

Picking up friends or family from airports can be a bit stressful—not just because of the logistics, but also because of the growing **drop-off and pick-up fees** at UK airports. If you're planning to collect someone from Gatwick Airport, you might be wondering: *Is it possible to avoid paying those £6+ charges typically imposed for short stays? What are the rules around Gatwick collection? And are there affordable alternatives?*

In this post, we'll break down the **Gatwick pick up charges**, explain how they compare across UK airports, and share some savvy alternatives to save you money without compromising too heavily on convenience.

Understanding the Rise of Drop-Off Fees Across UK Airports

Over the past few years, many UK airports—including Gatwick—have quietly increased their short stay drop-off and pick-up fees. This is often marketed as a way to reduce traffic congestion around kerbsides and [re-entry fee](#) [how it works](#) encourage longer-term parking solutions. But the result is an average fee of around **£6.51** just for a quick stop in a short stay or departure zone.

Airport Average Short Stay Drop-Off Charge Notes London Gatwick £6.00 - £6.50 Charges for kerbside pick-up, first 10 min free only on drop-off London Heathrow £6.50 - £7.00 Strict short stay pick-up fees, heavy enforcement Manchester Airport £5.50 Moderate drop-off fees Glasgow Airport £4.50 Lower drop-off prices but still tiered charges

These fees have crept up with little publicity and reflect a national trend to manage airport traffic more effectively. Knowing this average (£6.51 across UK airports) helps set expectations when you plan your trip or collection at Gatwick.



What Are Gatwick's Specific Short Stay Pick Up Charges and Collection Rules?

Gatwick Airport applies some specific rules to control pick-ups and drop-offs around the terminals. Let's break down exactly how their short stay pick up charges work.

- **Short Stay Drop-Off:** If you're dropping someone off, Gatwick typically offers a free 10-minute grace period in the short stay car park, after which charges apply.
- **Kerbside Pick-Up:** Unlike some drop-offs, picking up passengers kerbside without parking is usually not free. Gatwick charges a flat fee (roughly £6) for stopping to collect passengers at the terminal pick-up bays, which are strictly monitored to avoid congestion.
- **Parking for Pick-Up:** To avoid kerbside fees, you can park briefly in the short stay car park but will be charged according to time parked—this quickly adds up if you stay more than 10-15 minutes.

In practical terms, the **Gatwick short stay pick up** zones prioritize quick loading and unloading, and any prolonged waiting or parking there is chargeable.

Can I Avoid Paying Kerbside Pick-Up Fees at Gatwick?

The honest answer: *Not really, unless you're prepared to plan alternatives.* Gatwick's collection rules and traffic control systems are designed to prevent anyone lingering at the kerb without paying. Enforcement is active, including ticketing and fines.

For most drivers, the best way to avoid paying **Gatwick pick up charges** is to rethink the location of your pick-up.

Free or Low-Cost Alternatives to Avoid Gatwick Short Stay Prices

Gatwick offers a few options that savvy travellers use to dodge those kerbside parking fees without missing the flight arrivals.

1. Long Stay Parking and Shuttle Services

If you're happy to sacrifice a little convenience, you can park in Gatwick's long stay parking areas, where hourly and daily rates are significantly lower than the short stay car parks, and the first shuttle is free.

- **How it works:** Park in Long Stay, then take the free shuttle bus to the terminal to meet arriving passengers.
- **Cost:** Long stay parking typically costs less than short stay per hour — far cheaper if you plan to wait or pick up someone at quiet times.
- **Trade-off:** The shuttle ride takes around 10-15 minutes, so add that to your collection time compared to kerbside pick-up.

2. Park & Ride Options Nearby

Another popular budget option is to park at Park & Ride lots outside Gatwick, run by third-party operators. These usually offer cheaper rates than airport-operated short stay and come with shuttle services to the terminals.

- **Booking in advance:** Using tools like Holiday Extras airport parking comparison pages lets you compare prices and reserve space easily.
- **Price advantage:** Park & Ride rates start as low as a few pounds per hour, significantly undercutting short stay drop-off fees.
- **Time trade-off:** Similar to long stay, you must factor in shuttle transit time (10-20 minutes).

Weighing Convenience vs Cost: The Time Trade-Off

Many drivers face the classic airport pick-up dilemma:



1. **Pay to use the short stay kerbside bays and enjoy immediate terminal access**, but pay around **£6 or more** per quick pick-up.
2. **Park further away for free or cheaper and take a shuttle**, saving money but spending 15-30 minutes traveling between the parking lot and terminal.

Your choice depends on how much you value time over money. For last-minute, rushed pickups—especially if you can get precise flight arrival updates—paying a bit more for kerbside convenience may be worth it.

If your passenger has an established arrival time and you don't mind a short bus ride, long stay or Park & Ride saves notable cash.

How to Book Affordable Parking and Avoid Gatwick Drop-Off Fees

To get the best value when picking up at Gatwick, it pays to plan ahead:

- Use Holiday Extras airport parking comparison pages to compare long stay and Park & Ride options and secure your parking spot well in advance.
- Reserve your parking spot online to lock in lowest prices and avoid last-minute premium rates.
- Consider signing up for alerts about arrivals so you can time your pick-up more precisely and minimize waiting time.

Booking through trusted affiliate platforms like Holiday Extras via [awin1.com](https://www.awin1.com) also often comes with special discounts or perks you won't find on the airport's own site.

Summary: What You Need to Know About Gatwick Collection Rules and Fees

Topic Key Takeaway Average Drop-Off Charge UK-wide £6.51 per short stay drop-off or pick-up on average
Gatwick Kerbside Pick Up Flat charge of ~£6 for stopping to collect passengers, no free grace period
Long Stay Parking + Shuttle Cheaper parking option, shuttle ride takes 10-15 minutes to terminal
Park & Ride Alternatives Lower cost, longer shuttle time, book in advance for best price
Convenience vs Cost Paying kerbside fees is faster, parking/shuttle is cheaper but time-consuming

Final Thoughts

In short, while you technically *can't* pick up passengers kerbside at Gatwick without paying **short stay pick up charges**, you can avoid those fees by parking in long stay or Park & Ride lots and using shuttle services. This involves a modest time trade-off but represents excellent value compared to kerbside convenience fees that hover around £6.

To save money on your next Gatwick pick-up, plan ahead, compare options, and book your parking in advance on Holiday Extras. This way, you avoid surprises, save on drop-off fees, and maximize travel budget for your trip.

Safe travels and smooth collections!