



DAILY MAIL

The great parking rip-off

Residents are being hit by 400 per cent rises in parking charges - just to leave their

cars outside their own front doors, it emerged last night. The staggering increase means some motorists are paying more than £100 per year to park on their own street.

Councils are also raising millions by increasing pay and display charges, and the price of visitor permits, above the rate of inflation, a survey revealed.

The hours during which drivers must pay are also being extended in some areas - to include evenings, Sundays and bank holidays. More than half of local authorities have raised charges in the last year, by an average of nearly 50 per cent.

The revelations caused anger that motorists - who are already facing huge increases in fuel and insurance costs - are also being victimised by councils.

Edmund King, president of the AA, said: "Some local authorities are targeting drivers in an unfair manner because it disproportionately hits some people who live in particular areas and have no choice - especially those who cannot afford a garage or driveway."

A survey by the Sunday Times found 57 of 96 councils surveyed had increased their charges or extended charging hours. Of the 46 which set out their higher charges, the average increase was 44 per cent.



Mother of three Millie Parker, 41, from Barnet, paid £32 so eight friends could park on their street for her daughter Scarlett's birthday party. Last year the cost was £8. She told the Sunday Times: "I can't believe that I have to pay £100 a year to park outside my own house. How do they justify such a huge increase?" She added: "If I have three other mums around for a coffee, I have to pay £12 for three visitors' vouchers. It's definitely a way for the council to raise money, because there were enough

spaces under the old prices."

Councils are supposed to set fees to cover the costs of enforcing the restrictions, but are accused of increasing the charges to make a profit.

They face a legal challenge in the High Court by campaigners who are demanding the charges be cut. An RAC Foundation report found councils may be acting illegally.

A spokesman for Barnet Council said: "We have held

down the prices of residents' parking for several years, but circumstances dictate that we have to make them similar to other London boroughs."

