

# The Blue Badge Scheme Local Authority Guidance (England)



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. The Blue Badge scheme

The Blue Badge (Disabled Persons' Parking) Scheme was introduced in 1971 under Section 21 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 ('the 1970 Act').

The aim of the scheme is to help disabled people with severe mobility problems to access goods and services, by allowing them to park close to their destination. The scheme is open to eligible disabled people irrespective of whether they are travelling as a driver or as a passenger.

The scheme provides a national range of on-street parking concessions to Blue Badge holders. It allows them to park without charge or time limit in otherwise restricted on-street parking environments, and allows them to park on yellow lines for up to three hours, unless a loading ban is in place. A list of concessions given to Blue Badge holders in England is summarised at [Appendix A](#).

## 1.2. Role of central Government

The Department for Transport (DfT) is responsible for the legislation that sets out the framework for the scheme. This includes:

- the prescribed descriptions of disabled people to whom a badge may be issued i.e. the eligibility criteria;
- the maximum fee that can be charged by local authorities for issue of a badge;
- the period of issue of a badge;
- the grounds for refusal to issue a badge and the grounds to withdraw a badge;
- the circumstances in which a badge should be returned to the issuing authority;
- the manner in which a badge should be displayed; and
- the national concessions available to badge holders under the scheme.

A list of relevant legislation is at [Appendix B](#).

The DfT does not have a statutory duty to provide Blue Badge scheme guidance to local authorities and, in line with the Government's commitment to localism, there are no plans to introduce statutory guidance. However, the DfT will continue to issue this non-statutory guidance in order to share good practice.

Local authorities should note that the DfT cannot intervene in the case of individual applications or eligibility decisions. In addition, the DfT cannot provide local authorities or applicants with individual legal advice on the interpretation of the legislation that governs the scheme. When such advice is needed local authorities should consult their own legal departments.

## 1.3. Role of local authorities

Local authorities are responsible for the day-to-day administration and enforcement of the scheme. They are responsible for determining and implementing administrative, assessment and enforcement procedures which they believe are in accordance with the governing legislation. Whatever the local arrangements, it is important that there is effective communication between the teams that issue Blue Badges and those that conduct on-street enforcement.

It is the responsibility of each local authority to ensure that badges are only issued to residents who satisfy one or more of the eligibility criteria set out in the legislation that governs the scheme. Under no circumstances should anyone who does not satisfy at least one of the criteria receive a badge.

All members of staff who deal regularly with applicants and badge holders should be included in the local authority's Disability and Equality Awareness training programme. Such training will help staff to understand the importance of the scheme to those who may rely upon it to access goods and services. See [Section 8.5](#) for further details on the duties placed on local authorities by the Equality Act 2010.

## 1.4. Scope of guidance

This guidance applies to local authorities in England. The Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly and the Northern Ireland Assembly all provide separate guidance for their own Blue Badge schemes.

This guidance is designed to help local authorities put in place administration, assessment and enforcement practices that are:

- fair and consistent in their treatment of Blue Badge applicants;
- customer-friendly and clear;
- timely and cost-efficient; and
- resistant to abuse.

This document updates the version issued in February 2012 to take account of changes to eligibility brought about by introduction of Personal Independence Payment (see Section 4) and new enforcement powers available under the Disabled Persons Parking Badges Act 2013 (Section 7). It has been informed by an extensive independent programme of work undertaken on behalf of the DfT by Integrated Transport Planning Ltd (ITP) and the TAS Partnership Ltd (TAS)<sup>1</sup>. This work, referred to in this guidance as the 'independent review', included:

- in-depth case studies of practices in 33 local authorities, including the 8 Blue Badge Centres of Excellence (CoEs);
- cost modelling of different administrative and assessment approaches;
- stakeholder workshops with a wide range of local authorities and other organisations, including representatives from disabled peoples groups;
- input from mobility experts, including from local authorities, the College of Occupational Therapists, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists, Brunel University and the Department for Work and Pensions;

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<sup>1</sup> [Improving Blue Badge administration, assessment and enforcement: good practice review - final report - Publications - Department for Transport](#)

- pilot studies that tested and evaluated administrative and assessment approaches with disabled people and local authorities; and
- focus groups with badge holders and the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC).

Throughout the document, case studies from local authorities are highlighted in green text boxes and evidence from the independent review is highlighted in pink text boxes. Quick Wins identified through the independent review are at [Appendix J](#). The guidance also includes information from the Local Government Ombudsman that local authorities may wish to consider.

Local authorities should ensure that this guidance is brought to the attention of all officers involved in the administration and assessment of applications, issue of badges and parking enforcement.

Local authorities are also encouraged to join the Blue Badge Online Community at <https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/group/bluebadgeonlinecommunity> where they will be able to keep up to date with national policy on the Blue Badge scheme and discuss administration, assessment and enforcement issues with other local authorities.

## 2. Local publicity and information

### 2.1. Local information

It is important that disabled people who might be eligible for a Blue Badge are made aware of the scheme and how it can help them to become more mobile and independent. The DfT provides leaflets entitled "Can I get a Blue Badge", "The Blue Badge Scheme: rights and responsibilities" and "The Blue Badge Scheme: rights and responsibilities for organisations" that are available to download free of charge on the DfT's website. A printed copy of the rights and responsibilities leaflet is sent out via the Blue Badge Improvement Service with each badge. Members of the public are also able to check whether they might be eligible for a badge at [www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge](http://www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge)

Local authorities should aim to provide information about the scheme in simple language and in accessible formats on their websites and at locations that are likely to be accessible to disabled people. This information can typically cover:

- who is eligible for a badge;
- how to apply for a badge;
- the parking concessions available to badge holders;
- the rules of the scheme and how badge holders should use a badge;
- how the scheme is enforced;
- when, and how, to renew a badge; and
- who to contact at the local authority for further information about the scheme.

**Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council** helps signpost potentially eligible disabled people towards the Blue Badge scheme by making printed information available at a wide range of locations. In addition to council offices and seven contact centres, they also provide information at local libraries, disabled living centres, Citizens Advice Bureaux, the Welfare Benefits Advice Centre, the Money Advice Centre, local health centres and through the council's newspaper.

**Wandsworth Borough Council** has developed a series of pages on its website that are structured around bite-size topics that has made it easier to present information on the scheme in a clear and easy to understand way.

On its website, **Southampton City Council** provides information about the Blue Badge scheme through a series of Frequently Asked Questions. These are designed to enable potential applicants to obtain answers to basic questions they may have about the scheme and the council believes this will reduce the number of telephone enquiries received from members of the public.

### 2.2 Publicity on Blue Badge misuse

Publicity campaigns on Blue Badge misuse and enforcement initiatives can be effective in reducing misuse of badges. These may include the use of posters, leaflets and media campaigns and can be undertaken to a scale and cost that is appropriate to the local circumstances.

The "Respect the Badge" campaign undertaken by **Birmingham City Council** and **Coventry City Council** provided information that reminded people about the correct use of badges. It also highlighted potential penalties for misuse and provided phone, e-mail and internet contacts for people to report suspected badge misuse. The councils produced leaflets that were mailed to badge holders and posters that were put up on roadside billboards and in all council buildings. In addition, a video was produced and shown in around 200 GP surgeries across Birmingham. Council officers also worked closely with local newspapers and radio stations to publicise the issue of badge misuse and enforcement activities.

The campaign contributed to an increase in public awareness and an increase in reported instances of misuse. This in turn contributed to a 90% increase in prosecutions for Blue Badge misuse in Birmingham. Further information and copies of the literature can be found on the Blue Badge Online Community at: <https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/group/bluebadgeonlinecommunity>

# 3. The application process

## 3.1. Handling initial enquiries

It is important that potential applicants are provided with sufficient information and support at the initial enquiry stage. This should cover both their likely eligibility and the application process itself – particularly regarding any supporting evidence that the applicant will need to provide. This approach enables better screening of potential applicants and greater assurance that applications are properly completed at the first attempt.

Initial enquiries about Blue Badge applications can be handled directly by Blue Badge administration teams or by local authority contact centres. With sufficient advice and training, officers or customer service advisors can often establish over the telephone whether an individual is likely to be eligible or not. This can help to reduce the number of clearly ineligible applications and ensure that applicants who may be eligible receive the appropriate forms and information for their circumstances.

The Blue Badge Improvement Service includes an online eligibility checker that is available via Gov.UK ([www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge](https://www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge)) so that members of the general public can check quickly and easily whether they may be eligible for a badge. Further information on the Blue Badge Improvement Service is given in [section 8.4](#). Local authorities may wish to use similar eligibility checkers in their interactions with potential applicants (at [Appendix I](#)).

## 3.2. Applications by individuals<sup>2</sup>

It remains a matter for each individual local authority to decide on and to produce application form(s) for their area. Some local authorities have one form for all Blue Badge applications, while others have several forms, each catering for applications under different eligibility criteria.

To assist local authorities in deciding whether or not an applicant meets the eligibility criteria, the DfT has produced a [model application form](#) with accompanying guidance notes for applicants on how to complete the form. The DfT recommends that authorities provide the guidance notes as a separate document to the application form so that they can be retained by the applicant for future reference after their application has been submitted. This model form has been informed by work done with local authorities, mobility experts and disabled people as part of the independent review. The form has been used as the basis for the national online application facility that is available to members of the public via Gov.UK as part of the [Blue Badge Improvement Service](#). People are able to apply at [www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge](https://www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge)

### Medical information

It is important that applicants are asked to provide detailed information about their disability and mobility difficulties at the initial application stage. This enables more informed and quicker decision

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<sup>2</sup> Applications for organisational badges are covered in [Section 5](#).

making by local authorities and, in circumstances when an applicant is clearly eligible or ineligible, can avoid the need for the applicant to undergo an independent mobility assessment.

When designing the application form, the questions used will depend on the assessment approach adopted by the local authority. For example, information gathered about an applicant through the application form can be used:

- to enable the [cross-checking](#) of relevant personal information held by the local authority in relation to the applicant's condition and care (e.g. social care records);
- as the basis for a [desk-based assessment](#) of an applicant's likely eligibility under the '[subject to further assessment](#)' criteria; and
- as a means of verifying information the applicant provides, or cross referencing observations made by a healthcare professional during an [independent mobility assessment](#).

## Core personal data

The model application form includes the core personal data that DfT recommends is requested from the applicant as a minimum:

- First names **(m)**
- Surname **(m)**
- Title **(m)**
- Gender (see [Section 3.4](#)) **(m)**
- Date of birth **(m)**
- Place of birth (town and country) **(m)**
- Surname at birth **(m)**
- National Insurance number
- Current address and Postcode **(m)**
- Vehicle Registration Number (VRN) of vehicles in which the badge will be used most frequently.
- Serial number of current Blue Badge (if renewing a badge) or
- The name of the previous issuing local authority if someone has held a badge before **(m)**

When local authorities request badges to be printed through the [Blue Badge Improvement Service](#), they will be asked to complete some mandatory fields. It is therefore essential that the information marked above with an **(m)** is provided at application stage. The information is needed to personalise the badge or to enable data-matching for fraud prevention purposes.

## Checks at application

Through consultations with local authorities, the DfT is aware of many cases where people have been able to obtain badges fraudulently. Examples include people using fake identities, fake addresses or even applying in the name of people who have died. It is vitally important that the issuing local authority carries out checks at the application stage to ensure, as far as possible, that people are who they claim to be and that they are resident in that authority's area.

Research undertaken on behalf of DfT showed that less than half of all local authorities check a person's identity on application. Also, some do not check whether an individual is who they claim to be at the time of a mobility assessment. Local authorities are strongly encouraged to implement a robust identity management system to help reduce fraud and abuse of the scheme.

The [Blue Badge Improvement Service](#) includes ways of checking key information automatically to help prevent abuse of the scheme and to help ensure that those automatically eligible receive a badge more easily. For example, automatic checks can be made on whether or not an applicant has already been issued with a badge by a different local authority and local authorities will receive an alert when a badge holder might have died.

The model and Gov.UK on-line application forms aim to ensure that key information is captured to establish a person's identity. For example, information in relation to a person's birth does not change during their lifetime and can be compared with information held in other records, such as social service records. A person's National Insurance Number will also enable cross-checks to be made. The DfT recommends that local authorities request information and/or documents that are harder to fake and forge. So, for example, local authorities are asked to check for residency against Council Tax records or the electoral roll. The DfT recommends that local authorities no longer request documents such as rent books or utility bills as proof of identity or residency as these are easy to fake and forge. In terms of residency checks, the model and Gov.UK on-line application forms ask for information on previous addresses to help local authorities to establish a residency history about an applicant.

Local authorities will also want to establish whether the applicant has previously held a badge (a "renewal application") or whether it is a new application. For renewal applications, the DfT recommends that the previous badge number, the expiry date and the name of the previous issuing local authority if that is different are requested in order to aid in locating previous application records. A common badge numbering system has been introduced as part of the [Blue Badge Improvement Service](#). The badge serial number includes a unique badge number, the gender and date of birth of the badge holder, and the date of expiry of the badge.

Changes to the badge design mean that a person's signature is no longer needed for the badge. The new badge design that was introduced on 1 January 2012 includes a digitally-scanned, passport-style photograph of the badge holder.

## Declarations

The DfT strongly recommends that local authorities include declarations at the end of the application form for the applicant to review and sign. These can help to combat fraud and to allow the local authority to cross-check relevant information with other council departments. Suggested statements that could be included are shown in [section 7 of the model application form](#). These declarations appear at the end of the national on-line application form that is available via Gov.UK.

Declarations can be used to confirm that the applicant:

- understands the application process and has answered the questions honestly;
- understands that they will need to abide by the rules of the scheme;
- understands how the data provided will be used by the council and, where necessary, has given permission for data sharing in accordance with the Data Protection Act; and
- gives their consent for the release of medical information required for assessing eligibility.

Local authorities may wish to refer to [guidance](#) issued by the Information Commissioner's Office, including their [Code of Practice on Privacy Notices](#).

### 3.3. Completion and submission of applications

There are a number of ways that applications for a Blue Badge can be submitted to the local authority. Most local authorities currently have a printed application form that can be completed, signed and submitted with the required photograph, fee (where levied) and supporting evidence. Local authorities may achieve efficiency and/or customer service benefits by also providing alternative ways of completing and submitting applications, as outlined below.

#### Assisted completion

With sufficient training, Blue Badge advisors can assess over the telephone whether an individual is likely to be eligible. They can also partially complete an application form, which can then be sent to the applicant for signature, photograph and supporting evidence. Where a contact centre is available, the role of handling and processing initial applications can be absorbed by Customer Service Advisors in order to streamline the administration process.

**Wiltshire Council** offers the facility through its single county-wide telephone contact centre to assist in the completion of application forms over the telephone, whilst **Worcestershire County Council** uses a network of eight customer service centres that are spread throughout the county. Applicants are asked to fill in the application form and then bring it to one of the centres with the supporting documentation. The form is then checked, any gaps are filled and the assessment process is started in a face-to-face interview at the centre.

**Kent County Council** and **Shropshire Council** use telephone or online application services that minimise the need for Blue Badge applicants to physically visit their local authority offices in order to collect and submit application forms.

#### Online applications

The [Blue Badge Improvement Service](#) offers a national online application facility through Gov.UK. Applicants will still need to provide the appropriate, passport-style photograph, any supporting documents required (i.e. proof of identity, residency and eligibility) and the appropriate badge issue fee (where levied). In some cases, an applicant will upload a photograph as part of the on-line application and some local authorities now accept on-line payments.

One of the major advantages of an online application is that the information entered by the applicant on their online application form (or by the local authority in the case of assisted completion) automatically populates their application record file on the [Blue Badge Improvement Service](#). This has the potential to improve efficiency by eliminating local authority staff time spent scanning or transcribing written application forms and avoids errors that may arise from this process.

Feedback from badge holders suggests that those with internet access are keen to be able to submit completed application forms online in the future. Although the proportion of Blue Badge applications made online is currently fairly small, it is highly likely that demand for online applications will increase in the future as this becomes increasingly accepted as the norm for a range of council services.

### 3.4. Transsexual and transgender applicants

Transsexual and many transgender people live permanently in a gender other than that assigned at birth. Accordingly, their name and personal details will have changed. Discrimination against such people in many circumstances will be unlawful and best practice will always be to regard the individual in the gender with which they identify. In addition, the Gender Recognition Act 2004 affords privacy of gender history to transsexual people who have obtained a Gender Recognition Certificate. Disclosure of that gender history, except in certain limited circumstances (see section 22 of the Act), is a criminal offence. A Gender Recognition Certificate should never be requested as proof of identity.

Some applicants, particularly those who have recently commenced living in a different gender, may, for a number of reasons, find it difficult to provide the appropriate documentation, so local authorities will need to be more flexible in assessing the proof of identity of transgender people. Respect for the individual and privacy of gender history are of paramount importance. For more advice and information on transsexual and transgender issues please contact: [agender@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:agender@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk).

Since 15 October 2007, the Blue Badge has included a gender marker (Male/Female). It is important that local authorities deal with applications made by transsexual and transgender people sensitively, and issue badges under the requested gender.

### 3.5. Terminally ill applicants

Local authorities may wish to consider having a fast-track application process for people who have a terminal illness that seriously limits their mobility, in order to make the final weeks of their life easier.

**North Yorkshire County Council** has a 'fast track' application service for terminally ill people. The scheme enables Macmillan nurses (or specialist nurses), GPs and district nurses to fax or telephone through requests on behalf of their terminally ill patients. The health professionals use a specifically designed fax form. The badge is produced within 24 hours and dispatched by first class post on the same day. No fee is payable.

This approach enables North Yorkshire to provide a compassionate and efficient service to people in the final weeks of their life. The council currently issues approximately 800 of these badges a year, the majority of which are returned after a very short period of time.

### 3.6. Badge issue fee

The regulations governing the Blue Badge scheme give local authorities the discretion to charge a fee on the issue of a badge. This fee cannot exceed £10.

Local authorities should note that only successful applicants should be asked to pay the badge issue fee. The fee may also be charged if badge holders request replacements for badges that have been reported as lost or stolen or because they are not clearly legible or have been damaged.

## 3.7. Photographs

The photograph is a key feature in reducing abuse of the scheme and enabling effective enforcement. Local authorities can refuse to issue a badge if they have reason to believe that the applicant is not who they claim to be or that the applicant would permit another person to display the badge on a motor vehicle.

Each applicant should be asked to supply one passport-sized and passport standard photograph clearly showing their full face so that they can be easily identified.

A new badge design is in place for all badges issued on or after 1 January 2012. After this date, local authorities must not issue any old style badges. The new badges include a digitally scanned, passport-style photograph. For more information, please see the [Local Authority Circular](#).

The requirements for a photograph on the badge are set out in The [Disabled Persons \(Badges for Motor Vehicles\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) No.2 Regulations 2011](#) and follow closely the recommendations for passport photographs:

The photograph must be a close-up, digital photograph of the head and shoulders of the badge holder. The photograph shall have a strong definition between face and background and shall be:

- i. in colour;
- ii. 45 millimetres in height and 35 millimetres in width (passport size);
- iii. taken:
  - a. within the month prior to the date of the application;
  - b. against a light grey or cream background
- iv. undamaged;
- v. free from 'redeye', shadows, reflection or glare from spectacles;
- vi. of the full head of the holder (without any other person visible or any covering, unless it is worn for religious beliefs or medical reasons):
  - a. facing forward;
  - b. with nothing covering the face;
  - c. looking straight at the camera;
  - d. with a neutral expression and mouth closed;
  - e. with eyes open and clearly visible (without sunglasses or tinted spectacles and without hair or spectacle frames obscuring the eyes);
- vii. in sharp focus and clear;
- viii. printed professionally or in digital format;
- ix. a true likeness, without amendment

The DfT recommends that, for hard copy photographs, local authorities ask that the applicant's name be written clearly on the back of a photograph and that the applicant, or the person applying on their behalf, confirms in the [declaration section of the application form](#) that the photograph is a true likeness.

A close-up digital photograph of the head and shoulders of the badge holder must be displayed on the badge and a photograph should also be kept on the individual's file. The only circumstance in which a photograph of the holder does not have to be displayed on the badge is in the case of an eligible disabled person with a terminal illness if the issuing local authority is satisfied that the estimated life expectancy of that person is less than 6 months.

People who are unable to access photo booths (for example, wheelchair users) should be asked to provide a suitable photograph taken by other means which meets the passport-style standards outlined above. No other person should be visible in the photograph. Some local authorities now have webcam facilities for taking photographs for applications for a range of services and may wish to offer this as a convenient way for Blue Badge applicants to obtain a photograph.

**Shropshire Council** has an innovative process in place to provide application assistance in a rural county with a dispersed population. It allows people to make a Blue Badge application through seven unmanned Customer Service Points, from which applicants can speak to a remote advisor face to face using a webcam link. The advisor is able to fill out the form, take a photograph of the applicant using the webcam and scan proof of identity and benefits evidence, enabling the application to be completed in real time.

The DfT recommends that the photograph be returned to the applicant if their application is unsuccessful.

Photographs do not need to be provided for [organisational badges](#). Organisational badges should include the organisation's stamp or logo in the space provided on the badge.

## 4. Determining the eligibility of individual applicants

### 4.1 The two types of eligibility criteria

An individual's eligibility for a Blue Badge is considered in terms of being 'eligible without further assessment' (previously known as 'automatic') or 'eligible subject to further assessment' (previously known as 'discretionary').

In no circumstances should a badge be issued to an applicant who does not meet one of the eligibility criteria set out in the [legislation](#) which governs the scheme. Badges should never be issued to people solely on the basis of their age.

