

Over recent years, travellers using UK airports have noticed something subtle but significant—many [re-entry fee airport car park](#) airports now charge a **kerbside drop off fee** or **airport barrier charge** that didn't exist before. Even if you're just stopping for a minute or less to drop someone off, parking at the terminal's kerbside can cost you money.

In this article, we explore why airport drop-off fees have risen quietly across the UK, the average pricing you can expect (spoiler: it's around **£6.51**), and the alternatives available to travellers who want to avoid paying for those precious sixty seconds. We'll also help you understand the trade-off between convenience and cost when choosing kerbside drop-offs versus more distant parking options.

Understanding The Airport Barrier Charge

At many UK airports, a *barrier control system* has been introduced on the short-term stopping lanes outside arrivals terminals. This is a crucial measure for managing traffic congestion, improving security, and increasing airport revenue. The system typically allows free stopping for just 30-60 seconds before fines or charges apply.

Known to many travellers as the “**kiss and fly**” **pricing** due to its intended use for quick drop-offs, airport barrier charges are designed to discourage lingering at the terminal's kerbside. Here's why:

- **Reduce congestion:** Terminals are often gridlocked during peak times by people waiting in cars or dropping off passengers slowly.
- **Improve safety:** Keeping cars moving reduces risk to pedestrians and emergency response times.
- **Increase revenue:** Airports have looked for new income streams to cover rising operational costs and investments in infrastructure.

How Much Does a Sixty-Second Kerbside Drop Cost?

The exact fee depends on the airport, but the trend is clear: airport drop-off charges are rising quietly but steadily. According to the data tracked so far in 2024, the average UK airport kerbside drop-off charge is around **£6.51**. Below is a snapshot of typical charges at some popular UK airports:

Airport Drop-off Fee (per 60 seconds) London Heathrow£8.00 London Gatwick£6.50 Manchester£6.00
Birmingham£5.50 Glasgow£4.50

The most expensive airports tend to be London Heathrow and Gatwick, reflecting the significant volume of traffic and congestion challenges at those hubs. However, even smaller regional airports have introduced similar charges, meaning this is no longer just a London-area issue.

Why Are Drop-Off Fees Rising Quietly Across UK Airports?

The rise in kerbside fees has been relatively quiet, with many airports introducing or increasing charges with minimal publicity. Some reasons behind this subtle rate hike include:

1. **Operational Cost Increases:** Airports face rising costs for maintenance, security, and staffing. Drop-off fees help offset these expenses.
2. **Congestion Management:** Encouraging drivers to move on quickly improves passenger flow and reduces the need for costly infrastructure expansion.
3. **Environmental Goals:** Less idling traffic leads to reduced emissions around terminals.

4. **Revenue Diversification:** With competitive pressure on parking and retail revenue, small but frequent charges can boost the airport's bottom line.

While frustrating for many drivers, the additional kerbside charge fits into a broader strategy to modernise airport operations and improve customer experience—even if it means paying for those sixty seconds at the kerb.

Free Alternatives: Can You Avoid Paying the Kerbside Drop-Off Fee?

The good news is there are some free or cheaper alternatives to paying for a quick kerb drop-off. These usually involve slightly longer walks or shuttle rides but can be worth it if you're budget conscious.

Long Stay and Park & Ride Options

Many airports operate free or low-cost **Long Stay car parks** connected to terminals via shuttle buses. These facilities typically allow dropping off passengers without charges if you park briefly within the permitted time limits. The shuttles run frequently and take you directly to the terminal, though you should factor in extra time for the bus ride.

- **Example:** At Manchester Airport, you can use the Park & Ride service for free drop-offs and then take a shuttle into the terminal.
- Often, booking parking in advance via comparison tools can save money and guarantee availability.

Holiday Extras offers comprehensive airport parking comparison pages to help you identify and pre-book these cheaper or free parking options. Planning your parking in advance is key to avoiding last-minute fees.



Time Trade-Off: Shuttle Convenience vs. Kerbside Access

The ultimate decision between paying for kerbside convenience or opting for free parking with shuttle transfer comes down to a simple time versus money trade-off. Here are some factors to consider:

- **Kerbside Drop-Off (Kiss and Fly Pricing):** Pay £4.50 to £8.00 for the luxury of driving directly to the terminal entrance. Saves time but adds cost.

- **Long Stay with Shuttle:** Save money by parking further from the terminal, but add 15-20 minutes for shuttle transfer and walking.
- **Parking Availability:** Booking in advance tends to guarantee space and reduce stress.

Depending on your priorities—if you value every minute before your flight or prefer to keep costs down—you can choose accordingly. If you're dropping off family or friends who can manage luggage independently, parking further away is often easier and cheaper.

How to Check and Book Cheapest Parking Options

For those wanting to avoid inflated **kerbside drop off fees**, the easiest way is to compare and book parking online before you travel. Using trusted platforms can save you time and money:

- Holiday Extras Airport Parking Comparison Pages – Compare dozens of parking deals, including official airport lots, private park & ride services, and meet & greet options.
- Use affiliate links such as those via [awin1.com](https://www.awin1.com) for trusted booking platforms (replace XXXXX and YYYYYY with appropriate IDs).

Booking ahead not only avoids paying expensive *kiss and fly* kerbside charges but often unlocks promotions and discounts.

Summary: Is Paying for Sixty Seconds Worth It?

UK airports are increasingly charging for dropping off passengers for even brief moments at the kerbside. The average cost of about **£6.51** is a new standard, with major hubs like Heathrow charging up to £8 for a minute or less of stopping.

This airport barrier charge aims to manage congestion, improve safety, and generate revenue. But if you're not in a huge rush and want to save, free alternatives like Long Stay or Park & Ride with shuttles are available—just expect some extra transit time.

For smart travellers, the key is to weigh the convenience of paying for “kiss and fly” pricing against the pennies saved by taking shuttle options. Planning ahead using Holiday Extras airport parking comparison pages (affiliated via [awin1.com](https://www.awin1.com)) is the most efficient way to avoid surprise charges and book the best deal.



You ever wonder why ultimately, whether you choose to pay for those sixty seconds, or take the shuttle route, knowing about these charges upfront saves stress and wallet woes—helping you start or finish your holiday journey on the right foot.