

## Marston Holdings Launches Refunds After UK Overcharging Scandal

August 15, 2025

– Categories: Finance



Britain's largest bailiff company, Marston Holdings, has begun a major refunds programme after admitting it overcharged enforcement fees to individuals pursued for unpaid debts. The company, which works with public bodies such as Transport for London (TfL), HM Courts & Tribunals Service, and numerous local authorities, has issued a public apology and pledged to repay affected consumers in full.

The issue involved road traffic penalties where enforcement agents are legally permitted to add a fixed £235 fee to a debt when visiting a debtor's home. According to the Enforcement

Conduct Board (ECB), the sector's independent oversight body, Marston had, in some cases, charged multiple fees where regulations only allow one, breaching rules designed to protect the public from overcharging.

The problem came to light in April, when an industry investigation revealed repeated breaches. ECB chief executive Chris Nichols described the practice as “unacceptable behaviour” and confirmed the regulator is taking strong action to ensure full restitution and prevent future occurrences.

Marston has confirmed the fault was linked to a system issue that has now been resolved. Refund cheques, including interest at 8%, have already been sent to all identified cases. In some instances, recipients received nearly £250, covering the original £235 fee plus interest.

While the company insists fewer than 0.3% of its debtor caseload is affected, it has committed to reviewing seven years of records to ensure no case is missed. A dedicated call centre and a three-year refund scheme have been established to assist claimants and process repayments.

TfL has stated Marston is not currently carrying out enforcement work for the authority, and its contract remains under review.

Debt enforcement is a significant industry in the UK, with more than 8 million enforcement cases recorded in 2024 worth a combined £5.2 billion. More than half of these involve unpaid road traffic penalties, such as congestion charges, Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) breaches, and bus lane violations.

Marston's role in recovering more than £850 million each year for taxpayers has placed it among the most influential firms in the sector. However, the overcharging revelation has raised questions about oversight and operational compliance.

In a statement, Marston Recovery, one of the group's brands, said: “An issue was identified where some individuals with multiple unpaid road traffic penalties had been overcharged enforcement fees. The issue has been fixed. Letters, with cheques for a full refund plus interest at 8%, have been sent to all affected. Those letters include an apology and guidance on how to contact us if there are any questions or help is required.”

The government recently announced measures aimed at creating a fairer debt enforcement system, and the ECB has confirmed it will monitor Marston closely to ensure this breach is not repeated.