number of first time users (22%).

Venues with more even spreads of respondents who park daily, weekly, fortnightly and monthly, included car parks near shopping areas in Hull and Birmingham.

Overall, 19% of respondents said they used their car park each day, 28% used the car park at least once a week, 9% used the car park fortnightly, 11% monthly and 11% were first time users.

## Preferences

Three-quarters of respondents said the car park was their preferred parking option when they came to the location. This was consistent across all the car parks other than the hotel car park in Cardiff.

## Factors in choice

Location is more important than price when respondents choose where to park. More than two-thirds said they chose the closest car park, while just sixteen per cent chose the cheapest. Safety and cleanliness were factors in choice for less than a tenth of respondents.

Market MSCP car park in Birmingham was the exception; here the majority of respondents chose it because it was cheapest.

Overall respondents said the most important factors when choosing a car



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parking venue were location and personal safety. Location was considered most important in seven of the car parks, while personal safety was most important in six.

Alongside location, ease of access, little or no queuing and the number of spaces were important influencers for the majority of respondents. Their preference is a car park close to their starting point or destination, where they can drive in and easily find a space that comfortably accommodates their vehicle.

Drivers also want to feel the car park environment is safe and they will be personally safe as they walk to and from their car.

Factors around cost – tariffs and method of payment – were less important than location and safety. Tariffs were ranked fourth most influential factor while

payment method was ranked twelfth overall.

## Improvements

When asked what would improve the car park for them respondents offered a range of suggestions. Over 35 were mentioned in total with most relating to the user's personal experience of the venue rather than the building environment and management.

Issues mentioned by people at multiple car parks included pricing, range of payment options, free parking, pay machines not working, insufficient pay machines, more spaces and bigger spaces, better signage and better drainage.

The need for more spaces was the most frequently mentioned improvement - by 49 people at six car parks; the majority

came from three car parks in Braehead and two Hull locations.

Pay machines not working was also mentioned by 49 people at five car parks. However, 33 of them were at one car park, more than half the respondents at that location, indicating a specific problem that day.

Next most commonly mentioned improvement was more payment options, cited by 29 people at five different car parks; followed by better prices, mentioned by 24 people at five car parks.

Issues connected with the Safer Parking Scheme standards were mentioned by fewer people: lighting (11), Cleanliness (4) and security (9).

Over half the improvements suggested were mentioned at just one or two car parks and included manning levels,



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slippery floors, lifts not working, toilets, gritting, resurfacing, permitted waiting time, wider entrances, better stairs, permit holder bays and opening hours. Most of these were mentioned by tiny numbers of people and appeared to be specific to the individual car parks.

**More information:**

[www.britishparking.co.uk/Park-Mark---The-Safer-Parking-Scheme](http://www.britishparking.co.uk/Park-Mark---The-Safer-Parking-Scheme)