

When planning your airport drop-off or pick-up, one question that often trips up travellers is whether paying two barrier fees — that is, crossing in and out of the airport's paid zones twice — can ever be the right move. With drop-off charges rising quietly across UK airports, understanding how these fees work and when you might actually save time or hassle by paying for two entries rather than one is essential.

In this article, we'll break down everything you need to know about **drop off and pick up barrier fees**, highlight the **average UK airport drop-off charge (£6.51 as of 2024)**, and explore alternatives like *long stay* and *park & ride* options. We'll also show how airport configurations with **split zones and different pricing** can influence your choice.

So whether you're dropping someone off for an early flight or picking them up late at night, read on to discover if paying two barrier fees might be worth it — or just an avoidable cost.

Understanding Drop-Off Charges Across UK Airports

Airport drop-off charges have steadily increased across the [taxi airport drop off fee](#) UK, with many airports instituting fees as a way to manage congestion and encourage public transport use. But the way these fees are applied can vary widely, both in amount and method.

According to the latest data, the average drop-off charge at UK airports stands at **£6.51**. This average hides a big range:





Airport Drop-Off Charge London Heathrow Terminal 5 £6.50 Manchester Airport £5.00 Bristol Airport £3.00
London Gatwick (North Terminal) £6.00 Edinburgh Airport £5.00 London City Airport £6.00

While £6.51 might not sound like a lot, the cost adds up quickly when you consider that paying two barrier fees doubles the amount to around £13. Keep in mind airports may have split zones with different prices — for example, one area for drop-off and another for pick up — complicating the picture further.

What Are Two Barrier Fees?

A **two entries airport charge**, or paying two barrier fees, occurs when a vehicle enters and exits the airport's controlled zone twice, incurring a fee each time. This can happen if, for example, you:

- Drop someone off, leave the airport, then return later to pick them up
- Use different zones with separate entrance barriers (e.g., drop-off zone and parking zone), each charging entry fees
- Exit the airport but then re-enter shortly after, unintentionally triggering two fees due to how barriers are structured

Some airports have zones split into **different pricing** areas — so the drop-off area near the terminals costs more, while outer zones or Park & Ride areas might be cheaper or even free. This split zoning can tempt drivers to pay twice to save walking or shuttle time, but is it ever worth it?

Free Alternatives: Long Stay, Park & Ride, and Other Strategies

One important way to avoid paying hefty drop-off fees is to explore free or near-free alternatives. Depending on the airport, you may find ways to drop off or pick up travelers without crossing paid barriers at all. Here's how:

- **Long Stay Parking:** These areas are usually a few minutes away from the terminals and often have shuttle buses. The parking fee covers entry and exit, and on-site shuttles take the hassle out of walking.
- **Park & Ride Services:** Many airports have dedicated park & ride lots located near public transport hubs, with frequent bus or tram services to the terminals. These are often cheaper than drop-off zones and may

eliminate barrier fees altogether.

- **Public Transport:** For those travelling alone or light on luggage, buses, trains, and coaches can be the cheapest and least stressful alternative.

These solutions typically require a trade-off between convenience and cost — you'll spend more time shuttling or walking, but avoid paying the airport's rising fees.

Time Trade-Off: Shuttles vs Kerbside Convenience

Convenience is king for many travellers. Dropping off or picking up at the terminal kerbside is undeniably easier and faster, especially if you have young children, heavy luggage, or tight flights.

However, kerbside areas tend to be in the most controlled zones with the highest fees. Sometimes, paying two barrier fees for drop-off and pick-up zones might shave off shuttle wait times or long walks from cheaper parking.

If you're in a hurry and value time above all else, this might justify the extra cost. But if your schedule is flexible, and you don't mind a shuttle bus or a brisk walk, you can save money by sticking to free or cheaper zones outside the primary drop-off areas.

When Does Paying Two Barrier Fees Make Sense?

To help sort out whether paying for two barrier entries can be a smart choice, consider these situations:

1. **Split Zones with Significantly Different Prices** – If your airport has very distinct zones for drop-off and pick-up with varying fees, paying two smaller fees in each zone might be cheaper than paying one higher fee for a combined zone.
2. **Time-Sensitive Travel Behaviour** – If time is more valuable than money (e.g., for early flights, tight connections, or accessibility needs), paying twice to avoid shuttle or parking wait times can be justified.
3. **Group Arrivals and Departures** – When dropping off and picking up different people or groups at different times or terminals, paying two barrier fees is often unavoidable.
4. **Parking Booking and Package Deals** – Sometimes booking airport parking or drop-off services via third-party sites can bundle fees or offer discounts that make two barrier entries cheaper than expected.

Use Comparison Tools to Decide

Holiday Extras offers comprehensive airport parking comparison pages that highlight available drop-off and pick-up options and their prices. Using such tools can help you weigh up the cost of paying two barrier fees against cheaper alternatives, factoring in your airport, terminal, and timing needs.

For convenience, check trusted platforms like Holiday Extras airport parking comparison and look out for deals via their affiliate tracking links on networks such as awin1.com.

Summary: Balancing Cost and Convenience

Paying two barrier fees at UK airports can feel like a frustrating extra charge, especially when drop-off fees have quietly crept up to an average of **£6.51**.

However, depending on your airport's layout, the presence of split zones with different prices, and your personal circumstances, paying for two entries might sometimes be the most practical or cost-effective option.

- If time and kerbside convenience are your top priorities, two barrier fees could be justified.

- If you prefer to save money and don't mind shuttles, consider long stay parking or park & ride options instead.
- Use comparison and booking tools like Holiday Extras to find the best deals and local options.

Ultimately, the best approach depends on your specific travel plans, airport, and budget. With rising drop-off fees unlikely to reverse soon, a little advance planning can go a long way in cutting your airport travel costs while making your journey smoother.

Useful Resources

- [Holiday Extras airport parking comparison](#)
- [Book with airport parking deals on awin1.com](#)
- [Official airport websites for parking and drop-off policies](#)