### 4.2 Type 1: 'Eligible without further assessment'

#### The 'eligible without further assessment' criteria

People who may be issued with a badge without further assessment are those who are more than two years old and fall within one or more of the following descriptions:

- Receives the Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance (HRMCDLA); or
- Receives 8 points or more under the "moving around" activity of the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP); or
- Is registered blind (severely sight impaired); or
- Receives a War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement (WPMS); or
- Has been both awarded a lump sum benefit at tariffs 1-8 of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and certified as having a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking.

(NOTE: Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP) awards are not included in the Type 1 eligibility criteria.

#### Detailed guidance on proof of entitlement

Provided that the applicant can demonstrate that they satisfy one of the criteria listed above, and can satisfy identity and residency checks, the DfT expects badges to be issued with the minimum of formality in these cases.

**One of the following forms of proof of entitlement should be provided:**

**Proof of receipt of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance (HRMCDLA)**

An applicant in receipt of HRMCDLA will have an award notice letter from the Pension, Disability & Carers Service (PDCS). They are also issued with an annual uprating letter, stating their entitlement. Local authorities can ask applicants for a copy of this annual uprating letter as proof of their receipt of HRMCDLA if their award letter is more than 12 months old. "Indefinite or "life" awards are still subject to review, and therefore older award letters may not be reliable indicators of whether a person currently has an award of HRMCDLA. If the applicant has lost their HRMCDLA award or uprating letter, then they can be advised to contact the PDCS for a current award letter by:

- Telephone: 08457 123 456
- Textphone: 08457 22 44 33
- Email: DCPU.Customer-Services@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

This helpline is open from 7.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday, and further details can be found online at:

[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/FinancialSupport/DisabilityLivingAllowance/DG\\_10011925](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/FinancialSupport/DisabilityLivingAllowance/DG_10011925)

The DfT is aware that some local authorities have been accepting vehicle tax disc exemption certificates (DLA 404 or WPA0442) as proof of eligibility for HRMCDLA and the WPMS, and are awarding a Blue Badge when these certificates are submitted in support of a badge application. Because these exemption certificates are issued each year for a 12 month period, the DfT strongly discourages the practice of accepting these vehicle tax exemption certificates as the basis for awarding badges under the 'without further assessment' criterion. The local authority may, however, wish to inform applicants in receipt of HRMCDLA or WPMS that they are eligible to receive the vehicle tax exemption.

**Proof of receipt of a score of 8 points or more under the “moving around” activity of the Mobility Component of Personal Independence Payment.**

An applicant in receipt of this award will have a decision letter from the Department of Work and Pensions. Under the Mobility Component section, the letter will describe the degree to which the applicant can ‘Move around’. For the applicant to be eligible for a Blue Badge without further assessment, they must receive one of the following:

- You can stand and then move unaided more than 20 metres but no more than 50 metres. (8 points)
- You can stand and then move using an aid or appliance more than 20 metres but no more than 50 metres. (10 points)
- You can stand and then move more than 1 metre but no more than 20 metres either aided or unaided. (12 points)
- You cannot aided or unaided stand or move more than 1 metre. (12 points)

(NOTE: AFIP awards do not entitle the applicant to “automatic” Blue Badge eligibility. The applicant will need to meet one of the other “automatic” criteria or apply under the discretionary route)

Awards may be for a fixed period or “ongoing”. They are all subject to review and therefore old award letters may not be reliable indicators of current eligibility. If the award letter is more than 12 months old we recommend you check the validity of the PIP decision letter by calling the PIP Enquiry Service on 0845 8503322.

If the applicant has lost their PIP decision letter, then they should be advised to contact DWP for a replacement by:

- Telephone: 0845 850 3322
- Textphone: 0845 601 6677

This helpline is open from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday, and further details can be found online at: <https://www.gov.uk/pip>

**Proof of being registered blind (severely sight impaired)**

An applicant who is registered blind (now officially referred to as “severely sight impaired”) will often be registered with the local authority’s Social Services Department (or their agents). However, local authority administrators should note that registration is voluntary. The formal notification required to register as severely sight impaired is a Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI) signed by a Consultant Ophthalmologist. The CVI was formerly known as the 'BD8' form. The individual should have a copy of their CVI, and should be encouraged to register if they have not already done so as they may also be entitled to various other benefits.

**Proof of receipt of the War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement (WPMS)**

An applicant receiving the WPMS will have an award letter from the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency. They can be contacted via the free-phone enquiry number: 0800 169 22 77.

**Proof of both award of a lump sum benefit at tariffs 1-8 of the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation) Scheme and certification of having a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking.**

An applicant with the above award and certification will have an award letter from the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency confirming that they are in receipt of tariffs 1-8 under the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation) Scheme Order 2011 which also states that they have been certified as having a, “permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking.”

Local authorities can verify the eligibility of an applicant by contacting the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency on 0800 169 22 77.

An example of the award letter can be viewed at:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/adobepdf/259428/281009/blue-badge-scheme-eligibility-changes.pdf>

In order to streamline administration when verifying an applicant’s proof of entitlement, local authorities should consider using electronic records held on the applicant by other council departments and agencies, where such records are accessible and up to date. Applicants must give their consent to sharing any personal information for a secondary purpose under the Data Protection Act. This consent can be sought in the [‘Declaration’ section of the Blue Badge application form](#).

It is hoped, in time, that the [Blue Badge Improvement Service](#) will include automatic checks with DWP to establish whether applicants are in receipt of HRMCDLA or PIP.

**Brighton and Hove City Council's** Blue Badge team are able to check that an applicant is on the council's Blind Register. Having obtained specific consent from people applying under this criterion through the application form, the officers are able to cross-check the records held in another council department. This approach has several benefits, including a simplified and quicker application process for severely sight impaired people who have registered their impairment with the local authority and less staff time spent chasing and scanning paper CVI forms.

## 4.3. Type 2: 'Eligible subject to further assessment'

### The 'eligible subject to further assessment' criteria

People who may be issued with a badge after further assessment are those who are more than two years old and fall within one or more of the following descriptions:

- Drives a vehicle regularly, has a severe disability in both arms and is unable to operate, or has considerable difficulty in operating, all or some types of parking meter; or
- Has a permanent and substantial disability that causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking.

In addition, children under the age of three may be eligible for a badge if they fall within either or both of the following descriptions:

- A child who, on account of a condition, must always be accompanied by bulky medical equipment which cannot be carried around with the child without great difficulty;
- A child who, on account of a condition, must always be kept near a motor vehicle so that, if necessary, treatment for that condition can be given in the vehicle or the child can be taken quickly in the vehicle to a place where such treatment can be given.

Local authorities should note that, from 1 April 2012, legislation<sup>3</sup> prescribes that the eligibility of those applying because of a "permanent and substantial disability that causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking" (regulation 4(2)(f) of the [Disabled Persons \(Badges for Motor Vehicles\) \(England\) Regulations 2000](#) be confirmed by an **independent mobility assessor**.

The above condition does not apply when a local authority determines that, from the information that they have about the applicant, it is self-evident that the applicant meets the eligibility criterion, i.e. that the applicant is clearly eligible or ineligible and a mobility assessment would not assist the local authority in determining eligibility. The reason for this is that it would be overly burdensome for both local authorities and for applicants to require an independent mobility assessment in cases where an applicant's disability and impairment mean that they are clearly eligible or ineligible.

The DfT's view is that eligibility decisions are fairer and more objective if mobility assessments are undertaken by professionals who have been specifically trained in mobility and who are independent of the applicant. It is therefore important that local authorities use assessors who have been appropriately trained in mobility assessments, who hold appropriate professional qualifications and who are not open to bias because of a personal or commercial connection to the applicant.

The [regulations](#) define an 'independent mobility assessor' as a person who:

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<sup>3</sup> [The Disabled Persons \(Badges for Motor Vehicles\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No.2\) Regulations 2011](#)

- is recognised by the issuing authority as holding a professional qualification, the obtaining of which involved them being trained in the assessment of a person's ability to walk;
- is recognised by the issuing authority as having the expertise necessary to assess the applicant's ability to walk on behalf of the local authority;
- has never been employed or engaged as a provider of medical services to the applicant, where 'medical services' includes all forms of medical treatment and investigations to establish whether treatment is needed, but does not include an assessment conducted to establish whether the applicant is eligible for services provided by a local authority (including the provision of a Blue Badge);
- is not, in the opinion of the local authority, precluded by reason of personal or commercial relationship with the applicant from providing an independent assessment of their ability to walk.

It is down to the issuing local authority to determine what professional qualification(s) an independent mobility assessor should hold. However, we would expect that many local authorities would use occupational therapists and physiotherapists as they have been specifically trained in the assessment of mobility. In order to practice under either of these titles a person must be registered with the Health Professions Council.

The assessor must be independent of the applicant, but it is not necessary for them to be independent of the issuing authority - they can, for example, be employed by the local authority.

It is the DfT's view that the definition of an independent mobility assessor contained in the regulations precludes the use of both the applicant's GP and anyone else who has been involved in the applicant's ongoing care and treatment in determining an applicant's eligibility. It does not, however, prevent a local authority from making use of factual information from the GP or from other medical professionals regarding an applicant's condition(s) and treatment(s) as evidence to support the eligibility decision making process.

It is also down to the issuing local authority to interpret this provision, to determine the circumstances in which an independent mobility assessment is not required (i.e. the circumstances in which an applicant is self-evidently eligible or ineligible) and to determine the procedures used for that assessment. However, we recommend that local authorities refer to principles on independent mobility assessments contained within this guidance.

## **General guidance on assessing eligibility**

Eligibility under the above categories should be carefully assessed to maximise the fairness and consistency of badge issue across England. Local authorities should also keep a record of the procedures used and the outcome of the assessment process. This will help the authority to provide greater transparency to applicants and to demonstrate that correct procedures have been followed in event of a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

The independent review concluded that approaches based around the use of independent mobility assessments to determine eligibility of 'subject to further assessment' Blue Badge applicants enable a local authority to achieve:

- More efficient badge issuing, with associated cost savings and greater ownership of the decision-making process.
- Improved fairness for badge applicants, who are provided adequate opportunity to present their eligibility case.
- Greater assurance that assessment of eligibility is conducted thoroughly and objectively by an appropriately qualified person using available information and appropriate tools and tests.
- A high level of confidence that those applicants intended by legislation to be eligible for a Blue Badge actually receive them, while those who fall outside the statutory eligibility criteria do not.
- More consistent decision-making, both within local authorities and between authorities in England.
- Greater resistance to Blue Badge abuse, by ensuring that only genuinely eligible applicants receive a badge.

The case for reducing the role of an applicant's personal GP in badge eligibility decision making was supported by the Cabinet Office report [Making a difference: reducing burdens on general practitioners \(GPs\)\(2002\)](#) and the Department of Health's [Care Services Efficiency Delivery Programme Blue Badge Initiative Report \(2006\)](#). The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee recommended, in their [2002 Review Report](#), that mobility assessments conducted to determine an individual's eligibility for a badge should be undertaken by an accredited health professional other than the applicant's GP. In addition, the Transport Select Committee held an inquiry into the scheme in 2008 and, in their [Final Report](#), supported the removal of GP's from the assessment process. Their view was that the use of an applicant's own GP to assess their mobility, or of any other doctor directly involved in the applicant's care or treatment, is likely to produce a bias in favour of approving the application.

The independent review found that local authorities that based their assessment procedures around independent mobility assessments demonstrated cost savings, lower issue rates and lower appeal rates. Headline findings from the case studies include:

- Cost savings for local authorities. Direct comparisons between the average cost of an independent mobility assessment (£19.10) and assessment using an applicant's GP (£30.30) indicate potential for local authorities to achieve a 37% saving in Blue Badge assessment costs if all subject to further assessment applicants are seen by an independent mobility assessor rather than a GP. Some local authorities, such as the London Borough of Enfield, built savings in terms of previously foregone parking revenue into their business case for making the transition to independent mobility assessments.
- Blue Badge award rates of 70%, compared to 95% among local authorities that rely upon an applicant's own GP. Assessment approaches piloted through the independent review revealed that independent mobility assessments are better at ensuring that only those people who meet the eligibility criteria are successful in their application for a Blue Badge under the 'subject to further assessment' criteria.
- Lower appeal rates - the review found that, on average, 20% of 'subject to further assessment' applicants who were refused a Blue Badge following an independent mobility assessment appealed, compared to 39% among refused applicants when the local authority relied upon an applicant's own GP.
- Fewer applicants who were initially refused a Blue Badge with an independent mobility assessment (21%) were successful on appeal, compared to local authorities that are reliant upon an applicant's own GP (28%).

Focus group discussions with disabled people found that an independent mobility assessment conducted by a healthcare professional who was independent of the applicant's treatment was perceived as being the most robust way of determining an applicant's eligibility under the Blue Badge criteria.

## 4.4. Assessing people with walking disabilities

To qualify under this criterion, an applicant must have **any** permanent (i.e. likely to last for the duration of a person's life) and substantial disability that means they **cannot walk, or means they have very considerable difficulty walking**. Each application should be considered against this criterion, regardless of the particular condition. Applicants will need to demonstrate that their ability to walk is affected to the extent that they would be unable to access goods and services unless allowed to park close to shops, public buildings and other facilities.

Local authorities should be aware that it is not appropriate to refuse an applicant a Blue Badge solely on the basis that they are able to use public transport independently or because they already have a concessionary travel pass.

In all cases, entitlement depends on the applicant's difficulty in walking, and considerations such as difficulty in carrying parcels or luggage are not to be taken into account.

In addition, the DfT considers that it would not be appropriate to refuse an applicant a Blue Badge on the sole basis that they are due to have a medical procedure which may or may not improve their mobility. If, at the time of assessment, the applicant is deemed as having a permanent and substantial disability which means that they are unable to walk or that they have very considerable difficulty walking (which is unlikely to change unless they have medical intervention) then they should be issued with a badge. In all cases it remains the responsibility of the local authority to decide whether the applicant's disability is permanent or temporary. When a badge is issued in these circumstances the applicant should be reminded in their decision letter that they have a duty under regulation 9(1)(c) of the [Disabled Persons \(Badges for Motor Vehicles\) \(England\) Regulations 2000](#) to return the badge to the local authority if at any time their mobility improves.

Whilst medical conditions such as asthma, Crohn's disease/incontinent conditions, autism, Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (M.E.) and other mental/cognitive/intellectual disabilities are not in themselves a qualification for a badge, people with these conditions may be eligible for a badge if they are unable to walk or have very considerable difficulty in walking. Eligibility is not determined by the presence or absence of any particular diagnosis or condition. Provided that an applicant has a permanent and substantial disability, a local authority's eligibility decision should be based on whether the applicant's difficulty in walking meets the criterion in the regulations. Each application should be considered on its merits – not on a “one size fits all” basis. **The final decision about whether an applicant meets the criterion is for the issuing authority to make. The DfT has no power to intervene in eligibility decisions in individual cases.**

The independent review brought together mobility experts to give detailed consideration to what local authorities should take into account when determining an applicant's eligibility under this criterion. These experts included: experienced local authority practitioners; the College of Occupational Therapists; the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists; Brunel University and the Department for Work and Pensions. Assessment procedures are for local authorities to determine, but they may wish to take account of the following, which represents the group's findings:

**(a) the applicant cannot walk**

Being unable to walk means that they **cannot take a single step**.

The applicant needs to show that, because of their permanent and substantial disability, they cannot put one foot in front of the other.

Walking involves always having one foot on the ground.

If the applicant's **only way of getting about is to swing through two elbow crutches, then they will be considered unable to walk** (provided it is due to a permanent and substantial disability and not due to legs being in plaster).

**(b) the applicant has very considerable difficulty in walking**

The applicant will need to show that, as a result of their permanent and substantial disability, they are unable to walk very far without experiencing severe difficulty. Several factors may be relevant to determining this:

**Excessive pain** reported by the applicant when walking, or as a consequence of the effort of walking.

- Pain is subjective, and some people have higher pain thresholds than others. Consideration may need to be given to cross-referencing an applicant's reported experience of pain with information they provide about their permanent and substantial disability, details of medication they take, coping strategies they have adopted and any courses of treatment designed to help them manage their pain.

**Any breathlessness** reported by the applicant when walking, or as a consequence of the effort of walking.

- The applicant's reported breathlessness may need to be cross-referenced with details of diagnosed medical conditions known to cause breathlessness (e.g. emphysema) and any observations of the applicant's respiratory rate during a mobility assessment.

It does not matter whether excessive pain or breathlessness occurs at the time of walking, or later - what counts is that it is a direct result of their attempt to walk.

The **distance** an applicant is able to walk without excessive pain or breathlessness; taking due consideration of the environment the individual usually walks.

- If an applicant is unable to walk 30 metres (33 yards) in total, then their walking ability is not appreciable and they can be deemed as having very considerable difficulty in walking.
- The applicant *may* be deemed eligible if they can walk 30-80 metres (33-87.5 yards) without pain or breathlessness, but demonstrate very considerable difficulty in walking through a combination of other factors (e.g. extremely slow pace and/or their manner of walking).
- Applicants who can walk more than 80 metres (87.5 yards) and do not demonstrate very considerable difficulty in walking through any other factors would not be deemed as eligible.

The **speed** at which they are able to walk.

- As a guide the average person can walk in a minute:
  - Brisk pace - >90 metres per minute
  - Normal pace - 61-90 metres per minute
  - Slow pace - 40-60 metres per minute
  - Very slow pace - <40 metres per minute
- If an applicant cannot walk 40 metres (44 yards) in a minute (a pace of less than 0.67 metres/second), including any stops to rest, then this is an extremely slow pace which is likely to make walking very difficult when considered in isolation.
- If an applicant can walk 40 metres (44 yards) in less than a minute (a pace of 0.67 metres/second or more), including any stops to rest, then the speed at which they walk is not likely to make

walking very difficult when considered in isolation. The applicant *may* still be considered eligible if they demonstrate very considerable difficulty in walking through any other factors.

The **length of time** that an applicant is able to walk for.

- For example, if an applicant is only able to walk for less than one minute in total then walking is likely to be very difficult for them.

The **manner** in which the applicant walks.

- The applicant's posture, rhythm, coordination, balance and stride should be considered in terms of the degree of effect they have on their ability to walk.

**An applicant's use of walking aids.**

- The fact that a walking aid is or is not used may be relevant to the eventual decision, but this alone should not determine whether or not a Blue Badge is issued.
- For example, if a person can walk relatively normally with the use of an artificial leg or walking stick, then they should not be considered as eligible to receive a Blue Badge.
- It may be pertinent to consider whether an applicant is using any walking aids in a correct manner when determining whether they have very considerable difficulty in walking.
- It may also be pertinent to consider whether an applicant who is not using any form of walking aid at the time of their application could improve their walking ability, to the extent that they would no longer demonstrate very considerable difficulty in walking, through the correct use of such an aid.

The applicant's **outdoor walking ability**.

- It is important to consider the person's ability to negotiate the types of pavement or road one would normally expect to find in the course of walking outdoors. No pavement or road is absolutely flat therefore a degree of "incline" and "decline" should be considered in the course of a mobility assessment.
- It is not necessary for the assessment to be completed outdoors. However, it is important the assessment enables the healthcare professional conducting the mobility assessment to determine how the applicant would cope with walking outdoors based on their indoor walking ability.

**Whether the effort of walking presents a danger to the applicant's life, or would be likely to lead to a serious deterioration in their health.**

- The applicant needs to show that they should not walk very far because of the danger to their health.
- This element is intended for people with serious chest, lung or heart conditions who may be physically able to walk normally.
- The serious deterioration does not need to be permanent but it should require medical intervention for them to recover.
- They will need to show that any danger to their health is a direct result of the effort required to walk.

People with epilepsy will need to show that any fits were brought about by the effort required to walk.

## Assessment approaches

This guidance is non-statutory and does not constitute legal advice. Ultimately it is a matter for each individual local authority to adopt an assessment approach that they believe complies with the legislation and that best suits their circumstances.

The independent review found that intelligent use of independent mobility assessments in combination with initial cross-checking of existing council records and well designed desk-based assessments (to filter out those applicants who are 'self-evidently' eligible or ineligible) was the most cost effective and robust method of assessing an applicant's eligibility under the 'subject to further assessment' walking criterion.

## Cross-checking of local authority records

Local authorities may be able to improve the efficiency of Blue Badge eligibility decision making by routinely checking existing council records to see whether there is sufficient existing evidence on an applicant to determine whether an applicant is 'self-evidently' eligible and to award, or to refuse, a badge. This can reduce the number of applicants who need to undergo an independent mobility assessment. Cross-checking typically involves investigating whether an applicant has already undergone a related functional assessment of their disability or mobility with a different council department.

The cross-checking approach can only be used effectively when a Blue Badge applicant has already been in contact with a local authority in connection with other services that could support their independent living. It is not appropriate to use it as the sole basis for determining the eligibility of all Blue Badge applicants under the 'subject to further assessment' walking criterion.

In 2008/09, **the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea** issued 33 Blue Badges by cross-checking applicants' information on the council's adult social care database as part of their assessment procedure. This procedure generated an estimated cost saving of over £30 per 'subject to further assessment' application. This figure does not include the number of applications that were refused by assessors as a result of cross checking this information. There were also clear benefits for customers whose badge applications were processed using this approach. The time taken to return a decision was reduced by 1 week, and the local authority used all of the available information it held about an applicant in order to reduce the number of unnecessary mobility assessments.

Officers at **Birmingham City Council** were able to determine eligibility for 94 people by cross-checking applicants' information on the council's adult social care database as part of their assessment procedure. In 2008/09, this procedure generated an estimated cost saving of £2 per 'subject to further assessment' application. For applicants, the time taken to return a decision was reduced from 4 weeks to 2 weeks, and they were not required to attend an independent mobility assessment.

In order to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998, local authorities are encouraged to consult guidance produced by the Information Commissioner's Office. This clarifies the steps local authorities need to take in order to share sensitive personal data between departments for secondary uses. For further information, please consult the:

- [Data Protection Guide](#)
- [Good Practice Note on data sharing between different local authority departments](#)

Appropriate declarations need to be incorporated into the Blue Badge application form in order to enable applicants to give their permission to the local authority to access existing records, such as those held in [Adult Social Services or Council Tax departments](#).

The independent review resulted in the development of a set of 'core principles' for cross-checking the local authority records of Blue Badge applicants. This is available for reference at [Appendix E](#).

## Desk-based assessments

A number of local authorities have developed desk-based assessment tools to help determine the eligibility of Blue Badge applications. Since the applicant is not seen in person, a successful desk-based assessment relies heavily on the questions in the Blue Badge application form delivering the right level of information about the applicant, their disability, any medical conditions they experience and their ability to walk.

When designing desk-based assessment tools, the DfT recommends that local authorities draw upon **significant input from experienced healthcare professionals** who are familiar with Blue Badge eligibility assessments and, in particular, the 'subject to further assessment' walking criterion.

Many desk-based assessment approaches additionally incorporate the cross-checking of local authority records as a means of providing further detail about an applicant's walking impairment.

The independent review showed that whilst desk-based assessments have a role as a filtering mechanism to identify applicants who are clearly eligible or clearly ineligible for a badge, they cannot be successfully used as the sole means of determining all applicants' eligibility for a badge. Local authorities should refer an applicant for an independent mobility assessment if they are unable to make a clear and robust decision on eligibility using cross-checking or desk-based assessment, i.e. if eligibility is not self-evident.

**Bolton Council's** contact centre officers use a quantitative scoring matrix to determine the eligibility of Blue Badge applicants against the 'subject to further assessment' walking criterion. The scoring matrix was developed by experienced occupational therapists and relates to specific questions contained in the council's Blue Badge application form. Scoring thresholds are subsequently applied by the contact centre officers to enable them to reach a decision to refuse or award a badge, to undertake further assessment action such as telephoning the applicant for any information missing from the application form or contacting the applicant's GP for further factual information, or to refer the applicant for an independent mobility assessment with an occupational therapist.

Bolton believes that adopting desk-based assessments has enabled them to make quicker eligibility decisions, reducing processing time from up to 8 weeks to within 10 working days. In 2008/9, the approach enabled the council to save £12.52 per application compared with the previous approach of requesting a letter from each applicant's GP.

A set of 'core principles' for designing and implementing desk-based Blue Badge eligibility assessments were developed through the independent review. This is available for reference at [Appendix F](#).

Since 2003, a physiotherapist at York Hospital has undertaken Blue Badge mobility assessments on behalf of **York City Council** for all "subject to further assessment" applicants. This was initiated by the Primary Care Trust who saw benefits in reducing the time local GPs spend preparing Blue Badge letters for patients.

The physiotherapist initially desk-assesses each applicant to see whether a mobility assessment is necessary, and can access applicants' GP and hospital records to supplement the details provided on the application form.

Most new "subject to further assessment" applicants undergo a mobility assessment within two weeks of the application being received by the local authority. Whether renewal applicants who have previously undergone an assessment with the physiotherapist are seen in person depends on the outcome of previous assessments.

In 2008/9, each mobility assessment cost an average of £18.45 and delivered a significant saving (of £11.85 per applicant) compared with the local cost of obtaining a letter from an applicant's GP, giving

total annual cost savings of £7,667 as well as better targeting of Blue Badges. For the council, it improved the quality and consistency of decision-making and delivered the other intended aim of reducing the burden on local GPs.

**Stoke-on-Trent** has arranged for occupational health nurses employed by the PCT to conduct mobility assessments with all 'subject to further assessment' applicants in three different district health centres. Each assessment involves the assessor observing the applicant moving into the assessment room, talking with them about their condition and medication, asking how it affects their walking ability and watching the applicant leave the health centre.

Although the applicant is being seen in person, a successful independent mobility assessment often also relies upon information provided in response to the questions included in the local authority's application form. A set of 'core principles' for designing and implementing independent mobility assessments was developed through the independent review. This is available for reference at [Appendix G](#).

### **Independent mobility assessment approaches in rural locations**

During focus group discussions conducted as part of independent review, badge holders stated that they were generally prepared to travel for up to 20 minutes in order to be assessed for a Blue Badge. This may be of use to local authorities when identifying locations for Blue Badge assessment venues.

**Shropshire Council** is one of the most rural and sparsely populated counties and received 5,610 Blue Badge applications in 2009. A back-office Blue Badge team is supported by front line staff based at a total of 21 face to face customer service points and libraries around the county. The back-office team coordinates badge mobility assessments with all 'subject to further assessment' applicants. They first cross-check adult social care records before using a desk-based review to identify applicants whose mobility clearly meets or does not meet the walking criterion. The remainder are referred for an independent mobility assessment which is delivered at eight venues across the county, including 5 hospitals, 2 medical centres and a community centre.

In 2008/9, approximately 1,250 Blue Badge mobility assessments were carried out by physiotherapists. Each assessment takes approximately 30 minutes to complete. The mobility assessment explores several aspects including: breathlessness, turning without the risk of falling, the speed at which the applicant can comfortably walk over a given distance, perceptions of exertion over that walking distance, perceptions of pain over that walking distance and details of any walking aids needed/used by the applicant. As part of the assessment the assessor will also look at a person's general mobility and can make additional recommendations such as on the issue and correct use of walking aids, further referrals to falls clinics or other medical professionals, and provide advice on gait.

A Protocol Agreement between Shropshire Council and Shropshire PCT underpins these assessments and includes quality standards such as a target for the physiotherapists to have seen each Blue Badge applicant within 31 days of their application having been received by the council.

### **Joint mobility assessments**

A number of local authorities have integrated their Blue Badge mobility assessment procedures with other related concessions and benefits, such as concessionary travel and adult social care. In doing so they have been able to achieve cost savings whilst also improving customer service for applicants by reducing the number of assessments that they need to undergo.

Some authorities have successfully integrated the application and assessment procedures for various **travel related concessions**. These typically include Blue Badges, Concessionary Travel Passes, Dial-a-Ride, Community Transport and Taxicards.

The **Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea's** Blue Badge mobility assessment procedure has been fully integrated with other transport related concessions for disabled residents. An applicant's eligibility under the 'subject to further assessment criteria' is simultaneously considered alongside their eligibility to receive:

- A Freedom Pass (concessionary travel pass in London)
- A Taxicard

Applicants can also be signposted to Community Transport and Dial-a-Ride services operated for residents in the Borough.

The joint assessment approach has been made possible through a carefully designed mobility assessment procedure, which incorporates key questions that relate to the separate criteria for each of the three concessions.

In 2009/10, a total of 37 people were assessed for more than one concession simultaneously, which represented 9% of all Blue Badge mobility assessments completed in the Borough. Joining up these assessments enabled the council to make direct cost savings of over £2,000.

Some local authorities have joined up their Blue Badge eligibility assessment procedures with those used to determine the award of **social care packages, equipment and adaptations**. This is often achieved through the inclusion of a small number of additional questions which relate specifically to the 'subject to further assessment' Blue Badge walking criterion into in-home social care assessments.

In 2010, **Manchester City Council** adopted an approach of integrating Blue Badge eligibility assessments with those undertaken for mobility aids and home adaptations. All in-home assessments for mobility aids and adaptations were extended to incorporate brief questions about an applicant's walking ability in line with the 'subject to further assessment' criterion. The assessor notes on the applicant's social care record (routinely checked as part of the Blue Badge application process) whether or not the individual can be considered eligible for a Blue Badge.

An evaluation of the approach adopted demonstrated that the great majority (90%) of people who underwent at-home social care assessments were already in receipt of a Blue Badge - either because they received the Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance, or because they had previously applied successfully under the 'subject to further assessment' criterion. Of the remaining applicants, 80% were unaware of the Blue Badge scheme and subsequently applied successfully for a Blue Badge, while 20% were not considered eligible by the occupational therapist.

Although this approach has only been in place for a short period of time, forecasts are that it will enable 160 people per year to apply successfully for a Blue Badge without needing an additional mobility assessment.

Additionally, the integration with the in-home social care assessment has achieved customer service benefits by joining up two services from different council departments that disabled people access. It also ensures better targeting of the Blue Badge scheme, encouraging those people who are eligible for a badge to apply for and receive the concession.

The independent review identified the following considerations for local authorities when developing joint assessment approaches:

- Integrating teams within the local authority to administer all of the concessions to be jointly assessed or establishing strong links between existing teams which manage each of the respective concessions.
- Developing common fields across application forms for each of the concessions so that information gathered about applicants in respect of different concessions can be fed into the joint assessment process.
- Establishing a joint mobility assessment proforma with due consideration of the eligibility criteria for each concession.
- Training mobility assessors to fully understand the criteria of different concessions included within the joint assessment process.
- Ensuring that feedback mechanisms exist within the local authority so that an assessor's recommendations are available to administrative staff members in the relevant teams or departments.

The independent review also found strong support for joint assessments among the majority of disabled people and the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee.

## Core Principles of independent mobility assessments and desk based assessments

Core principles for desk-based assessments ([Appendix F](#)) and independent mobility assessments ([Appendix G](#)) were developed by mobility experts and piloted as part of the independent review.

Whilst assessment approaches are for local authorities to determine, they may wish to draw on the outputs of that review when developing their approaches.

The independent review found quantitative evidence that local authorities adopting a combination of well designed independent mobility assessment and desk-based assessment approaches based on the core principles could:

- Significantly improve the accuracy of eligibility decisions, thereby ensuring that only those people who meet the 'subject to further assessment' walking criterion receive a Blue Badge.
- Improve the consistency of eligibility decisions for applicants under the 'subject to further assessment' walking criterion.

## 4.5 Assessing people with severe disability in both arms

This criterion is intended to cover disabled drivers who, because of a severe disability in both of their arms, are unable, or find it very difficult, to use on-street parking equipment.

When making an assessment under this criterion, local authorities will need to consider whether the applicant meets **all** of the following:

- Regularly drives an adapted or non-adapted vehicle; and
- Has a severe disability in both arms; and
- Is unable to operate, or has considerable difficulty operating, all or some types of parking meter.

For this purpose a 'parking meter' includes a machine for issuing pay-and-display tickets which shows that a charge has been paid and the period of parking paid for, as well as a parking meter which itself indicates that a charge has been paid and whether the period paid for has expired.

**Only a very small number of people are likely to qualify under this criterion. In no circumstances should anyone who does not satisfy all three of the conditions set out above receive a badge. In particular, a badge should not be issued to a person who travels solely as a passenger or a person who has difficulty carrying parcels, shopping or other heavy objects such as luggage.**

Most drivers with disabilities in both arms drive an adapted vehicle and should be able to provide insurance documents which contain statements to this effect. In addition, applicants who have registered their adapted vehicle with the DVLA will be able to present their driving licence which will contain codes that refer to the modifications made to the vehicle. These can be found on the reverse of a photocard driving licence (under category 12, information codes) and in the 'codes' sections on the front of the counterpart driving licence. The following driving licence codes are relevant to this criterion:

- 40 - Adapted steering.
- 79 - Restricted to vehicles in conformity with the specifications stated in brackets.

Where the applicant does not have an adapted vehicle, only drivers with the most severe disabilities in both of their arms (i.e. who cannot operate a parking meter) should be considered eligible. This may cover disabled people with, for example: a limb reduction deficiency of both arms; bilateral upper limb amputation; muscular dystrophy; spinal cord injury; motor neurone disease; or a condition of comparable severity.

**Sheffield City Council** uses information from their client database and a telephone triage system to initially assess individuals. They also link with the local Primary Care Trust (PCT) who helped develop the triage system and employ a physiotherapist to further assess individuals. They ask the applicant to provide evidence of any vehicle adaptation by requesting a copy of their driving insurance documents (which state whether the holder is driving an adapted vehicle or not). This approach helps Sheffield to verify the degree of disability the applicant has in a consistent and fair manner.

## 4.6. Assessing children under the age of three

Since 17 June 2011, children under the age of three have been eligible for a badge if they fall under either or both of the following criteria:

- A child who, on account of a condition, must always be accompanied by bulky medical equipment which cannot be carried around with the child without great difficulty;
- A child who, on account of a condition, must always be kept near a motor vehicle so that, if necessary, treatment for that condition can be given in the vehicle or the child can be taken quickly in the vehicle to a place where such treatment can be given.

It may be necessary to make transitional arrangements for those children under the age of two who were issued with a Blue Badge before the new regulations entered into force and whose current badge will expire on the day following their second birthday. For more information, please see the [Local Authority Circular](#), published in May 2011.

Examples of children under the age of three likely to fall into the criterion mentioned in the first bullet point may be those who need to be accompanied at all times by any of the following types of equipment:

- **Ventilators** - drive air through a tube placed into the windpipe. They blow oxygen-enriched air gently into the lungs through a tube that is passed through the mouth or nose, or via a tracheostomy.
- **Suction machines** - are portable suction apparatus used for aspirating fluids and vomit from the mouth and airway by sucking the material through a catheter into a bottle using a vacuum pump (piston, diaphragm, or rotary vane), bacterial filter, vacuum gauge, trap for moisture (or any debris accidentally drawn into the mechanism), a reservoir for the aspirated material, and a suction catheter or nozzle.
- **Feed pumps** - deliver fluid feeds via nasogastric tube to the child's stomach.
- **Parenteral equipment** - services intravenous lines providing nutrition if a child is unable to take food or fluids through his or her mouth. The line can also be used for injecting medication.
- **Syringe drivers** - are used to deliver medication by intravenous injection (e.g. antibiotics), or by subcutaneous injection (e.g. insulin to control diabetes) this can be given by using a small pump known as a syringe driver. A syringe is attached to the syringe driver and the drug is released through a small needle.
- **Oxygen administration equipment** - consists of a tank and regulator with supply equipment for oxygen; mask or nasal prongs and tubing.
- **Continuous oxygen saturation monitoring equipment** - involves a device usually strapped to the child's foot or hand. This shines light through the skin and monitors the amount of oxygen in the blood. It is used to monitor where a child may need access to oxygen.
- **Casts and associated medical equipment for the correction of hip dysplasia** – between birth and six months of age, a brace called a Pavlik Harness is often used to hold the baby's hips in position. The Pavlik harness is made of canvas, with straps, Velcro and buckles. From six months and over a child is often placed in a Spica cast after surgery. A Spica cast can be either plaster or fibreglass and will encase the child from the chest down to cover one leg or both. In both cases the apparatus is likely to be deployed for a period of up to three months per hip.

Examples of children with highly unstable medical conditions who need quick access to transport to hospital or home and are likely to qualify under the criterion are set out below. This group may also need to stop to perform an urgent medical procedure e.g. suction of a tracheostomy tube:

- children with tracheostomies;
- children with severe epilepsy/fitting;
- children with highly unstable diabetes;
- terminally ill children who can only access brief moments of outside life and need a quick route home.

DfT recommends that local authorities treat each application for children under the age of three as a special case. This may mean making arrangements to see the child, although this should not be necessary if the child's paediatrician is able to write a letter outlining the child's medical condition and any special equipment they need to use. A medical assessment should not be necessary.

Local authorities should make it clear when issuing the badge that it should be returned to them on expiry or if the recipient no longer needs it because the condition under which it was issued no longer applies. This is particularly relevant in the case of children with hip dysplasia, as this condition normally lasts between three and six months.

Local authorities should note that the lists provided above are indicative only and are not intended to be exhaustive in order to allow for new advances in technology and treatment equipment.

## 5. Determining the eligibility of organisational applicants

### 5.1. Organisational eligibility criteria

An organisational badge may be issued to an organisation for use in a motor vehicle or vehicles when the vehicle or vehicles are to be used to carry disabled people who would themselves be eligible for a badge as specified in Section 4(2) of the [Disabled Persons \(Badges for Motor Vehicles\) \(England\) Regulations 2000](#)

An 'organisation' is defined in the 2000 Regulations as meaning an organisation concerned with the care of disabled persons to which a disabled person's badge may be issued in accordance with section 21(4) of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.

Local authorities will need to check whether the organisation in question:

- Cares for and transports disabled people who would themselves meet one or more of the eligibility criteria for a individual Blue Badge; and
- Has a clear need for an organisational badge rather than using the individual Blue Badges of people it is transporting.

It is unlikely that taxi or private hire operators and community transport operators would be eligible for an organisational Blue Badge as they are not usually concerned with the care of disabled people who would meet one or more of the eligibility criteria for a badge. Such operators are, of course, able to use an individual's Blue Badge when carrying that person as a passenger.

### 5.2. Assessing organisational badge applications

Applications for badges from organisations caring for disabled people should be examined to ensure that they are genuine and necessary. It is for local authorities to make this judgement, based on their local knowledge of the organisation concerned. Common examples of organisations that may be eligible include residential care homes, hospices or local authority social services departments that transport groups of people who would meet the eligibility criteria for an individual Blue Badge.

When making an application, organisations could be asked to provide the same type of information required by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) for licensing a vehicle under the Disabled Passenger Vehicle (DPV) taxation class (for exemption from Vehicle Excise Duty (VED)). To license a vehicle in the DVP taxation class, an organisation needs to make a signed declaration on the organisation's letter-headed paper. The declaration for a badge application needs to say that they are an organisation concerned with the care of disabled people (who would meet one or more of the eligibility criteria prescribed in the regulations that govern the Blue Badge scheme) and that they will be using the vehicle solely for the purpose of transporting those people. This should be signed by a Board Member or Trustee of the organisation. The model application form and the online application facility available on Gov.UK both have specific declarations for organisational applicants.

In order to help determine eligibility of applications, local authorities could ask the applicant organisations:

- About the number of qualifying disabled people being cared for;
- About the type of vehicle(s) being used to carry them, whether it is adapted and how;
- Why the organisation feels they need an organisational badge rather than using individual Blue Badges of people in their care; and
- How often the badge is likely to be used and for what purpose.

Although there is nothing in the Regulations governing the scheme about the actual numbers to be 'cared for' in order to qualify for a badge, **where relatively few people meet the eligibility criteria for a badge in the organisation, it would be preferable for the disabled people themselves to apply for badges, rather than have one issued to an organisation.** This then allows the holder to use the badge issued to them in any vehicle in which they are travelling, as either a driver or passenger.

In all circumstances, badges must be issued to the organisation and not to individual employees. However, like other successful applicants, organisations issued with a Blue Badge should be sent a copy of DfT's leaflet 'The Blue Badge Scheme: rights and responsibilities'. There is now a separate rights and responsibilities leaflet for local authorities to download, which provides information to successful organisational applicants. <http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/blue-badge-rights-responsibilities-organisations>

**All employees of the organisation who will be using the badge should also be reminded that they must only use the badge for the purposes of transporting disabled people who meet one or more of the eligibility criteria for a badge. These employees should be reminded that if they use the badge to take advantage of the concessions when there are no passengers in the vehicle who are themselves eligible for a badge they could face a fine of up to £1,000.**

**Liverpool City Council** has improved its procedure for assessing organisational badge eligibility in response to concerns over misuse. Blue Badge team managers now personally visit applicant organisations to check and discuss the organisation's remit, its need for an organisational badge, the vehicles it uses and the vehicle documents.

This has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of organisational badges they issue, from over 300 in 2006-7 to fewer than 50 in 2010. Organisations in Liverpool that had previously been issued with a badge are often advised that disabled people being transported should use their own individual Blue Badge in the vehicle.

# 6. Administering the scheme after the assessment

## 6.1 Unsuccessful applications

### Grounds for refusal to issue a Blue Badge

Under regulation 8 of the [2000 Regulations \(SI 2000/No 682\)](#) (as amended by [\(SI 2011/2675\)](#)), a local authority may refuse to issue a Blue Badge if:

- a. the applicant holds or has held a badge and misuse has led to a conviction for an offence defined in regulations 2(3) and 2(4); or
- b. the applicant fails to provide the local authority with adequate evidence of their eligibility, either as an individual or as an eligible organisation; or
- c. the applicant fails to pay the fee chargeable for the issue of a badge (if a fee is required by the issuing authority); or
- d. the local authority (i) has reasonable grounds for believing that the applicant is not the person they are claiming to be, or (ii) would permit another person to whom the badge was not issued to use the badge; or
- e. the applicant fails to provide evidence of residency; or
- f. the applicant already holds a valid badge issued by another issuing authority; or
- g. from 1 April 2012, a report from an independent mobility assessor confirming an applicant's eligibility has not been made available to that local authority in a form that is satisfactory to them.

With reference to (a) above, a 'relevant conviction' is defined in regulation 2(3) and 2(4) of the 2000 Regulations (as amended). Essentially, this covers convictions of a badge holder or third party of offences under section 21(4B) of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and sections 115 and 117 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The relevant offences are intended to address misuse of a real badge by a third party or use of a fake/altered badge by a badge holder or third party. In addition, relevant offences include dishonesty or deception committed under any UK legislation in relation to the badge. More information on convictions and the wrongful use of a Blue Badge is provided in [Enforcing the Scheme](#).

With reference to (b) above, this includes any decision to refuse a Blue Badge to an individual who is deemed not to meet one or more of the eligibility criteria for receiving a badge. This could be because the applicant failed to provide the relevant supporting [evidence](#) of eligibility with their application e.g. failed to provide proof of receipt of HRMCDLA, WPMS of the appropriate PIP score.

With reference to (d) above, decisions to refuse to issue a badge on the grounds that the applicant is not the person they claim to be, or that they would permit another person to use a badge that has been issued to them should not be taken lightly. In all cases the final decision should be taken after careful examination of the facts.

No time limit is set out within the 2000 Regulations on the period for which a local authority can refuse to issue a Blue Badge to an applicant under points (a) to (g) above.

An applicant should not be refused a badge solely on the grounds that they have not been awarded (or no longer receive) the Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance or the appropriate PIP score. In such cases, the applicant should be assessed under the 'eligible subject to further assessment' criteria. In addition, applicants should not be advised that they need to apply for DLA or PIP in order to determine badge eligibility.

Some local authorities have established procedures to deter applicants from repeatedly applying for a Blue Badge. These procedures are applied when it is clear that an applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria for receiving a badge, when their original application has been refused, and when this decision has been upheld following a review of their application 'on appeal'.

- **Stoke-on-Trent City Council** informs applicants that they can reapply for a Blue Badge in three months time if they believe their condition has changed, or they can provide further evidence of their eligibility for a Blue Badge.
- **The London Borough of Bromley** informs applicants that they cannot reapply for a Blue Badge for a period of 6 months if their application has been refused because they do not meet the Blue Badge eligibility criteria.

In both cases, individuals whose mobility deteriorates significantly within these timeframes are not prevented from reapplying for a badge.

## Feedback for unsuccessful applicants

Regulation 8(3) of the 2000 Regulations states that where a local authority receives an application for a badge and refuses to issue one, it must let the applicant know in writing why their application was refused. **The DfT strongly recommends that every applicant who is refused a badge should be given a detailed explanation of the grounds for refusal.** It is not sufficient to simply state that the applicant did not meet the eligibility criteria. The Local Government Ombudsman expects authorities to provide a clear explanation of the reasons why an application has been refused in the decision letter. This transparency can avoid complaints being made and upheld. By providing detailed feedback for unsuccessful Blue Badge applicants, local authorities can proactively reduce the number of ['appeals'](#) they receive.

The independent review found that some local authorities have a higher refusal rate through strict application of the Blue Badge eligibility criteria in their local area. All of these authorities determined the eligibility of 'subject to further assessment' applicants through a combination of cross-checking, desk-based and mobility assessments. Despite high rates of refusal, these authorities demonstrated a rate of appeal that was similar to the average (2.5% of all subject to further assessment applicants). Further investigation of how this had been achieved revealed that:

- Applicants are generally less likely to appeal, because they feel the authority has given their application due consideration.
- Detailed feedback letters explain to unsuccessful applicants why they had fallen short of the eligibility criteria, thereby making the decision-making process more transparent.

The **Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea** provides unsuccessful Blue Badge applicants with the following information:

- A description of the relevant criterion against which the applicant was not adjudged to have been eligible, making reference to the fact that the eligibility criteria are set nationally by the DfT.
- Specific reference to information provided by the applicant in their application form, and where relevant during a mobility assessment with an independent mobility assessor, that shows why they do not meet eligibility criteria for receiving a Blue Badge.
- References to relevant pages on the Gov.UK and DfT websites where applicants can read further information about the Blue Badge eligibility criteria.
- An explanation of the local authority's procedure for dissatisfied applicants to appeal (including asking for their case to be reviewed by a senior member of staff), or to complain about the way that staff members at the local authority have handled their case. This includes a statement that unless the applicant can provide further evidence in support of their application, or their mobility has significantly changed since they applied for the Blue Badge, then their appeal against the decision is unlikely to be successful.

### Local authority appeals procedure

There is no legal requirement for local authorities to have an appeals procedure in place if someone disagrees with the reason why their application for a Blue Badge was not successful. However, as explained above, Regulation 8(3) of the 2000 Regulations states that, where a local authority receives an application for a badge and refuses to issue one, it must let the applicant know in writing why their application was refused.

Local authorities are, however, strongly recommended to establish an internal procedure to deal with appeals against an authority's decision not to issue a badge. This process needs to be clear, straightforward and fair, and not in itself a deterrent to applying for a badge. In addition, it is important that this appeal procedure is clearly signposted to unsuccessful applicants in their decision letter. The Local Government Ombudsman considers that failure to put in place a proper appeal mechanism would be likely to result in an adverse finding in the event of a complaint being made to them.

The independent review revealed two different ways in which applicants may wish to contact their local authority after receiving notification that their Blue Badge application has been refused:

- The unsuccessful applicant may believe that their application has been wrongly refused and wish to query that decision through a **review** of their application and the decision.
- The unsuccessful applicant may be unhappy with the manner or conduct of local authority staff members who handled their enquiries and/or mobility assessment, and wish to **complain about these issues**.

### Request for review of decision

The term 'request for review of decision' is used here because it is more appropriate than 'appeal', which usually implies both more formality and more independence from the local authority than is envisaged.

Applicants who are refused a Blue Badge may believe that their application has been wrongly refused and wish to query that decision. DfT recommends that in such situations there should be provision for the dissatisfied applicant's case to be reviewed by the issuing authority, preferably by someone who was not directly involved in the initial decision. Local authorities should note that the DfT does not have the power to intervene in individual applications that have not been successful on the grounds that the applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria and that they should not advise such applicants to appeal to the DfT.

**Nottingham City Council** has established a clear procedure for handling requests for review of the refusal decision (appeals) from Blue Badge applicants. This has two stages. In the first stage, the applicant writes to the council to ask for a review of the decision and explain why they think the decision should be changed. For example, they may believe the information they have provided has not been fully taken into account or they may wish to offer further information to support their case.

The request for review of the decision is dealt with by the Group Manager (who is not directly involved in the initial decision) who will review the case and the initial decision made. Where an independent mobility assessment has already been undertaken, the Group Manager will review the advice received from the mobility assessor as well as considering all the information provided by the applicant. Applicants may be sent for an independent mobility assessment if they did not originally have one. If the initial appeal is rejected by the Group Manager a case-specific letter is sent to the applicant setting out the reasons for the rejection.

If the applicant still does not accept the decision, they may go to a second stage of appeal in which the Head of Service reviews the case, all the evidence and the case-specific letter sent to the applicant. If the Head of Service rejects the second appeal, that is the end of the appeal process.

Focus groups with Blue Badge holders and the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee revealed strong support for unsuccessful applicants to be offered an independent mobility assessment upon appeal if their original eligibility decision was reached without an independent mobility assessment.

## Complaints

The term 'complaint' is used to deliberately distinguish this type of appeal from the request for a review of the decision. Some Blue Badge applicants may be aggrieved not by the eligibility decision of the authority but rather the way in which the process has been conducted. They may, for example, be upset by the manner or conduct of local authority staff or view aspects of the process as unfair.

In such cases these applicants should be made aware of the local authority's standard complaints procedure, in the same way that any other user of the local authority's services would be informed of their right to complain. Applicants should also be reminded that complaints can be brought to the attention of the Local Government Ombudsman. Their Advice Team can provide further advice to both local authorities and applicants on the role of the Local Government Ombudsman and can be contacted on 0300 061 0614.

## 6.2. Successful applications

Successful applicants will be given the DfT leaflet “[The Blue Badge Scheme: rights and responsibilities](#)” when they are provided with a Blue Badge. The Blue Badge Improvement Service will supply a copy of the leaflet and the parking clock when the badge is sent. Local authorities are able to buy additional copies of the leaflet, the parking clock, and wallets from Northgate Information Solutions, the suppliers of the Blue Badge Improvement Service. The rights and responsibilities leaflet, and a separate one aimed at organisations, are available to download free of charge from the DfT's website.

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/blue-badge-rights-responsibilities-england>

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/blue-badge-rights-responsibilities-organisations>

Badge holders should also be reminded that they have a duty under Regulation 9 of the 2000 Regulations to return the badge if:

- the badge expires;
- the badge holder is no longer eligible or, in the case of an organisational badge, the organisation no longer exists or is no longer eligible;
- it is a replacement badge for one that is lost or stolen and the original is found/recovered (in this case the original badge should be returned so that it can be securely destroyed);
- the badge is so damaged/faded that the details on it are illegible or it cannot be identified correctly or distinguished from a forgery;
- the badge is no longer required by the holder (e.g. where they have become confined to the house); or another valid badge is inadvertently issued to the holder by another issuing authority; or
- the badge holder dies.

**However, it should be noted that under new regulations, if an existing recipient of HRMCDLA is reassessed by DWP and fails to score 8 points or more under the ‘Moving Around’ mobility component of PIP, legislation requires that they should be allowed to retain their current badge until it expires.**

It should be noted that the badge remains the property of the issuing local authority which has powers to [withdraw](#) the badge in some circumstances.

It should also be noted that an individual should not be in receipt of more than one valid badge at any time. Section 21(2) of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 states that “**A badge** may be issued to a disabled person.....resident in the area of the issuing authority....” To support this, regulation 8(2)(f) of the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) Regulations 2000 says that a local authority may refuse to issue a badge on the grounds that “the applicant already holds a valid badge issued under section 21 of the 1970 Act or a recognised badge within the meaning of section 21A of that Act”. Where a second badge may have already been issued, regulation 9(1)(g) states that a badge shall be returned to the issuing authority immediately when “the holder is issued with another valid badge under section 21 of the 1970 Act or with a recognised badge within the meaning of section 21A of that Act”.

### Issuing the Blue Badge and Parking Clock

A new style Blue Badge has been issued since 1 January 2012. The new designs for both individual and organisational badges use sophisticated secure print technologies to ensure badges cannot be copied or forged, and details cannot be altered. The new badge design also includes raised text features, a hologram and has to be tested to withstand up to 120 degrees centigrade.

Misuse of badges by someone other than the badge holder is currently a common occurrence. The written information contained on the badge has been changed to clarify the correct use of a badge. An up-to-date, passport-style photograph of the badge holder must be submitted and digitally scanned on the back of an individual badge to ensure the badge holder can be identified if necessary. The only exception to this requirement for display of a photograph on the badge is when the issuing local authority is satisfied that the holder is not expected to live beyond six months from the date of issue. The standards for photographs are the same as those used for passports and driving licences.

From 1 January 2012, local authorities are only able to issue the new style badge. However the old badge design, issued until the end of December 2011, will still be able to be used by a badge holder until the date on which it expires, which could be as late as December 2014. The new badge design should be issued to all successful new badge applicants, successful renewal badge applicants and those who have either lost or had a badge stolen and need to have a replacement badge issued.

The parking clock is designed to be displayed with the Blue Badge when parking on yellow lines or in parking bays which are time-limited and should be set to show the time of arrival by badge holders. A parking clock will be issued to new badge holders at the same time as their Blue Badge. An additional design which includes the badge and the clock within a wallet is also now available.

### **In-person collection of Blue Badges**

Wherever practicable, local authorities should consider requiring individuals or their representatives to collect their Blue Badge in person and to provide proof of identification on collection. In addition, if they are collecting a badge after a renewal application, they should return their expired badge to the local authority so that it can be officially destroyed. Local authorities may also wish to be aware that the Local Government Ombudsman expects them to ensure that there is sufficient flexibility in their procedures to deal with the minority of cases where the personal circumstances of the applicant involved mean that in-person collection is not possible.

In-person collection of the Blue Badge offers considerable anti-fraud benefits over the more common practice of posting a badge out to successful applicants. Benefits include:

- Greater certainty that the person who underwent a mobility assessment is the same person who collects the badge at the end of the application process.
- Confirmation that the badge has been received by the successful applicant or a representative acting on their behalf.
- The creation of an additional opportunity for the issuing authority to obtain declarations from the successful applicant that state the badge has been received and that it will only be used in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the booklet 'The Blue Badge Scheme: Rights and responsibilities'.
- An opportunity to proactively retrieve an expiring badge in order to remove this opportunity for abuse of the scheme.

The **London Borough of Richmond** does not send any Blue Badges through the post to successful new or renewal applicants. All applicants, or their nominated representatives, are required to collect the badge from the council's Accessible Transport Unit in person.

If the badge holder attends to collect their own badge, then their likeness is checked against the photographs they submitted with their Blue Badge application before the badge is handed over. If a representative collects the badge on behalf of the badge holder then they must have a letter signed by

the badge holder stating who will be collecting the badge. They will also be asked to provide proof of their ID.

All renewal applicants are required to hand over an existing badge which is in their possession before they are given the new badge.

In all cases, the badge holder or their representative is reminded of their responsibilities under the Blue Badge scheme and their attention is drawn to the Blue Badge scheme: rights and responsibilities booklet, as well as the declarations the applicant is required to have ticked and signed (in the application form) prior to receiving a Blue Badge.

Where any abuse or misuse of an applicant's Blue Badge subsequently takes place, these signed declarations, and any misrepresentations made in the collection of the Blue Badge, can be used by the local authority as part of their evidence for a local magistrate.

## Period of issue

In accordance with the [regulations that govern the scheme](#) most badges must be issued for three years. However, certain exceptions apply, which are explained below:

- In the case of children under three, the badge should be issued for a maximum period ending on the day immediately following their third birthday.
- Where entitlement for a Blue Badge is linked to an award of the Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance (HRMCDLA), War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement (WPMS) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) the period of issue should be linked to the period of receipt of that allowance, where that period is less than three years. In this specific context there is no minimum period of issue for a Blue Badge. For example, a badge can be issued for 9 or 12 months if this corresponds with the period of issue of HRMCDLA, WPMS or PIP.

Where HRMCDLA, WPMS or PIP has been granted for a period longer than three years, the badge should only be issued for the standard three year period. At the point of a renewal application, a badge should continue to be issued on a three yearly cycle provided that the applicant remains eligible (see ["Renewal applications"](#) below).

**In no circumstances should a badge be issued under the 'subject to further assessment' walking criterion, which states that a person needs to have a 'permanent and substantial disability', to applicants with a temporary disability or for a period of less than 3 years.**

## Data storage and sharing

Local authorities have a statutory obligation under Section 21(5) of the [Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970](#) to maintain a register showing:

- The holders of badges issued by the authority; and
- The vehicle or vehicles for which each of the badges is held.

A robust system that can identify badge holders within a local authority is invaluable not only to issuing authorities, but also to police and enforcement authorities in dealing with instances of misuse, stolen or fraudulent badges. The Blue Badge Improvement Service will enable data sharing and enforcement checks quickly and easily.

## Renewal applications for individual Blue Badges

Issuing badges for a maximum three year period allows local authorities the opportunity to:

- Confirm that individuals who were awarded a badge under the ['without further assessment'](#) criterion remain in receipt of qualifying benefits. If they no longer receive these benefits, then it may be necessary for the applicant to be assessed against the ['subject to further assessment'](#) criteria to determine whether the applicant remains eligible to receive a Blue Badge. (Note: from October 2013, if someone aged 16-64 applies for a badge on the basis of a HRMCDLA award, it is advisable to check with DWP that the award is still valid as the individual may have been reassessed for PIP and had the HRMCDLA award terminated).
- Check that applicants who were awarded the badge under the ['subject to further assessment'](#) criteria continue to meet the eligibility criteria and are therefore in need of a badge. Although a badge holder may still have the same disability, it is possible that their degree of mobility may have improved to such an extent that they no longer meet the eligibility criteria.
- Where a badge holder has a permanent disability which will not change (e.g. where there has been a loss of limbs), the opportunity to renew the badge allows the local authority to ensure that the applicant's personal details, such as their address, remain correct, that the information on the badge remains legible and that an up-to-date photograph is obtained.

It is entirely a matter for local authorities to assess an applicant's eligibility for a badge at the point of a renewal application in accordance with the regulations governing the scheme. The administrative measures taken in assessing renewal applicants are for individual authorities to decide. If local authorities use a well designed application form and a screening assessment that has been designed with input from independent mobility assessors with experience of conducting Blue Badge mobility assessments, they are able to 'filter out' those new applicants who are 'self-evidently' eligible or ineligible without the need for an independent mobility assessor to see them in person. The work also indicates that a robust independent mobility assessment at the point of initial application can highlight those successful applicants with conditions and mobility impairments that are unlikely to change and who would not require a further in-person independent mobility assessment at the point of a renewal application.

**Local authorities should generally do their best to ensure that renewal applications are dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible.** However, if a renewal applicant was previously issued a badge by another local authority, it is the responsibility of the new issuing authority to ensure that the applicant still meets the eligibility criteria for a badge.

[Appendix H](#) draws on the findings from the independent review to identify a set of 'core principles' that local authorities may wish to consider when developing robust procedures for handling renewal applications for a Blue Badge.

Council officers at the **London Borough of Haringey** send standard renewal application letters and an application form to existing badge holders three months prior to the expiry date of the applicant's Blue Badge. These vary depending on whether the applicant previously received a badge under the 'without further assessment' or 'subject to further assessment' criteria.

There are disabled parking bays at the Haringey Council offices, where the customer contact centre is located, which people can use if they are renewing a Blue Badge. Customer Services staff go out to the vehicle with the applicant and collect the old badge from them before handing over the new badge. This helps to reduce the number of expired badges that remain in circulation.

Each renewal applicant is also made aware that they will not receive a new badge if they are not able to return their existing Badge.

## Replacement of damaged/lost and stolen badges

Where a badge has been lost, stolen or destroyed, or has become so damaged or faded that it is illegible or cannot be identified correctly or distinguished from a forgery, the local authority can issue a replacement badge.

The expiry date shown on the replacement badge should be the same as the date that appeared on the original badge. The record of the original badge should be updated on the Blue Badge Improvement Service to show that it is no longer valid. This information should be passed to on-street enforcement teams where possible. Replacement badges will now have a unique issue number included in the badge security number, instead of having the words “Duplicate” on the front.

In the case of stolen badges, the authority should ask badge holders to provide a police crime reference number, for their records. If the badge is subsequently found or recovered, the original badge should be returned to the issuing authority so that it can be destroyed.

Through the Blue Badge Centre of Excellence Programme, **Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council** worked with the neighbouring authorities in South Yorkshire to adopt a standardised approach to issuing duplicate badges. Previously the councils had no means of tracking the number of lost and stolen badges, and it was perceived as being easy for a badge holder to report a badge as lost and obtain a duplicate.

The local authorities in the area have agreed to implement several measures, including:

- Require an applicant to provide a crime reference number if they report a badge as stolen.
- Ask the applicant to complete a specific form, which includes an anti-fraud declaration that states they do not know the whereabouts of the original badge and will return it to the council if it is found.
- Record the serial number of the lost or stolen badge and pass this on to other councils in the area so that any misuse can be readily identified by parking enforcement officers working in the region.

Damaged badges should also be returned to the issuing authority to be officially destroyed. Wherever possible, the DfT strongly recommends that this process involves the badge holder collecting the replacement badge from local authority offices, or a nearby contact centre, so that it can be exchanged for the damaged badge.

Each time a replacement badge is issued, the date of reissue and reason should be noted on the badge holder's record so that repeated cases can be monitored and action can be taken if abuse is suspected.

## Deaths

When a Blue Badge holder dies, the badge should be immediately returned to the issuing authority (regulation 9(1) of the [2000 Regulations](#)).

The DfT recommends that local authorities include details of how to return Blue Badges in their death registry packs, and cross reference deaths registered in their area against their Blue Badge holder records, so that recall notices can be issued as required.

The benefits of requesting the return of Blue Badges from the families of deceased badge holders through the death registration process were identified through the independent review and include:

- Avoiding unnecessary distress for the family members of the deceased badge holder, for whom subsequent contact (e.g. renewal reminders) from the authority can be upsetting.
- Minimising the opportunity for fraudulent use and misuse of unreturned Blue Badges after the genuine holder is deceased.
- Minimising the amount of time local authority officers need to spend contacting the deceased badge holder's relatives.
- Reducing the number of invalid badges in circulation in a local area, thereby improving the scheme for all genuine badge holders and reducing the effort needed to enforce the Blue Badge scheme.

**Brighton & Hove City Council** receives information on deaths in the area every month. The council's Blue Badge team check this list against their records of badge holders to see whether the badge has already been returned.

If the badge has not been returned approximately 6 weeks after information about the death has been received, the Blue Badge team send a sensitive letter to the badge holder's last address, requesting that the badge be returned.

As soon as the information about the death of a Blue Badge holder has been received a note is added on the individual's electronic record in order that they are not inadvertently sent a renewal reminder. The information is also added to the Civil Enforcement Officers handheld computers so that they can report any such badges that are being used through the issuing of a Penalty Charge Notice.

In addition to all of the above, in an effort to make sure badges are returned as soon as possible after a Blue Badge holder has passed away, they include information about the importance of returning badge in their death registry packs.

In **Rotherham** and **Kent** a request for bereaved family members to return Blue Badges belonging to deceased relatives is included in death registry packs. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council provide a pre-paid envelope in which a Blue Badge can be returned, while **Kent County Council** operates a 'Tell Us Once' scheme which comprises a face-to-face or telephone interview covering all aspects of death registry, including a request to return a Blue Badge.

On the [Gov.UK website](https://www.gov.uk) the Blue Badge is included in a list of items about which a deceased individual's family may need to contact their local authority as part of the process of registering the death:

Local authorities participating in the National Fraud Initiative (which is currently run by the Audit Commission every two years) can also now opt to submit their Blue Badge holder records for comparison against the Department for Work and Pension's database of deceased persons as part of this exercise. This may be particularly relevant for local authorities operating in metropolitan areas with a more transient population. For further information please contact:

- E-mail: [nfiqueries@auditcommission.gov.uk](mailto:nfiqueries@auditcommission.gov.uk)
- Telephone: 0844 798 2222
- National Fraud Initiative web page: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/fraud/nfi/pages/default.aspx>

# 7. Enforcing the Scheme

## 7.1 Who should read this?

This guidance is aimed at any local authority officer involved with Blue Badges - whether from the issuing or enforcing perspective.

The demand for Badges has increased significantly – trebling in the last 20 years - and we estimate there could be 650,000 additional Badge holders over the next 10 years.

Although the scheme began as a way of improving access for disabled people, the substantial monetary value of a Badge in some areas is contributing to both increasing demand and the incentive to abuse the scheme and commit fraud. The misuse of Blue Badges undermines the benefits of the scheme, impacts upon local traffic management and creates hostility amongst other badge holders and members of the public.

Abuse can occur happening at all points in the system from the initial application, through requests for replacements, to on-street usage. For this reason, it is vital that both issuing teams and parking enforcement teams are alert to criminal or fraudulent behaviour and attempt to prevent fraud and abuse before it happens.

Robust, ongoing administration and enforcement processes can help counter more systematic abuse of the Blue Badge scheme. Issuing authorities and on-street parking enforcement teams both have a role to play in ensuring that the scheme's rules are obeyed.

## 7.2 What is this section about?

This section of the guidance seeks to highlight some of the many forms of abuse that are prevalent and illustrate some of the actions local authorities could take to combat it, often based on the real experiences of local authorities. It also details the existing powers available to local authorities.

It is not meant to be prescriptive – it is important that local authorities have the freedom and ability to develop an enforcement strategy suitable for their own particular circumstances. This guidance will assist local authorities in enforcing the Blue Badge scheme.

### **Types of abuse/misuse**

Badges can be abused in a multitude of ways and it is important that local authorities remain vigilant at all stages of the issuing/enforcing process. The following is not an exhaustive list, but illustrates several ways in which badges can be misused, from minor to more serious transgressions:

#### *By the badge holder*

- Parking in the wrong place or parking for too long where there is a time limit

- Use of a badge that is no longer valid
- Use of a badge that has been reported as 'lost' or 'stolen'
- Letting a friend or relative use the badge
- Use of a copied badge
- Altering the details on the badge, for example, the expiry date
- Making a fraudulent application (e.g. providing false information on the application form) or using a badge obtained fraudulently.

*By a third party:*

- Using someone else's badge (with or without the badge holder's knowledge) without the badge holder being present in the vehicle at some point during the trip
- Using a badge belonging to someone who has died
- Copying, altering or faking badges
- Using a stolen badge
- Using a fake badge

## 7.3 Enforcing the scheme

Local authorities should consider developing a range of tools and techniques to deal with different types of offenders and different types of offences. Conventional enforcement complemented by additional preventative measures is more likely to be successful in the long term.

### **Issuing authorities**

Local authorities should consider ways of preventing abuse and misuse at the outset. Ensuring that only eligible people get badges and that independent mobility assessments are used where eligibility is unclear, is the first step.

As part of this process, local authorities should make checks on the applicant's identity and address to confirm that they are who they say they are and that they are resident in the local authority area. Seeking a signed declaration of these facts from the applicant will also support subsequent enforcement action by local authorities where it is later found that the applicant has supplied false information. Obtaining a declaration that the badge holder will not allow someone else to use a badge that has been issued to them may stop badge holders from doing so, by removing the excuse of ignorance.

Once a badge is to be issued, the local authority may wish to consider the most secure way of distributing badges. Where badges are subsequently reported as stolen by badge holders, some authorities will request the badge holder provides a crime investigation number (issued by the police), before a replacement is issued. A badge holder is less likely to falsely claim a badge has been stolen if required to formally report this to the police.

Ensuring all successful applicants are properly informed of - and understand - what they can and cannot do with a badge (and when/how it should be returned to the issuing authority) is likely to reduce the chances of accidental misuse occurring and avoid disputes. The badge is supplied with a copy of the DfT's guidance leaflet 'The Blue Badge scheme: rights and responsibilities in England'. Local authorities may wish to consider producing further, free information leaflets, informing local badge holders of where they can park in the local authority and conditions of use at each site, to help badge holders to use the badge correctly.

Those who abuse the Blue Badge scheme may find it easy to convince themselves that no one really suffers as a consequence of the abuse, or that it is acceptable because 'everyone does it'. Publicising the consequences for disabled people who are unable to park close to where they need to get, and publicising the potential consequences for offenders of misusing badges, could reduce the number of offences.

Some authorities enable the general public to report abuse. Where the public report abuse, we would encourage local authorities to follow up the matter and to take action as appropriate in order to deter or prevent repeat offending. We would also encourage issuing authorities to work closely with their enforcement authorities and act on information supplied by enforcement officers. Offenders can be prosecuted and face a fine of up to £1,000 on conviction. Badges can also be [withdrawn](#) after a relevant conviction. The DfT is aware of authorities who work closely with magistrates to inform them about the seriousness of the issues and to encourage more consistent and effective penalties.

Working together with other local authorities and DfT, and ensuring issuing and enforcing authorities work together effectively can help to maximise resources, share skills and intelligence, spread any costs and ensure that the abuse is not simply moved to the neighbouring local authority area.

## **Enforcing authorities**

There is a wide range of legislation available to local authorities to use in their enforcement activities. Local authorities can be flexible in how they use these powers to address their own local circumstances and the specifics of each case. The following examples have been put together after talking to local authorities about how they are attempting to address badge abuse.

Local authorities may be aware that on 8 October 2013 the Disabled Persons' Parking Badges Act 2013 and the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force (see "Inspecting badges" section below for further information).

In cases where an applicant makes a fraudulent application (providing false information), it may be possible to prosecute the individual under section 2 of the Fraud Act 2006. This carries a penalty of a fine of up to £5,000 and/or up to 12 months imprisonment on summary conviction. If a badge has been issued, the local authority can require its return under Regulation 9(2)(b) of the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles)(England) Regulations 2000.

The following are actions that could be taken against a badge holder who uses an expired badge, an illegible badge, a badge that was lost or stolen and for which a replacement has been issued, or a badge which they are no longer entitled to use:

- they could be prosecuted and receive a fine of up to £1,000 on conviction under section 117 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984;
- they could be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice for the parking contravention in those areas where local authorities have taken civil parking enforcement powers. In other areas, Fixed Penalty Notices can be issued;
- the local authority could seize the badge under section 21 (4D) of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970; and
- Regulation 9 of the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) Regulations 2000 allows the badge to be withdrawn after a relevant conviction.

Where a badge holder simply parks in the wrong place or parks for too long with a valid badge, a Penalty Charge may be issued for any parking contravention.

In cases where a badge holder lets a third party use a badge, the issuing local authority can withdraw the badge under regulation 9(2)(a) of the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) Regulations 2000, but only after a relevant conviction has been obtained (a Penalty Charge may also be issued for any parking contravention that has occurred during the badge misuse). In such circumstances, a relevant conviction requires that the non-badge holder is using the badge with the holder's knowledge. This is often very difficult for local authorities to prove, even when they know it is happening. It should be remembered, however, that whilst this may make it difficult to withdraw a badge that is being systematically abused by a friend or family member, a local authority may refuse to reissue a badge if it has reasonable grounds for believing that the applicant would permit another person to use it (Regulation 8(2)(d)(ii)).

The following are some of the actions that could be taken against a person using someone else's badge for their own benefit:

- they could be prosecuted and receive a fine of up to £1,000 on conviction under section 117 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984;
- consideration could be given to prosecuting persistent offenders under the Fraud Act 2006;
- they could be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice for any parking contravention; and
- the local authority could seize the badge under section 21 (4D) of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.

For offences that involve either the badge holder or anyone else copying, altering or faking/forging a badge, the following legislation may be used, depending on the circumstances:

- offenders can be prosecuted under section 115 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and are liable on summary conviction to a fine of up to £5,000, and up to two years imprisonment on indictment;
- the Fraud Act 2006 and the Forgery and Counterfeiting Act 1981 may be used. These carry heavier penalties;
- an offender can be prosecuted under section 117 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and fined up to £1,000 if they are convicted of using a forged badge; and
- the offender could be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice for any parking contravention.

In the case of other offences:

- the Theft Act 1968 (in particular sections 1 and 22) may be used to prosecute someone found guilty of stealing badges, handling stolen badges and/or using stolen badges;
- when a stolen badge is being used but there is insufficient evidence to obtain a conviction under the Theft Act, section 329(1)(c) of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 may offer another means of obtaining a conviction;
- it is possible in certain circumstances for Courts to disqualify persistent offenders from driving for a period of time under section 146 of the Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000;
- there have been cases where people have attempted to sell badges through web-sites like E-bay or Gumtree. The badge remains the legal property of the issuing local

authority, so it is unlawful for someone else to sell a badge. The rightful owner can take action to recover the goods through the civil courts. It may also be possible to prosecute the person offering the badge for sale under section 7 of the Fraud Act 2006. Where a badge holder might attempt to sell (or gift) a badge, it will be possible to withdraw the badge, under regulation 9(2)(b) (as amended), where the authority is satisfied that the holder “purported to transfer the badge to another person”; and

- it is possible that Section 11 of the Fraud Act 2006 (relating to obtaining services dishonestly) could be used when someone is seeking to fraudulently use a Blue Badge to gain parking concessions in an off-road parking area.

For the purposes of badge withdrawal, the requirement for a local authority to obtain 3 “relevant convictions” has now been reduced to one relevant conviction (regulation 9(2)(a) refers).

Regulations 2(3) and 2(4) of the amended regulations define a relevant conviction. A badge can be withdrawn for one successful prosecution of a badge holder or third party of:

- an offence under section 21(4B) of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (this covers misuse of a real badge or use of a fake/altered badge while the vehicle is being driven); or
- an offence under sections 115 or 117 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (this covers misuse of a real badge or use of a fake/altered badge when the vehicle is parked); or
- dishonesty or deception committed under any other UK legislation in relation to the badge (which takes account of offences under, for example, the Fraud Act 2006, the Theft Act 1968, the Forgery and Counterfeiting Act 1981, etc).

Where the offence prosecuted was committed by a third party using the holder's badge, the authority needs to demonstrate that the holder knew the third party was using the badge, before it can be withdrawn.

Inclusion of offences under S21(4B) of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and sections 115 and 117 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as relevant convictions, is intended to address misuse of a real badge by a third party or use of a fake/altered badge by a third party or badge holder. Although these offences also cover wrongful display of a badge by the holder, it is NOT intended that a badge holder should be prosecuted and have the badge withdrawn for merely displaying it wrongly.

## **Inspecting badges**

Under section 21(4BA) of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (“the 1970 Act”), an enforcement officer can approach a person in a vehicle displaying a Blue Badge (or a person who appears to have been in or to be about to get into, the vehicle) and require them to produce the badge for inspection. Typically this would be done to check the detailed information and the photograph of the badge holder on the back of the badge, in order to verify whether the badge is being used by the correct person.

A person who without reasonable excuse fails to produce a badge when required to do so shall be guilty of an offence under section 21 (4BD) of the Act and liable to a fine not exceeding £1000.

Until 8 October 2013, only the police could seize badges. Now, however, the Disabled Persons' Parking Badges Act 2013 ("the 2013 Act") enables enforcement officers to inspect and retain a badge without police presence if they have reasonable grounds for believing that the badge:

- (a) is a fake; or
- (b) has already been cancelled e.g. because it was reported lost or stolen; or
- (c) should have been returned to the issuing authority (e.g. because it has expired, the holder has died, the holder is no longer disabled, a replacement has been issued, the badge has become damaged/faded, the authority has written to the holder requesting return of the badge either following a relevant conviction for misuse or because it was obtained by false representation); or
- (d) is being misused (including by someone other than the holder when the genuine holder is not involved in the journey).

There is no obligation on local authorities to use this power but many have indicated that they will do so. In using the power, we would expect enforcement officers to take appropriate steps to establish "reasonable grounds" for retaining the badge. Local authorities will wish to establish suitable procedures for their enforcement officers to follow but they could include checking the BBIS database; telephoning their local authority to establish further details of the badge/badge holder; or interviewing the person using the badge at the roadside.

Of particular interest is the power to retain a badge that is being used (misused) by someone other than the genuine badge holder. In using this power we would expect enforcement officers to establish that the disabled badge holder is not part of the journey. Even if they are not present, the badge holder may have been dropped at that place or may be being picked up from that place. Very often the person using the badge will admit on questioning that the holder is not involved in the journey; some local authorities telephone the holder to establish their whereabouts.

When a badge is retained in scenarios (a)-(c) above we expect the local authority will destroy it in due course, as it would no longer be valid (if the authority recovering the badge is not also the badge-issuing authority, we would suggest they liaise with the issuing authority in this respect). However, when a valid badge is retained under (d) above it should normally be returned to the holder. That is because the power to retain a badge is not the same thing as a power to permanently withdraw/confiscate a badge. Indeed, the badge holder may not know the third party is using the badge. A badge can only be permanently withdrawn from use if a relevant conviction for misuse has been obtained under regulation 9(2) of the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) Regulations 2000 or if the badge was obtained by false representation. To reinforce this, we are amending those regulations to explicitly require that a valid badge retained because it is being misused is returned as soon as reasonably practicable to the holder (provided that the authority does not have pre-existing grounds, under the regulations, for withdrawing the badge). In practice this is likely to mean that the badge is returned first to the issuing authority by the enforcing authority and then to the holder. The issuing authority may wish to warn the holder about the seriousness of misuse when returning the badge. The act of returning the badge does not preclude the relevant authority from prosecuting any offence that has been committed, if desired.

The new legislation does not empower the local authority to use force when attempting to retain a badge. If an enforcement officer encounters any form of resistance we would advise that they take no further action without police support.

Local authorities should also note that the 2013 Act adds to the definition of enforcement officer a person who is employed by a local authority or with whom the authority have made arrangements for the purpose of inspecting and retaining badges. This could include a direct employee of the local authority or a contractor. Furthermore, this new category of “enforcement officer” does not need to be in uniform but they do need to be authorised in writing by the authority to carry out badge inspections and retentions. They should also produce appropriate evidence of authority when exercising their powers, otherwise there is no obligation on an individual to hand their badge to the enforcement officer. In practice, the local authority should hold written documentary evidence of authorised officers and should ensure that all officers carry some form of identification authorising them to carry out inspections/badge retention. The new powers therefore pave the way for the wider use of specialist Blue Badge fraud teams operating in plain-clothes, and without the requirement for police presence.

Each local authority will wish to consider its own training and procedures for enforcement officers employing the new powers. Whenever misuse or abuse of a badge is suspected, the parking enforcement officer should deal with the badge holder in a sensitive manner. No assumptions or questions should be raised about why the individual has been issued with a badge, as this is not the enforcement officer’s role. In addition, some disabilities may not be immediately visible. In enforcing the Blue Badge scheme, we recommend that enforcement officers receive disability awareness training so that they can carry out their duties appropriately.

To aid the inspection process, a gender marker has been included in the unique serial number of the badge; “X” for male badges and a “Y” for female badges. The marker has been added to the badge to help enforcement officers to identify obvious cases of badge misuse. When using this marker to check that the correct badge holder is using the badge, officers should be aware of, and deal sensitively with, individuals who may have undergone – or be undergoing - gender reassignment. These individuals will have been issued with a male or female badge according to whichever gender they are living under. Each badge number also now includes the badge holder’s month and year of birth and the expiry date.

The Blue Badge Improvement Service and the new badge design will enable quicker and easier verification checks by enforcement officers. Enforcement officers are now able to use hand-held devices, provided they have a web browser, to check key details of the badge and the badge holder at the roadside. They can also download a photograph of the holder. The Blue Badge Improvement Service system administrator within the relevant issuing local authority is able to authorise enforcement officers’ access to this part of the service.

## **Uncovering abuse and gaining evidence**

The most commonly reported forms of abuse tend to relate to misuse of the Blue Badge by the friends and family of the badge holder. Where this is a problem and enforcing authorities wish to take action, it is important that authorities are sure that misuse is taking place and have obtained sufficient evidence, especially if a prosecution is to be pursued. Local authorities may decide how to do this. Some examples that have been used are:

- In cases of suspected systematic abuse, some local authorities have obtained authorisation to carry out undercover surveillance under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) in order to build up evidence that can later be used to prosecute a person;

- Where an enforcement officer wishes to establish if the badge holder is in the vicinity of the vehicle and truly is part of the journey being made, some officers will phone the badge holder at home to establish if they are in fact there;
- Similarly a local authority might choose to send an officer to the badge holder's home, simultaneously, whilst a colleague is with the third party who is using the badge;
- Some enforcement officers will stay on hand to observe both the start and end of a journey to establish if the badge holder is present at any stage; and
- A local enforcement team (often working in conjunction with the police) may identify Blue Badge abuse 'hot spots', such as streets around football stadiums, offices or shops.
- Some enforcement officers will question the badge user at the roadside at the time of inspecting the badge.

## 7.4. Sharing information

It is important that there is effective communication between issuing authorities and on-street parking enforcement teams or other enforcement agencies. They need to be able to share the information they have on badge holders. However, local authorities are reminded that badge holders must have given their consent to sharing their personal information under the Data Protection Act. This will probably have been done at the initial application stage in the 'Declaration' section of the Blue Badge application form (see Appendix D for the model application form) or as part of a Gov.UK online application.

Where possible, issuing authorities should provide on-street enforcement teams with data on local badge holders, particularly in relation to badges that have been reported as lost or stolen so that these badges can be recognised if used on the street. This process can be made easier through the use of technology. For example, parking enforcement officers can use hand held devices to check the Blue Badge Improvement Service system for key information about the status of individual badges. Alternatively, where this approach is not viable, parking enforcement officers could contact their local issuing authority to check the status of suspicious badges.

The Blue Badge Improvement Service also enables checks on badges that have been issued anywhere in England, Scotland or Wales. If they do not have such devices, local enforcement officers can ask for a check to be made on the Blue Badge Improvement Service by their colleagues in either the issuing or enforcing local authority from their computer terminals. The Blue Badge Improvement Service administrator at the issuing local authority can authorise access to this system.

### Sharing Best Practice

This guidance is based on strategies used by local authorities in the past. Enforcing the Blue Badge scheme is a challenging task which often requires innovative strategies to address changing circumstances. We would therefore encourage local authorities to continue to work together and share best practice. Sharing successful techniques and cooperating with other local authorities, particularly neighbouring authorities, will ensure best use of resources and increase the chances of successful outcomes for enforcement strategies.

## 8. Further advice

### 8.1 Official statistics on Blue Badges

Since 1994, the DfT has carried out an annual voluntary Blue Badge survey covering local authorities in England. As badges may remain valid for a three-year period, the survey shows a rolling total of those held at 31 March each year. The data from this survey is published annually and is available on Gov.UK.

The DfT strongly encourages local authorities to complete this survey as this is currently the only data available across England and at local level on total Blue Badges issued and enforcement practices. This supports openness and transparency, allowing members of the public access to their local authority's data.

Current Blue Badge statistics, along with the latest questionnaire and guidance, can be found on Gov.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disabled-parking-badges-statistics>

Following the introduction of BBIS, the DfT is working to reduce data collection and reporting burdens on local authorities whilst, at the same time, maintaining the time series of data and enabling the delivery of the Blue Badge reforms to be monitored and assessed. Blue Badge data will be used to support accountability of central Government for national policy decisions and of local authorities for delivery of the reforms.

For 2013/14 the survey will consist of a shorter survey form and a download from BBIS. The short survey is still necessary as there will be valid badges on issue that were issued before BBIS and there is information that is not available from BBIS such as prosecutions for badge misuse.

### 8.2 Blue Badge Online Community

A Blue Badge Online Community has been set up on the Local Government Improvement and Development (formerly IDeA) Communities Knowledge Hub website. This is a forum for local authority teams involved in administering and enforcing the Blue Badge scheme to share good practices, ideas and practical tips.

The Knowledge Hub on-line community also contains links to documentation that local authorities in England may find useful in effectively delivering the Blue Badge scheme and contains up to date information on the DfT's reforms.

If you would like to discuss any issues raised in this guidance, or anything to do with the Blue Badge scheme, with other local authority officers working in this area then follow the link below to sign up to the BBOC: <https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/group/bluebadgeonlinecommunity>

## 8.3 Visitors from outside of the UK

There are currently no formal reciprocal arrangements in place for disabled parking badges issued outside the UK.

The UK Government has informal reciprocal agreements in place with other European Union Governments to accept Blue Badges from these countries. In England and Wales, a parking clock is required to be displayed with the Blue Badge on double yellow lines and in other areas where parking is time-limited. Local authorities should be aware that the official publication of the European Commission “Parking card for people with disabilities in the European Union: conditions in the Member States” states that in the UK “the parking card is used in conjunction with a parking clock. However, people from other countries who display the parking card without a parking clock will be given the same concessions.”

Local authorities should ensure that parking enforcement teams are made aware of this information. Local authorities may also wish to consider making disabled parking clocks available upon request to anyone who presents a valid disabled parking badge from Scotland, Northern Ireland or another EU country, to avoid potential problems.

The DfT is aware of some cases where local authorities believe people may be trying to use fake badges, claiming they have been issued by another Member State, but enforcement officers have remained suspicious about their validity. Recognition is voluntary, rather than mandatory, and so local authority enforcement officers can refuse to recognise an overseas badge if they have reasonable grounds to believe that it is fake or forged.

Disabled parking badges from countries outside the EU vary in design and it would be hard for local enforcement officers to verify their authenticity. DfT advise people visiting the UK from non-EU countries that they should bring their disabled parking badges with them and check with the local police or local authority in the areas they intend to visit to see if the badge would be recognised, but emphasise that this entirely at the discretion of the police and local authority.

## 8.4 Blue Badge Improvement Service

The Blue Badge Improvement Service is a new service that is available to all local authorities in England from 1 January 2012. It provides the following core services:

- secure printing, personalisation and distribution of the new Blue Badge design;
- a central database of all Blue Badges on issue and key information on badge holders;
- an online eligibility checker and an online application form that is available on Gov.UK;
- a system support service;
- an initial enquiry support service to handle general enquiries from members of the public;
- managed service administration and support; and
- a data-set completeness service that will be available for any local authority who might want to transfer historic records onto the system.

The Blue Badge Improvement Service is a web-based service that is available over Government Connect (GCSx). It is accredited to HMG security requirements (Impact Level 3) and is compliant with data protection legislation.

A central database, an online applications system and a single secure print service for the badge offers many benefits. These include:

- fraud prevention: automated checks can be made at application stage to prevent multiple and fraudulent applications;
- automated checks can reduce the need for time-consuming, paper-based checks on applicants by local authorities;
- improved customer services: the service should mean quicker, easier renewals for people whose circumstances have not changed; reminders can be sent centrally and records can move to different local authorities with the badge holder if they move house;
- use of sophisticated anti-fraud technologies on the new badge at the lowest cost and more security in the supply, storage and distribution;
- quick and easy enforcement checks by officers from anywhere in the country on badges issued by any local authority, either using a desktop PC, handheld device or SMARTphone; and
- significant operational and other efficiencies for local authorities.

If your local authority would like more information or updates on the BBIS please contact [bbis@northgate-is.com](mailto:bbis@northgate-is.com).

## 8.5 Equality Act 2010

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (EA2010) introduces a new Public Sector Equality Duty which requires public bodies - including local authorities - to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the EA2010;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This new Duty came into force on 6 April 2011. It brings three existing duties on race, disability and gender together into a single duty and also extends to cover age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment. In order to meet this duty, a public authority must embed equality considerations in everything they do. In setting local fees and charges for badges and badge holders, the DfT recommends that local authorities check with their legal teams to ensure any local practices are consistent with the Public Sector Equality Duty. Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty is available on the Equality and Human Rights Commission [website](#).

Section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 (EA2010)<sup>4</sup> requires service providers to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled people are not put at a substantial disadvantage compared to people who do not share the disability, when accessing services. This requirement has implications for car park operators who may have to demonstrate that, as well as marking out disabled persons' parking spaces, they have taken reasonable steps to ensure that they are available to disabled people.

A good practice guide 'Inclusive Mobility' has been published on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure, which includes a chapter on parking issues. It is designed to help service providers meet their obligations under the EA2010 and provides guidance on established good

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<sup>4</sup> This requirement was previously contained in Part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, which was repealed when the EA2010 was commenced in October 2010.

practice in a general sense that relevant organisations can apply to their particular situation. See [Appendix C](#) for details of how to obtain a copy.

# Appendix A: Summary of Blue Badge parking concessions

The parking concessions available to Blue Badge holders are governed by the provisions in the [Local Authorities' Traffic Orders \(Exemptions for Disabled Persons\)\(England\) Regulations 2000.](#)

These Regulations cover traffic orders which are made by local authorities under various sections of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and which lay down parking restrictions or impose parking charges on motorists. The effect of the Regulations is to require local authorities to include in such orders certain exemptions in favour of vehicles displaying a Blue Badge. This includes:

- allowing badge holders to park free of charge and without time limit at 'on street' parking meters and pay-and-display machines;
- allowing badge holders to park free of charge and without time limit at 'on-street' disabled parking bays, unless signs say otherwise.
- allowing badge holders to park on single or double yellow lines for up to three hours in England, unless there is a ban on loading or unloading.

# Appendix B: Relevant legislation

The disabled persons' parking badge scheme came into operation on 1 December 1971 by means of Regulations made under Section 21 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (Badges for display on motor vehicles used by disabled persons). This Act was amended by the Disabled Persons' Parking Badges Act 2013.

The scheme as it currently stands is governed by the following Regulations:

- the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) Regulations 2000 ([SI 2000/682](#));
- the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2000 ([SI 2000/1507](#));
- the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Exemptions for Disabled Persons) (England) Regulations 2000 ([SI 2000/693](#));
- the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 ([SI 2007/2531](#));
- the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2007 ([SI 2007/2600](#));
- the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 ([SI 2011/1307](#)).
- the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations 2011 ([SI 2011/2675](#))
- the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 ([SI 2013/2203](#))

Other relevant legislation:

- Section 21A (Recognition of badges issued outside Great Britain) of the [Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970](#).
- Sections 115 (Mishandling of parking documents and related offences), 117 (Wrongful use of disabled person's badge) and 142(1)(General interpretation of Act) of the [Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984](#) (provides powers to tackle parking related abuse of the scheme).

All of the above Statutory Instruments (and the Acts) can also be viewed on the website of the Office of Public Sector Information at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/>

# Appendix C: Useful related guidance/publications

The [Local Authority Circular June 2011](#), the [Local Authority Circular November 2011](#) and the Local Authority Circular 8 October 2013 provide information on the recent changes to Blue Badge regulations.

The Department for Transport has produced the following leaflets about the Blue Badge Scheme:

- [Blue Badge – can I get one? - Publications - Department for Transport](#)
- [The Blue Badge Scheme: rights and responsibilities](#)
- [The Blue Badge scheme: rights and responsibilities for organisations that have Blue Badges - Publications - Department for Transport](#)

The Blue Badge Scheme: rights and responsibilities leaflet will be issued to the badge holder as part of the Blue Badge Improvement Service.

The DfT is unable to provide hard copies of these leaflets but they can be downloaded free of charge from the DfT website.

Blue Badges, parking discs and wallets, and additional printed copies of the leaflet are available for the relevant price through the Blue Badge Improvement Service. Request for additional Blue Badge materials should be raised directly with the Blue Badge Unit.

Other publications which may be of interest are:

- [Inclusive Mobility](#)

[The GOV.UK Website](#) also provides useful information on the Blue Badge scheme and hosts an online eligibility checker and online application form.

## Initial Enquiry Support Service

The Initial Enquiry Support Service (IESS) is a service provided by Northgate Public Services and it provides a centralised point of contact for initial enquiries from members of the public wanting more information on the Blue Badge Scheme. The IESS can receive enquiries from the public via telephone, email, or letter.

As an initial enquiry service, advisors will respond to general requests for advice, such as the use of the Blue Badge when travelling abroad, what the toll concessions are for Blue Badge holders, who they should contact to renew their badge, details of how to use and where to report the misuse of badges.

Where appropriate the IESS will encourage the use of online facilities such as the online application form, eligibility checker and further reading to be found on a range of websites, such as the Department for Transport and Transport Scotland.

The scope for the IESS does not include 'assisted applications'. Therefore enquiries to do with assisting online applications will not be supported via IESS.

The IESS will be advising members of the public that their local authority is still the first point of contact to:

- Apply for a badge
- Renew a badge
- Replace a badge that has been stolen, lost or become illegible
- Return a badge because the holder has died
- Advise of a change of address / different car details
- Report badge misuse

It is probable therefore that a high number of enquiries received by the IESS will be signposted to LAs for their support.

The IESS will be available to members of the public from Monday to Friday between the hours of 8 am to 6 pm, as a central point of contact for initial enquiries for those wanting more information on the Blue Badge scheme.

A voicemail facility will pick up any enquiries out of hours, at weekends and Bank Holidays.

The contact options for the IESS (detailed below) should not be published and used by LAs as an alternative to existing local arrangements for blue badge support. As the service provided by Northgate is an *Initial* Enquiry Support Service many of the enquiries received from members of the public will be signposted to the LA. Therefore if LAs default to using the IESS as a first point of contact, members of the public could be in the unfavourable position of having to make two calls.

The IESS telephone number for residents in England is:

IESS England          0844 4630213

The IESS e-mail address is: [bluebadge@northgate-is.com](mailto:bluebadge@northgate-is.com)

Where necessary members of the public can also write to:

Blue Badge Unit,  
Northgate Information Solutions,  
Wellington House,  
Wynyard Park,  
Billingham, TS22 5TB

# Annex D: Updated Blue Badge model application form

The model application form has been based on the findings from an independent review of Blue Badge scheme good practices and tested with disabled people through pilot studies.

The model application form is designed to be modular so that, depending on their particular circumstances, local authorities can:

- join the sections together to create a single application form; or
- develop separate application forms for specific eligibility criteria.

**A version of the model application form, which can be modified by local authorities, is available to download.**

The application process is entirely a matter for local authorities to determine, taking account of local circumstances and their procedures for eligibility assessment. [Section 3](#) provides practical advice on the design of application forms and processes for handling applications. Use of this model form is at the discretion of each local authority, but they should note that it forms the basis of the online application facility that is available through Gov.UK as part of the [Blue Badge Improvement Service](#) (BBIS).

In order to ensure quality of data on BBIS from the earliest stages, the badge request pages on BBIS require some mandatory information about applicants. Local authorities considering submitting badge orders will therefore need to ensure they have the following information from applicants:

## **For an Individual**

Forename

Surname

Surname at Birth

Gender

Date of Birth

Town of Birth

Country of Birth

First line of address

Town

Postcode

Country (defaults to UK)

**The following also needs to be supplied when submitting an individual's badge for printing:**

Confirm residency check has been undertaken

Confirm identity check has been undertaken

Eligibility category

Application Date

Badge Start Date

[Badge End Date](#) (if not supplied this will be set to 3 years after Badge Start Date)  
Dispatch Method (to applicant or local authority)  
Fulfilment Option (e.g. standard or fast track)  
Reason if a non-standard fulfilment option has been selected  
Either a photo or confirmation that the applicant is terminally ill  
Assessment Type if the Eligibility Category is [Walking Disability](#) (e.g. independent mobility assessment, desk based assessment)  
Issue number (for replacement badges)

### **For an Organisation**

Organisation Name  
Forename of organisation contact  
Surname of organisation contact  
First line of address  
Town  
Postcode  
Country (defaults to UK)

### **The following also needs to be supplied when submitting an Organisational Badge for printing:**

Application Date  
Badge Start Date  
Badge End Date (If not supplied this will be set to 3 yrs after Badge Start Date)  
Dispatch Method  
Fulfilment Option  
Reason if a non-standard fulfilment option has been selected  
Number of badges to be printed  
Either the organisation's company logo or confirmation that one has not been provided

There are other fields for voluntary information, e.g. National Insurance Number.

The remainder of this appendix is framed around the following sections of the application form:

1. Information about the applicant (core questions to gather appropriate personal details)
2. Questions for 'without further assessment' applicants
3. Questions for 'subject to further assessment' applicants with walking difficulties
4. Questions for 'subject to further assessment' applicants with disabilities in both arms
5. Questions for 'subject to further assessment' applicants under the age of three
6. Questions for organisational applicants
7. Declarations and signatures

Each section includes suggested specific guidance points that local authorities may wish to include for applicants to help ensure that they are able to complete the form fully and accurately.

A set of guidance notes accompanies the application form. Local authorities may wish to produce and provide this to applicants to retain for their future reference.

*Insert the name/contact details/logo of your local authority here*

# Blue Badge Application Form

Please complete all relevant sections of the application form and supply the appropriate documents to confirm your address, identity and evidence of eligibility. When completing this form you may find the accompanying guidance notes helpful.

The local authority may refuse to issue a badge if you do not provide adequate evidence that you meet the eligibility criteria.

## Section 1 – Information about the applicant.

If you are completing the form on behalf of an applicant who is under 16, or who is unable to complete the form themselves, please provide their details in appropriate sections and sign the form on their behalf.

If you are applying on behalf of an organisation that cares for and transports disabled people then please do not complete Section 1. You only need to complete Sections 6 and 7.

Further guidance on completing this section can be found in Section 1 of the accompanying guidance notes.

**Title** (Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, other):

**First names** (in full):

**Surname:**

**Surname at birth:**

**Gender:** Male ☐ Female ☐

**Date of Birth** (DD/MM/YYYY): /

Town:

**Place of Birth:**

Country:

**National Insurance Number:**

(see Section 1 of the accompanying guidance notes)

**Driving Licence Number:**

(If you hold a driving licence)

**Current address and contact details:**

Postcode:

Home Tel:

Mobile Tel:

Email:

**Previous address, if different in the last three years:**

Postcode:

**Do you currently hold a Blue Badge, or have you held a Blue Badge before?**

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

**If you have:**

Which local authority issued you with the last badge?

What is the serial number on the last badge?

What is the expiry date of the last badge?

**Proof of your address, dated within the last 12 months:**

We need to check that you are a resident in this local authority area before we can process your application. Please select one of the following options and provide original documentation where relevant:

- Either:** ☐ I give consent to the local authority to check my personal details on the local authority's Council Tax database so that I do not need to submit proof of my address.
- Or:** ☐ I have enclosed a Council Tax bill bearing my name and address, dated within the last 12 months.
- Or:** ☐ I do not pay Council Tax, am over the age of 16 and give consent to the local authority to check my address on the electoral register.
- Or:** ☐ I am applying on behalf of an applicant who does not pay Council Tax and is under the age of 16. I give my consent to the local authority to check school records to confirm their address.

**Proof of your identity:**

We need to check your identity to reduce the potential for fraudulent applications for a Blue Badge. You must attach a certified photocopy of **one** of the following as proof of your identity:

☐ Birth certificate / adoption certificate ☐ Marriage / Divorce certificate ☐ Passport

☐ Civil Partnership / Dissolution certificate

☐ Valid driving licence

**Photographs:**

You will need to enclose a recent passport standard photograph of the applicant. The photograph needs to show the applicant's full face so that the holder can be easily identified. No one else should be in the photograph. The photograph will be placed on the back of the badge and will not be visible when the badge is being displayed in the vehicle.

Please ensure that the applicant's name is on the back of the photograph and that you complete Sections 7(a) and 7(d) of this form to confirm that the photograph is a true likeness.

**Badge issue fee** (where applicable):

*[The local authority will need to insert details of local payment options for successful Blue Badge applicants, where the fee is collected.]*

Payment will only be taken if your application for a Blue Badge is successful. You will only be issued with a Blue Badge once your payment has been received.

**Please nominate the vehicle registration number(s) for the main cars in which you intend to use the Blue Badge:**

(Up to three registration numbers should be nominated, but please remember that other vehicles can be used).

## Section 2 – Questions for ‘without further assessment’ applicants.

These questions are intended for people who may qualify for a Blue Badge automatically because they:

- are severely sight impaired (blind);
- receive the **Higher Rate of the Mobility Component** of Disability Living Allowance;
- receive the appropriate component of Personal Independence Payment;
- receive the War Pensioner’s Mobility Supplement; or
- receive a qualifying award under the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation) Scheme.

If you are unsure whether these questions apply to you, then please read Section 2 of the guidance notes enclosed with this application form.

### 2a) People who are severely sight impaired (blind)

Are you registered as blind (severely sight impaired)?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

If YES, please state which local authority you are registered with:

If YES, do you give consent to us to check the local authority’s register of blind people to see whether your disability is already known to the council?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

If NO, then please indicate whether you have enclosed a copy of your Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI) or a BD8 form, signed by a Consultant Ophthalmologist and that you wish to be registered as blind:

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

### 2b) People who receive the Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance

Do you receive the Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

If YES, have you been awarded this benefit indefinitely?

Yes: ☐

No: ☐ If NO, when is your award of this benefit due to end?

(DD/MM/YYYY):   /   /

If you are in receipt of the Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance you must enclose an original letter of entitlement to this benefit issued within the last twelve months or your original annual uprating letter.

Please note that we may also check that you are in receipt of this award with the Department for Work and Pensions.

## 2c) People who meet a 'Moving Around' descriptor for the Mobility Component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Does your 'Moving Around' descriptor for the Mobility Component meet/match any of the following statements?

- ☐ You can stand and then move unaided more than 20 metres but no more than 50 metres. (8 points)
- ☐ You can stand and then move using an aid or appliance more than 20 metres but no more than 50 metres. (10 points)
- ☐ You can stand and then move more than 1 metre but no more than 20 metres. (12 points)
- ☐ You cannot stand or move more than 1 metre. (12 points)

If you did not tick any statement above, please tick the 'NO' box.

No: ☐

If you have ticked a statement above (8, 10 or 12 points); have you been awarded this benefit for an ongoing period?

Yes: ☐

No: ☐ If NO, when is your award of this benefit due to end?

(DD/MM/YYYY):   /   /

If you have ticked one of the above statements (8, 10 or 12 points) for the 'Moving Around' descriptor of the Mobility Component of PIP, you must enclose an original letter of entitlement to this benefit .

Please note that we may also check that you are in receipt of this award with the Department for Work and Pensions.

## 2d) People who receive the War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement

Do you receive the War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

If YES, have you been awarded this benefit indefinitely?

Yes: ☐

No: ☐ If NO, when is your award of this benefit due to end?

(DD/MM/YYYY):   /   /

If you are in receipt of the War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement you must enclose an original letter of entitlement to this benefit. You should have an award letter from the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA). If you have lost this letter, then the agency can be contacted via the free-phone enquiry number: 0800 169 22 77.

## **2e) People who receive a benefit under the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation) Scheme**

Have you received a lump sum benefit under the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation) Scheme within tariff levels 1 – 8 (inclusive) and have been certified by the SPVA as having a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty walking?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

If you are in receipt of the above mentioned award under the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation) Scheme, the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA) will have issued you with a letter confirming the level of your award and also confirming that you have been assessed as having a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking. You must enclose the original of this letter as proof of entitlement. If you have lost this letter, then the agency can be contacted via the free-phone enquiry number: 0800 169 22 77.

If you have answered "Yes" to any of the questions in Section 2 please go straight to Section 7

### Section 3 – Questions for ‘subject to further assessment’ applicants with walking difficulties.

These questions are intended for people who have answered NO to all of the questions in Section 2. Please note that you will only qualify for a Blue Badge under this criterion if you, or the person on whose behalf you are applying, are over two years of age and **have a permanent and substantial disability which means you are unable to walk or you have very considerable difficulty in walking.**

If you are unsure whether these questions apply to you, then please read the guidance notes enclosed with this application form.

**Please describe:**

- Any medical conditions / disabilities which affect your walking.
- If you know them please state the medical terms for the condition you have been diagnosed with.

**Please describe:**

- Any surgery or courses of treatment you have undergone or specialist clinics you have attended in relation to each medical condition / disability you have mentioned.
- Please state when you underwent any relevant surgery or treatment or attended specialist clinics.

Surgeries / courses of treatment / specialist clinics:	Dates you received this treatment:

**What medication do you currently take in relation to the conditions / disabilities you described above?**

Medication	Dosage	Frequency

**Are you currently taking any pain relief in relation to the medical conditions / disabilities you mentioned above?**

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

If Yes, please explain what you are taking and how frequently you need it:

**Are you currently...**

(Please tick whichever statements apply to you and provide further details in the space below).

- ☐ Awaiting surgery in relation to the conditions / disabilities described above?
- ☐ Recuperating from surgery in relation to the conditions / disabilities described above?
- ☐ Awaiting treatment for any of the conditions / disabilities described above?
- ☐ Managing your condition / disability since you have been advised it is not expected to improve any further?
- ☐ None of the above.

**Please give details of the healthcare professionals or specialists (including your GP) who have been treating you in relation to the conditions / disabilities described above:**

Name	Job title	Hospital / Health Centre	Telephone number

<p><b>Do you anticipate that your conditions / disabilities will improve in the next 3 years?</b> (Tick as appropriate).</p> <p>Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>If you ticked YES, please describe how much you expect your conditions / disabilities to improve.</b></p>			
<p><b>How do the conditions / disabilities you described above affect your ability to walk?</b></p>			
<p><b>Please tick whichever of the following statements describe your general walking ability:</b> (Please tick whichever options apply to you - you can tick more than one box).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am able to walk well, including recreational walks.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am able to walk around the supermarket to do my own shopping.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am able to walk and can use public transport for some of my local trips.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am able to walk, but struggle with longer distances or hills.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am able to walk, but get breathless if I walk for more than a few minutes.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am able to walk, but find it too painful to walk for more than a few minutes.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am able to walk but use a wheelchair for longer trips outside the home.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am able to walk around my home, but am unable to climb the stairs.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am unable to walk at all.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe below).</p>			
<p><b>Are you able to walk outside without help?</b></p>			

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ (please describe the help you need in the space below...)

**Where, in your local area, can you comfortably walk to from your home?**

(Please state a specific location or landmark which could be found on a map, e.g. a shop, street address or park).

**Please tick the box that best describes the way you walk:**

- ☐ Normal - no specific problems with walking.
- ☐ Adequate - for example, you walk with a slight limp.
- ☐ Poor - for example, you walk with a heavy limp, a stiff leg or shuffle, or have problems with balance.
- ☐ Extremely poor - for example, you drag your leg, stagger, swing through two crutches or need physical support.
- ☐ Other.

If there is not a box that describes the way you walk, please tell us in your own words about the way you walk in the space provided below:

**Do you use any of the following walking aids?**

(Please tick whichever options apply to you - you can tick more than one box).

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 elbow crutch.               | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 elbow crutches.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 walking stick.              | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 walking sticks.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walking frame (Zimmer frame). | <input type="checkbox"/> Rollator.           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wheelchair.                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Powered wheelchair. |

☐ Other (please describe in the space below).

**Were your walking aids...**

(Please tick whichever options apply to you).

- ☐ Purchased privately by me.
- ☐ Prescribed by a healthcare professional.
- ☐ Provided by Social Services.
- ☐ Other (please describe below).

**How far would you estimate you are able to walk, using any walking aids, before you feel severe discomfort?**

(Please state the distance in metres or yards using whichever measure is best for you).

: metres  : yards

When answering this question please note that:

- The average adult step is just less than one metre, which is 1.1 yards or 3 feet and 4 inches.
- If you walk alongside someone and they take 100 steps you would have walked roughly 90 metres, or 100 yards.
- The average double-decker bus is about 11 metres, or 12 yards, long.
- A tennis court is about 24 metres, or 26 yards, long.
- A full size football pitch is about 100 metres, or 110 yards, long.

**Roughly how much time would you estimate it takes you to walk this distance?**

: minutes

**Are you able to continue walking after a short rest?**

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

**If you can continue, roughly how long (in minutes) are you able to walk for in total?**

: minutes

**Please answer 'Yes' or 'No' to each of the following questions by ticking the relevant box:**

Are you troubled by shortness of breath when hurrying on level ground or walking up a slight hill?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

Do you get short of breath walking with other people of your own age on level ground?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

Do you have to stop for breath when walking at your own pace on level ground?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

Do you get too breathless to leave your home, or after dressing?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

**Is there anything else you would like to add that you think is relevant in support of your application for a Blue Badge?**

## Section 4 – Questions for ‘subject to further assessment’ applicants with a disability in both arms.

These questions are intended for people who **drive a vehicle regularly, have a severe disability in both arms and are unable to operate, or have considerable difficulty in operating, parking meters.**

If you are unsure whether these questions apply to you, then please read the guidance notes enclosed with this application form.

**Do you drive regularly?**

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

**Do you have a severe disability in both arms?**

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

**Please describe your medical condition / disability:**

**Are you unable to operate, or have considerable difficulty operating a parking meter or pay and display machine due to your upper limb disability?**

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

**If yes, please describe the difficulties you have with operating parking meters and pay and display machines:**

**Do you drive a specially adapted vehicle?**

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

**If yes, please describe how the vehicle has been adapted for you, and enclose a copy of your insurance details verifying this adaptation:**

## **Section 5 – Questions for ‘subject to further assessment’ applicants under the age of three.**

These questions are intended for children under the age of three who may be eligible for a Blue Badge because:

- **They have a condition requiring the transportation of bulky medical equipment at all times; or**
- **They must always be kept near a motor vehicle on account of a condition so that they can, if necessary, be treated for that condition in the vehicle or taken quickly in the vehicle to a place where they can be so treated.**

If you are unsure whether these questions apply to your child, then please read the guidance notes enclosed with this application form.

**Are you applying on behalf of a child under the age of three who has a condition requiring transportation of bulky medical equipment at all times?**

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

**If YES, please state what type of equipment is required:**

**Are you applying on behalf of a child under the age of three that suffers from a condition that requires that they must be always kept near a motor vehicle so that they can, if necessary, be treated for that condition on the vehicle or be taken quickly in the vehicle to a place where they can be treated?**

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

**If YES, please describe the child's medical condition:**

**If you have answered yes to either of the questions above please enclose a letter from a healthcare professional that has been involved in your child's treatment (for example your GP or paediatrician) giving details of the child's medical condition and the type of medical equipment they need, or provide the healthcare professional's contact details below:**

## Section 6 – Applying for an Organisational Blue Badge.

These questions are intended for organisations involved in the care of disabled people who are seeking a Blue Badge for a vehicle/vehicles (e.g. minibus, or specially adapted commercial vehicle) which is/are to be used to carry disabled people who would themselves qualify for an individual Blue Badge. Please see Section 6 of the accompanying guidance notes for a list of the eligibility criteria prescribed in the regulations that govern the scheme.

**An 'organisation' is defined in legislation as meaning an organisation concerned with the care of disabled persons to which a disabled person's badge may be issued.**

Organisational badges will therefore only be issued to an organisation which:

- cares for and transports disabled people who would meet one or more of the eligibility criteria for a individual Blue Badge; and
- has a clear need for an organisational badge rather than using the individual Blue Badges of people it is transporting.

Organisational badges should only be used when transporting disabled people in their care who meet one or more of the eligibility criteria for a badge – and must not be used for the employee's benefit when they are carrying out other business on behalf of the organisation. It is unlikely that taxi or private hire operators and community transport operators would be eligible for an organisational Blue Badge as they are not usually concerned with the care of disabled people who would meet one or more of the eligibility criteria for a badge.

If you are unsure about how to answer these questions, then please read the guidance notes enclosed with this application form.

**Name of organisation:**

**Main contact name:**

**Address:**

**Postcode:**

**Telephone:**

**Email:**

### **Organisational logo**

You need to supply the company logo of your organisation if you are applying for an organisational badge. Please see Section 6 of the guidance notes for more information.

**Does your organisation care for disabled people who would themselves qualify for an individual Blue Badge?** See Section 6 of the accompanying guidance note for a list of the eligibility criteria.

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

If YES, please give details of the nature of this care:

As part of that care, does your organisation provide them with transportation?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

If YES, please give details of the types of vehicles in which you wish to use the badge, their vehicle registration number and how often they are used to transport disabled people:

Type of vehicle	Vehicle Registration Number	Frequency used to transport disabled people

Are any of your vehicles licensed under the Disabled Passenger Vehicle (DPV) taxation class?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

If YES, please give details and attach a photocopy of the tax disc(s) to this application:

How many disabled people are in the care of your organisation?

: people

How many of these people are already in receipt of a Blue Badge as individuals?

: people

How many of these people do you estimate would be eligible to receive a Blue Badge if they applied as individuals (see description of eligible disabled people in the accompanying guidance note)?

: people	
<b>Charity Number of your organisation:</b> (if applicable)	

**Please describe why your organisation is applying for a Blue Badge and the types of trips it will be used for:**

**How often do you envisage your organisation will use the Blue Badge?**

**If you already have an organisational Blue Badge:**

What is the serial number on the current badge(s)?

What is the expiry date of the current badge(s)?

**How many organisational badges are you applying for?**

(Please note that your organisation will be required to pay the badge issue fee for each Organisational Badge that is issued).

**Badge issue fee** (where applicable).

*[The local authority will need to insert details of local payment options for successful Blue Badge applicants, where the fee is collected.]*

See Section 1 of the accompanying guidance notes.

**Payment will only be taken if your organisation's application for a Blue Badge is successful. Your organisation will only be issued with a Blue Badge once your payment has been received.**

## Section 7 – Declarations and signatures.

These questions should be answered by all applicants for a Blue Badge.

### 7a) Mandatory declarations about the information you have provided and the application process

- Please read the following declarations thoroughly.
- Please tick all relevant boxes to indicate that you have read and understood each declaration.
- Not ticking one of these declarations may mean we are unable to issue you with a Blue Badge.
- Providing fraudulent information may result in prosecution and a fine.

All documents relating to this application will be dealt with in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 and may be shared within the local authority, with other local authorities, the police and parking enforcement officers to detect and prevent fraud. Any medical information that you have supplied to support this application is deemed, under the Data Protection Act, to be “sensitive personal data” and will only be disclosed to third parties as necessary for the operation and administration of the Blue Badge scheme, and to other Government Departments or agencies, to validate proof of entitlement or as otherwise required by law.

#### Declarations to be completed by all applicants

- ☐ I confirm that, as far as I know, the details I have provided are complete and accurate. I realise that you may take action against me if I have provided false information in this application form.
- ☐ I understand that I must promptly inform my local authority of any changes that may affect my entitlement to a badge.

#### Declarations to be completed by all individual applicants

- ☐ I confirm that the photographs I have submitted with my application are a true likeness.
- ☐ I understand that, if my application is successful, I must not allow any other person to use the badge for their benefit and that I must only use the badge in accordance with the rules of the scheme as set out in the “Blue Badge scheme: rights and responsibilities in England” leaflet which will be sent to me with the badge.
- ☐ I understand that I must not hold more than one valid Blue Badge at any time.

#### Declarations to be completed by all ‘subject to further assessment’ individual applicants (i.e. people who have completed Sections 3, 4 or 5)

- ☐ I understand that the local authority may need to contact an accredited healthcare professional for the purpose of obtaining further information in support of my application.

- ☐ I understand that I may be required to undertake an assessment with a healthcare professional who is independent of my existing care and treatment in order to determine my eligibility for a Blue Badge.

## Declarations to be completed by all organisational applicants

- ☐ I confirm that I am authorised to represent the organisation and that the organisation is concerned with the care of disabled people.
- ☐ I understand that, if the application is successful, the badge(s) must only be used when transporting disabled people and that the organisation must use the badge(s) in accordance with the rules of the scheme.

## 7b) Your consent to use your information to improve the service you receive

Please read and tick the following optional declarations that you consent to. Ticking these boxes will help to improve the service we can offer you.

- ☐ I consent to the local authority checking any information already held by the local authority's Social Services department on the basis that:
- It can help determine my eligibility for a Blue Badge;
  - It may speed up the processing of my application;
  - It may enable a decision to be made without the need for a mobility assessment.
- ☐ I agree to the disclosure of the information included in this form to other local authority departments/service providers so that I can be informed about other local authority services that may be of benefit to me.

## 7c) Checklist of documents you may need to enclose

Please ensure you have enclosed all of the relevant documents for the sections of this application form that you have completed. We have provided a checklist below to help remind you of what you need to enclose.

### Section 1 – Information about you

- ☐ Proof of your address, dated within the last 12 months.  
(if you have not given consent for us to check Council Tax / electoral register / school records).
- ☐ A certified copy of proof of your identity.
- ☐ A passport standard photograph of the applicant with their name on the back.

### Section 2a – People who are severely sight impaired

- ☐ A copy of your ophthalmologists report / CVI / BD8 form (if you have not given us consent to check the blind register).

### Section 2b – People who received the Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance

- ☐ An original letter of entitlement for the Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance issued within the last 12 months or your original annual uprating letter.

#### **Section 2c – People who meet a ‘Moving Around’ descriptor for the Mobility Component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP)**

- ☐ An original Personal Independence Payment decision letter.

#### **Section 2d – People who receive the War Pensioner’s Mobility Supplement**

- ☐ An original letter of entitlement for the War Pensioner’s Mobility Supplement.

#### **Section 2e – People who receive an award under the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation) Scheme**

- ☐ An original award letter confirming receipt of tariffs 1-8 under the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation) Scheme, which also certifies that you have a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty walking.

#### **Section 4 – Drivers with an disability in both arms**

- ☐ A copy of your insurance details if you drive a specially adapted vehicle.

#### **Section 5 – Children under the age of three**

- ☐ A letter from a healthcare professional that has been involved in the child’s treatment, giving details of medical condition and type of medical equipment needed.

#### **Section 6 – Organisational Badge**

- ☐ A photocopy of the tax discs for any vehicles registered under the Disabled Passenger Vehicle (DPV) class.
- ☐ Your organisation’s logo.

### **7d) Your signature against the declarations that you have ticked in section 7a and 7b**

<b>Your signature:</b>	
<b>Date of application:</b>	(DD/MM/YYYY): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
<b>Please print your name here:</b>	

# Blue Badge Application Form - Guidance Notes

## What sections of the application form should I complete?

*All individual applicants should complete Section 1 and Section 7.*

Individual applicants will also need to complete:

- Section 2 if they receive the Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance.
- Section 2 if they receive a 'Moving Around' descriptor for the Mobility Component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP).
- Section 2 if they are registered blind (severely sight impaired), or if they wish to be registered blind and have a Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI) signed by a Consultant Ophthalmologist which states that they are severely sight impaired (blind).
- Section 2 if they receive the War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement.
- Section 2 if they receive the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation) Scheme within tariff levels 1-8 (inclusive).
- Section 3 if they have a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking.
- Section 4 if they are a driver who has a severe disability in both arms and is unable to operate, or has considerable difficulty operating, all or some types of on-street parking equipment.
- Section 5 if the applicant is a child under the age of 3 who must be accompanied by bulky medical equipment or who needs to be kept near a vehicle at all times, either for treatment, or for transportation to a location where treatment can be performed.

*Organisational applicants should complete Section 6 and Section 7 only.*

## Section 1 - Information about you

This section should be completed by all individual applicants for a Blue Badge. It does not need to be completed if you are applying for an Organisational Blue Badge. All fields should be filled in.

There are questions for those who have already held a Blue Badge or who have a Blue Badge which is due to expire shortly. Applicants should note that only one badge will be valid for one applicant at the same time. The serial number can be found on the front of the badge.

## Proof of your identity and address

### Identity:

A certified photocopy of one of the following must be submitted with your application:

your birth/adoption certificate, marriage/divorce certificate, civil partnership/dissolution certificate, valid driving licence or passport.

A certified copy is a photocopy of a document that has been verified as being true by a person who holds a certain position of responsibility. The following persons are accepted as being able to verify your true likeness for the purposes of providing proof of identity:

- *[The authority should add here a list of the persons they would accept as a certifying person.]*

The individual certifying the documents should include the text: "This copy is a true likeness of the original" alongside their signature. They should also print their name, address and occupation alongside this information.

### Address:

Proof of address should be in the form of an original Council Tax bill bearing your name and address. The original must be submitted with your application and will be returned at the end of the application process.

You will not need to submit your Council Tax bill if you have ticked the appropriate box in Section 1, which gives your consent for the local authority to check your address on their Council Tax records or electoral register.

If you are completing the application form on behalf of someone under the age of 16, you should give your consent for the local authority to check school records to confirm their address.

## Blue Badge Issue Fee

*[The local authority should add information about local arrangements for payment of the badge issue fee (where levied)]*

Your local authority will only issue successful applicants with a Blue Badge once payment of the required fee has been received.

## Other information

You should also provide the Vehicle Registration Numbers of the three vehicles in which you are most likely to use a Blue Badge if your application is successful. This information helps local authorities with their enforcement of the Blue Badge scheme rules, but please note that you can use a Blue Badge in other vehicles too.

## Photograph

The Blue Badge will include a digital photograph which will form part of the badge design. The digital photograph will also be stored on the national database for identification and enforcement purposes.

You should supply one passport-sized and passport standard photograph clearly showing your full face so that you can be easily identified.

The requirements for a photograph on the badge are set out in the [Disabled Persons \(Badges for Motor Vehicles\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) No.2 Regulations 2011](#) and follow closely the recommendations for passport photographs: <https://www.gov.uk/photos-for-passports>

The photograph must be a close-up, digital photograph of the head and shoulders of the badge holder. The photograph shall have a strong definition between face and background and shall be:

- x. in colour;
- xi. 45 millimetres in height and 35 millimetres in width (passport size);
- xii. taken:
  - a. within the month prior to the date of the application;
  - b. against a light grey or cream background
- xiii. undamaged;
- xiv. free from 'redeye', shadows, reflection or glare from spectacles;
- xv. of the full head of the holder (without any other person visible or any covering, unless it is worn for religious beliefs or medical reasons):
  - a. facing forward;
  - b. with nothing covering the face;
  - c. looking straight at the camera;
  - d. with a neutral expression and mouth closed;
  - e. with eyes open and clearly visible (without sunglasses or tinted spectacles and without hair or spectacle frames obscuring the eyes);
- xvi. in sharp focus and clear;
- xvii. printed professionally or in digital format;
- xviii. a true likeness, without amendment

## Section 2 – Questions for 'without further assessment' applicants

You will be automatically eligible for a badge if you are more than two years old, can satisfy residency and identity checks, and meet at least one of the eligibility criteria in Section 2. You will need to provide the appropriate documentation to prove eligibility under one of the criteria. An example of proof of entitlement is proof of payment of the allowance. Any documents sent in as proof of entitlement will be returned to the applicant as quickly as possible, once they are no longer needed by the local authority.

### Section 2a

Please complete this section if you are registered as severely sight impaired (blind). You are asked to state the name of the local authority or borough with which you are registered. In many cases, you will be registered with the same authority to which the application for a badge is being made. If this is not the case, local authorities will check with the named authority that you are registered as severely sight impaired (blind).

The current formal notification required to register as severely sight impaired (blind) is a Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI), signed by a Consultant Ophthalmologist, which states that you are severely sight impaired (blind). However, registration is voluntary.

### Section 2b

Please complete this section if you receive the Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance (HRMCDLA). You will have had an award notice letter from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). You will also have been sent an annual uprating letter stating your entitlement. This uprating letter can be used as proof of receipt of HRMCDLA if your award letter is more than 12 months old. If you have lost your HRMCDLA award letter or your uprating letter, then please contact the Disability Benefits Centre for a current award letter by:

- Telephone: 08457 123 456
- Textphone: 08457 22 44 33

This helpline is open from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday, and further details can be found online at: <https://www.gov.uk/dla-disability-living-allowance-benefit/what-youll-get>

### Section 2c

Please complete this section if you receive a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and your decision letter states that you meet one of the following 'Moving Around' descriptors within the Mobility Component:

- You can stand and then move unaided more than 20 metres but no more than 50 metres. (8 points)
- You can stand and then move using an aid or appliance more than 20 metres but no more than 50 metres. (10 points)
- You can stand and then move more than 1 metre but no more than 20 metres. (12 points)
- You cannot stand or move more than 1 metre. (12 points)

Your decision letter can be used as proof of receipt of the relevant PIP award. If you have lost your PIP decision letter, then please contact DWP for a PIP decision letter by:

- Telephone: 08458503322
- Textphone: 0845

This helpline is open from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday, and further details can be found online at: <https://www.gov.uk/pip>

### Section 2d

Please complete this section if you receive a War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement (WPMS). You should have an official letter from the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency demonstrating receipt of the grant. You must enclose the original of this letter as proof of entitlement.

If you have lost this letter, then the agency can be contacted via the free-phone enquiry number: 0800 169 22 77.

## Section 2e

Please complete this section if you receive a lump sum benefit under the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation) Scheme within tariff levels 1-8 (inclusive) and have been assessed and certified by the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency as having a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking. You will have been issued with a letter from the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency confirming the level of your award and also confirming that you have been assessed as having a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking. You must enclose the original of this letter as proof of entitlement.

If you have lost this letter, then the agency can be contacted via the free-phone enquiry number: 0800 169 22 77.

## **Section 3 – Questions for ‘subject to further assessment’ applicants with walking difficulties**

Section 3 is to be completed if the questions in Section 2 do not apply to you and if you have a permanent and substantial disability which means you cannot walk or which means that you have very considerable difficulty walking. A permanent disability is one that is likely to last for the duration of your life. Medical conditions such as asthma, autism, psychological / behavioural problems, Crohn’s disease / incontinent conditions and Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (M.E.) are not in themselves a qualification for a badge. People with these conditions may be eligible under this criterion if they are unable to walk or have very considerable difficulty in walking.

You are asked to describe the nature of your disability and give an estimate of the maximum distance that you can walk without assistance from another person or severe discomfort. It can be difficult to accurately work out the distance you can walk. There are several things that can help you:

- Ask someone to walk with you and pace the distance you walk.
- The average adult step is just under 1 metre. For example, if the person walking with you took 100 steps, you would have walked about 90 metres (or 100 yards).
- The average double-decker bus is about 11 metres (or 12 yards) long.
- A full-size football pitch is about 100 metres (or 110 yards) long.

If you still find it difficult to work out the distance you can walk in metres, please tell us:

- The number of steps you can take, and how long, in minutes, it would take you to walk this distance.
- About your walking speed.
- The way that you walk, for example, shuffling or small steps etc.

Your local authority may ask you to have a mobility assessment with a medical professional, such as a physiotherapist or occupational therapist, in order to determine whether you meet the eligibility criteria. You may have had a mobility assessment in the last 12 months which covered your walking ability and you can give details of this in the final box of Section 3.

## **Section 4 – Questions for ‘subject to further assessment’ applicants with disabilities in both arms**

Section 4 should be completed by applicants who have a severe disability in both arms. You will need to show that you drive a vehicle regularly, that you have a severe disability in both arms and that you are unable to operate, or have considerable difficulty operating, all or some types of on-street parking equipment. You will need to satisfy all three conditions above in order to obtain a badge. Local authorities may make arrangements to meet applicants applying under this criterion.

## **Section 5 – Questions for ‘subject to further assessment’ applicants under the age of three**

Section 5 should be completed on behalf of:

- children under three years of age who have a medical condition which means that they must always be accompanied by bulky medical equipment which cannot be carried around with the child without great difficulty; or
- children under three years of age who have a medical condition which means that they need to be kept near a vehicle at all times, either for treatment, or for transportation to a location where treatment can be performed.

A parent or guardian must apply on behalf of a child under the age of three.

The list of bulky medical equipment referred to above may include:

- ventilators;
- suction machines;
- feed pumps;
- parenteral equipment;
- syringe drivers;
- oxygen administration equipment;
- continuous oxygen saturation monitoring equipment; and
- casts and associated medical equipment for the correction of hip dysplasia.

A local authority may issue a badge if the equipment is always needed and cannot be carried without great difficulty.

Examples of highly unstable medical conditions that mean children who have them may need quick access to transport to hospital or home are:

- tracheostomies;
- severe epilepsy/fitting;
- highly unstable diabetes; and
- terminal illnesses that prevent children from spending any more than brief moments outside and who need a quick route home.

Please note that the above lists are not exhaustive, to allow for new advances in technology and treatment equipment.

## Section 6 – Organisational badges

Please complete this section if you are representing an organisation applying for an organisational badge. An organisational badge may be issued to organisations whose responsibility includes the care and transportation of disabled people who would themselves meet the eligibility criteria for a badge should they apply individually. An eligible disabled person is defined as a person who is over two years old and:

- receives the Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance; or
- receives 8 points or more under the 'Moving Around' activity of the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment; or
- is registered blind (severely sight impaired); or
- receives a War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement; or
- receives a lump sum benefit under the Armed Forces and Reserved Forces (Compensation) Scheme within tariff levels 1-8 (inclusive) and has been assessed and certified as having a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking; or
- drives a vehicle regularly, has a severe disability in both arms and is unable to operate, or has considerable difficulty in operating, all or some types of parking meter; or
- has a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking.

In addition, eligibility covers children under the age of three who fall within either or both of the following descriptions:

- a child who, on account of a condition, must always be accompanied by bulky medical equipment which cannot be carried around with the child without great difficulty;
- a child who, on account of a condition, must always be kept near a motor vehicle so that, if necessary, treatment for that condition can be given in the vehicle or the child can be taken quickly in the vehicle to a place where such treatment can be given.

Organisational badges will therefore only be issued to an organisation which both:

- cares for and transports disabled people who would meet one or more of the eligibility criteria for a individual Blue Badge; and
- has a clear need for an organisational badge rather than using the personal Blue Badges of people it is transporting.

In all circumstances, badges will be supplied to organisations or departments (e.g. Social Services Department) rather than to individual staff members.

All employees of the organisation who will be using the badge should be reminded that they must only use the badge for the purposes of transporting disabled people in their care who meet one or more of the eligibility criteria for a badge. These employees should be reminded that if they use the badge to take advantage of the concessions when there are no passengers in the vehicle who are eligible for a badge they will face a fine of up to £1,000.

It is unlikely that taxi or private hire operators and community transport operators would be eligible for an organisational Blue Badge as they are not usually concerned with the care of disabled people who would meet one or more of the eligibility criteria for a badge. Such operators are, of course, able to use an individual's Blue Badge when carrying that person as a passenger.

You will be asked to supply the company logo of your organisation if you are applying for an organisational badge. The criteria for these are largely the same as those for photo on individuals' badges.

- Images can be in colour or black + white (in accordance with the company logo).
- The permitted image format is .JPG or .GIF
- The maximum size of the image is 200kb.
- The dimensions of the logo/image **on the badge** will be 274 pixels (wide) x 354 pixels (high) @ 200dpi (depth of pixels per inch).

This equates to 1.37 inches (wide) by 1.77 inches (high) or 35mm (wide) by 45mm (high).

## **Section 7 – Declarations and signatures**

Section 7a): The relevant mandatory declarations must be completed by all applicants, since they underpin the terms of applying for a Blue Badge. Please take the time to read and understand these declarations, since not ticking those that are relevant to your applicant may result in your local authority being unable to accept your Blue Badge application.

Section 7b): You may wish to tick the optional declarations in order to speed up your application and improve the service you receive from your local authority. In doing so, you will be providing specific consent to your authority to allow them to share information about you with relevant departments and service providers within the authority.

Section 7c): All applicants must sign and date the form prior to submitting it.

A local authority may refuse to issue a badge if they have reason to believe that the applicant is not who they claim to be or that the badge would be used by someone other than the person to whom it has been issued.

If your badge application is successful, the leaflet "The Blue Badge scheme - rights and responsibilities in England" will be sent to you with the badge. This leaflet explains the rules of the Scheme and how you should use the badge properly. The leaflet can be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-blue-badge-scheme-rights-and-responsibilities-in-england>

# Appendix E: Cross-checking ‘core principles’

The independent review identified the following set of ‘core principles’ which may be of benefit to Blue Badge issuing authorities that have not yet implemented this practice:

- Appropriate declarations should be incorporated into the Blue Badge application form in order to enable each applicant to give their permission to the local authority to access existing records held in Adult Social Care and Council Tax departments.
- An identifier, such as the Blue Badge applicant’s National Insurance Number or name and address details, should be gathered on the Blue Badge application form and used by local authority administrative staff to look-up the applicant on the Adult Social Care / Concessionary Travel / Council Tax databases.
- Administrative staff members can then review notes from any previous assessments, and view the outcome of these assessments, to see whether the applicant is likely to qualify for a Blue Badge. Notes made in the Adult Social Care database by occupational therapists, physiotherapists and social workers may also contain useful information. For example, this might include whether the Blue Badge applicant has been in hospital and/or the types of care they have been receiving from the council or local health services.
- Where council assessments have been undertaken for support in the home, disabled person’s parking bays, stair-lifts and/or ramped access to the property, then council officers can check any notes kept on existing information systems to see how recently the individual was assessed by a healthcare professional and the outcome of any assessments conducted.
- Award or non-award of these benefits may be considered an indication of previous assessment outcomes. For example, an applicant whose home has been adapted by the council to include wheelchair ramps and a stair-lift is likely to be considered eligible for a Blue Badge under the ‘subject to further assessment’ walking criterion.
- Where it is not clear from the information on the system whether the applicant may be eligible for a Blue Badge then a member of administrative staff, or the independent healthcare professional the local authority uses to conduct mobility assessments, may wish to contact the occupational therapist/physiotherapist/social worker who conducted the most recent or relevant assessment with the Blue Badge applicant. Through a telephone call, it is often possible to ascertain the extent of the Blue Badge applicant’s impairment to determine whether they are eligible for a Blue Badge.

- Ultimately a Blue Badge may be awarded or refused based on the information available if the applicant is clearly eligible or clearly ineligible. If eligibility is unclear, then one of the other assessment practices described below (desk-based assessment and/or an independent mobility assessment) is typically used to determine their eligibility for a Blue Badge.

# Appendix F: Desk-based assessment 'core principles'

The following were identified through the independent review as the core principles for designing and implementing desk-based assessments of applicants under the 'subject to further assessment' walking criterion.

They are intended as a guide for local authorities wishing to adopt desk-based assessments and were developed by the research team drawing on significant input from expert advisers to the review and experienced practitioners from local authorities that have established desk-based assessments. Their use is not mandatory and it remains the responsibility of local authorities to determine their assessment procedures.

The independent review showed that whilst desk-based assessments have a role as a filtering mechanism to identify applicants who are clearly eligible or clearly ineligible for a badge, they cannot be successfully used as the sole means of determining all applicants' eligibility for a badge. It is good practice for local authorities to provide scope for an applicant to be referred for an independent mobility assessment if they are unable to make a clear and robust decision on eligibility using cross-checking or desk-assessment.

Core principles of Blue Badge desk-based assessments	
Topic	Core assessment principles
<b>Design of assessment approach</b>	<p>The design of the assessment tool is led by healthcare professionals such as physiotherapists or occupational therapists with an understanding of the Blue Badge eligibility criteria.</p> <p>The tools are based on the eligibility criteria set out in legislation which governs the Blue Badge scheme, and this guidance note.</p> <p>Administrative staff members conducting desk-based assessments receive training and mentoring from the healthcare professionals that designed the tool.</p>
<b>Evidence of eligibility from the application form</b>	<p>The desk-assessor's knowledge of relevant medical conditions, disabilities and trauma rehabilitation, as well as local health services people to turn to for evidence and support, is used to cross-check self-reported information with details of the medical condition they have been diagnosed with. Training and mentoring may be necessary.</p> <p>The desk-assessor checks that the permanent and substantial disability described by an applicant is consistent with their description of how it currently affects their mobility, by drawing on information provided in the application form.</p>

	<p>The assessor seeks detailed information about the applicant's disability gathered through questions on the application form. Self-reported descriptions of the way the applicant walks, types of walking trips they are normally able to make, whether they can walk around the supermarket or use public transport, and qualitative descriptions of how the applicant's disability affects their ability to walk, can all be used by the assessor as evidence of their eligibility under the walking criterion.</p> <p>The assessor considers the distance an applicant states they can normally walk from their home, and the amount of time this usually takes, using specific points of reference which can be checked on an online street mapping tool.</p> <p>The desk assessor considers whether the applicant uses a walking aid, and whether this was prescribed by a healthcare professional or purchased privately, based on responses to questions in the application form.</p>
<b>Decision-making</b>	<p>A quantitative scoring mechanism ensures that administrative staff members do not make subjective decisions that can only be reached by trained healthcare professionals such as occupational therapists and physiotherapists.</p> <p>A sample (e.g. 5%) of applicants whose eligibility for a Blue Badge has been determined through a desk-based assessment is initially sent for an independent mobility assessment with an experienced occupational therapist/physiotherapist who has knowledge of the Blue Badge eligibility criteria. This enables the local authority to validate its approach and ensure consistency of outcome with mobility assessment decisions.</p> <p>An applicant should be referred for a mobility assessment with an independent healthcare professional if it is not possible to clearly determine their eligibility for a Blue Badge following a desk-based assessment.</p> <p>Recourse to an IMA is available as a matter of routine when eligibility is unclear, and <b>not</b> only if the applicant 'appeals' to request the original decision made through a desk-based assessment is reviewed by the issuing local authority.</p>

# Appendix G: Independent mobility assessment ‘core principles’

The following were identified through the independent review as the core principles for designing and implementing independent mobility assessments of applicants under the ‘subject to further assessment’ walking criterion.

They are intended as a guide for local authorities and were developed by the research team drawing on significant input from expert advisers to the study and experienced practitioners from local authorities that had established independent mobility assessments. These core principles are not mandatory and it remains the responsibility of local authorities to determine their assessment procedures.

**Table 5-3: Core principles of Blue Badge mobility assessments**

Topic	Core assessment principles
<b>Design of mobility assessment approach</b>	<p>The mobility assessment procedure is designed and delivered by fully qualified healthcare professionals, such as physiotherapists and occupational therapists, with an understanding of the Blue Badge eligibility criteria.</p> <p>Assessments begin with the assessor checking the applicant's photograph ID, or comparing their appearance against photographs submitted with their application form, to ensure the person presenting for the assessment is the applicant in question.</p> <p>At the end of the assessment the applicant is given the opportunity to provide any additional information or evidence that they believe will support their application.</p>
<b>Applicant's manner of walking</b>	<p>The assessor observes the applicant's manner of walking and notes the degree of effect on their ability to walk. The impact of the applicant's speed, posture, rhythm/coordination, balance and stride on their walking ability can be recorded.</p> <p>If required, the applicant undergoes a range of functional movement tests as part of the assessment so the assessor can cross-check the applicant's walking ability with the range of movement they exhibit.</p> <p>The applicant describes journeys they normally undertake with details of where they travel from and to in the local area (including any walking), why they have applied for a Blue Badge and the impact it will have on their mobility.</p>
<b>Underlying medical conditions and impact on walking</b>	<p>Any medical conditions or disabilities which impact upon the applicant's ability to walk without severe discomfort are discussed.</p>

	<p>This enables the assessor to cross-check the information provided by the applicant in their Blue Badge application and also acts as a form of identity check, since it would be reasonable to expect an applicant (or their advocate/personal assistant) to recall details of medical professionals that have been treating their condition/disability, the frequency with which the applicant visits these healthcare professionals and when they last had an appointment and medication they have been prescribed which is relevant to their walking impairment.</p> <p>The assessor and applicant discuss the applicant's walking ability in order to gain an understanding of the nature of their walking impairment and determine whether it arises from a permanent and substantial disability.</p>														
Excessive pain	<p>Pain is subjective and some people have higher pain thresholds than others. An applicant's perception of pain can often be measured using a Visual Analogue Scale:</p> <div><div>012345678910</div><div>(e.g. 0 = no pain)(10 = worst pain imaginable / extreme pain)</div></div> <p>Consideration should be given to exploring whether the applicant experiences pain at rest, when walking and after walking.</p> <p>The applicant's self reported experience of pain can be accompanied by probing questions covering: pain clinic involvement and management strategies, the origin of pain (e.g. do they know the cause), where it hurts (location of pain), duration of pain (constant, occasional), description of pain (burning, aching, stabbing), the type of medication the applicant uses (analgesics etc) and whether they take them.</p> <p>The applicant's self-reported level of pain can be checked against visual signs of pain on an applicant's face and in their demeanour (sweating, pallor, shaking, grimacing).</p>														
Breathlessness	<p>Breathlessness can be measured using a range of tools, such as the Medical Research Council's Dyspnoea Scale:</p> <table><tr><td>Are you troubled by shortness of breath when hurrying on level ground or walking up a slight hill? Yes / No</td><td>If No</td><td>MRC Grade 1</td></tr><tr><td>If YES, do you get short of breath walking with other people of your own age on level ground? Yes / No</td><td>If No</td><td>MRC Grade 2</td></tr><tr><td>If YES do you have to stop for breath when walking at your own pace on level ground? Yes / No</td><td>If No</td><td>MRC Grade 3</td></tr><tr><td rowspan="2">If YES do you get too breathless to leave your home, or do you get breathless after dressing? Yes / No</td><td>If No</td><td>MRC Grade 4</td></tr><tr><td>If Yes</td><td>MRC Grade 5</td></tr></table> <p>The applicant's reported breathlessness should also be checked against visual signs of shortness of breath, and any difficulty maintaining conversation while walking or recovering from the effort of walking.</p> <p>An applicant rated at MRC Grade 3 or above may be considered eligible for a Blue Badge if an assessor's observations support the applicant's self-reported degree of breathlessness. An applicant rated at MRC Grade 1 or 2 may still qualify for a Blue Badge under the other aspects of the walking criterion.</p>	Are you troubled by shortness of breath when hurrying on level ground or walking up a slight hill? Yes / No	If No	MRC Grade 1	If YES, do you get short of breath walking with other people of your own age on level ground? Yes / No	If No	MRC Grade 2	If YES do you have to stop for breath when walking at your own pace on level ground? Yes / No	If No	MRC Grade 3	If YES do you get too breathless to leave your home, or do you get breathless after dressing? Yes / No	If No	MRC Grade 4	If Yes	MRC Grade 5
Are you troubled by shortness of breath when hurrying on level ground or walking up a slight hill? Yes / No	If No	MRC Grade 1													
If YES, do you get short of breath walking with other people of your own age on level ground? Yes / No	If No	MRC Grade 2													
If YES do you have to stop for breath when walking at your own pace on level ground? Yes / No	If No	MRC Grade 3													
If YES do you get too breathless to leave your home, or do you get breathless after dressing? Yes / No	If No	MRC Grade 4													
	If Yes	MRC Grade 5													
Walking speed and distance	<p>The applicant is observed and timed walking over a pre-measured distance as part of the assessment. For example, assessors can observe the applicant mobilising to the interview/assessment room from a reception area and measure the time it takes them to cover this pre-measured distance for a quantitative measure of their walking pace.</p>														

	<p>If an applicant requires regular stops in order to manage severe discomfort (pain and/or breathlessness) and/or fatigue then the assessor can consider issues such as the duration of pauses, and the frequency with which they occur, when determining whether the applicant finds walking very difficult.</p> <p>It may be helpful to consider the total distance and time that an applicant can walk for without severe discomfort and balance this against the amount of time they spend pausing or resting</p> <p>If an applicant is unable to walk 30 metres (33 yards) in total, then their walking ability is not appreciable and they can be deemed as having very considerable difficulty in walking.</p> <p>The applicant may be deemed eligible if they can walk 30-80 metres (33-87.5 yards) without pain or breathlessness, but demonstrate very considerable difficulty in walking through a combination of other factors (e.g. extremely slow pace and/or their manner of walking).</p> <p>Applicants who can walk more than 80 metres (87.5 yards) and do not demonstrate very considerable difficulty in walking through any other factors would not be deemed as eligible.</p>
<b>Use of walking aids</b>	<p>The fact that a walking aid is or is not used may be relevant to the eventual decision, but this alone should not determine whether or not a Blue Badge is issued.</p> <p>For example, if a person can walk relatively normally with the use of an artificial leg or walking stick, then they should not be considered as eligible to receive a Blue Badge.</p> <p>It may be pertinent to consider whether an applicant is using any walking aids in a correct manner when determining whether they have very considerable difficulty in walking.</p> <p>It may also be pertinent to consider whether an applicant who is not using any form of walking aid at the time of their application could improve their walking ability, to the extent that they would no longer demonstrate very considerable difficulty in walking, through the correct use of such an aid.</p>
<b>Decision-making</b>	<p>The assessor cross-references all of the information provided by the applicant during the assessment with the assessor's observations on the day and other information derived from the application form and relevant local authority information systems prior to reaching their decision about whether the applicant is unable to walk or demonstrates very considerable difficulty in walking.</p> <p>The assessor considers each aspect of walking (pain, breathlessness, speed, distance, use of walking aids and manner of walking) first in isolation, and then in combination, to reach a decision as to whether they combine to mean the applicant experiences very considerable difficulty in walking.</p>

# Appendix H: Core principles of Blue Badge renewals

The independent review identified the following set of ‘core principles’ on the Blue Badge renewal process. They are intended as a guide for local authorities and were developed by the independent review research team drawing on significant input from experienced practitioners. Their use is not mandatory and it remains the responsibility of local authorities to determine their renewal process.

Core principles of renewals	
Eligibility pathway	Core principles of the renewal process
<b>Common to all renewal applicants</b>	<p>Send all badge holders a renewal reminder three months in advance of the expiry date of their Blue Badge.</p> <p>Verify the applicant's address and contact details, and personal information are correct, updating the Council's records as necessary.</p> <p>Update the vehicle registrations held on record by the local authority to aid the continuing enforcement of the Blue Badge Scheme.</p> <p>Secure the return of the expired Blue Badge so that it can be destroyed, retaining a note of this Badge's serial number on the applicant's Blue Badge record.</p>
<b>Without further assessment individual applicants</b>	<p>Verify that the applicant continues to demonstrate eligibility under the 'without further assessment' criterion.</p> <p>This can be achieved by checking local authority records, such as the Blind Register for those registered blind or requesting a copy of their CVI form. For proof of their entitlement for HRMCDLA requesting original copy of their award letter (less than 12 months old) or their annual updating letter from the Disability Benefits Centre. For proof of entitlement to PIP, requesting the original decision letter. If in any doubt contact the PIP Enquiry Service on 08458503322. For those awarded WPMS/AFCS requesting an original copy of their award letter from SPVA.</p> <p><b>Wherever possible ensure the renewal process is as quick and efficient as possible for the applicant.</b></p> <p>Consider applicants that no longer qualify under this criterion against the 'subject to further assessment' criterion.</p>
<b>Subject to further assessment individual applicants</b>	<p>Verify that the applicant continues to demonstrate eligibility under the 'subject to further assessment' criterion.</p> <p>This can be achieved by checking local authority records to see how the applicant was assessed previously, and to whether the assessor recommended that they need to be re-assessed upon renewal.</p>

	Re-assess applicants with conditions that may have improved since they last applied for a Blue Badge using the same procedure as for new Blue Badge applicants under the 'subject to further assessment' criterion.
<b>Organisational badges</b>	Follow the same procedure as for new organisational applications.

# Appendix I: Eligibility Checker

<p><b>Part 1 – all applicants</b></p> <p>Who are you checking eligibility for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For you?</li> <li>• For someone else? <i>If you are completing this on behalf of someone else, please choose the statements that apply to <u>the applicant</u></i></li> <li>• For your organisation?</li> </ul>	<p><i>go to Part 2</i></p> <p><i>go to Part 2</i></p> <p><i>go to Part 3</i></p>
<p><b>Part 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am resident in England</li> <li>• I am not resident in England</li> </ul>	<p><i>go to Part 4</i></p> <p><i>go to Part 11</i></p>
<p><b>Part 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I represent an organisation <u>concerned with the care of</u> disabled people resident in England</li> <li>• I represent an organisation concerned with the care of disabled people resident outside of England</li> </ul>	<p><i>go to Part 6</i></p> <p><i>go to Part 14</i></p>
<p><b>Part 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am over the age of two and registered as blind (severely sight impaired); or</li> <li>• I am over the age of two, have a Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI) or a BD8 form, signed by a Consultant Ophthalmologist, and wish to be registered as blind; or</li> <li>• I receive the Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance; or</li> <li>• I meet a 'Moving Around' descriptor for the Mobility Component of Personal Independence Payment that indicates that I cannot stand, or can stand but walk no more than 50 meters; or</li> <li>• I receive a War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement; or</li> <li>• I receive a tariff within 1-8 (inclusive) of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme <u>and</u> have been assessed as having a</li> </ul>	<p><i>go to part 8</i></p>

<p>permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None of the above apply</li> </ul>	<p><i>go to Part 5</i></p>
<p><b>Part 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am over the age of two and have a <u>permanent</u> and substantial disability which means that I am <u>unable to walk</u>; or</li> <li>• I am over the age of two and have a <u>permanent</u> and substantial disability which means that I have <u>very considerable difficulty in walking</u>;</li> <li>• I am over the age of two, drive a vehicle regularly, and have a severe disability in <u>both</u> arms that means I am <u>unable</u> to operate all or some types of parking meter; or</li> <li>• I am over the age of two, drive a vehicle regularly, and have a severe disability in <u>both</u> arms that means I have <u>considerable difficulty</u> operating all or some types of parking meter; or</li> <li>• I am under the age of three and have a medical condition that means I must always be accompanied by bulky medical equipment; or</li> <li>• I am under the age of three and have a medical condition that means I must always be kept near a vehicle in case I need emergency medical treatment.</li> <li>• None of the above apply</li> </ul>	<p><i>go to Part 9</i></p> <p><i>go to Part 10</i></p> <p><i>go to Part 12</i></p>
<p><b>Part 6</b></p> <p>I represent an organisation that is <u>concerned with the care of, and provides transportation for</u>, disabled people who are over the age of two and are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• registered as blind (severely sight impaired); and/or</li> <li>• receive the Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance; and/or</li> <li>• receive a War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement; and/or</li> <li>• in receipt of a tariff within 1-8 (inclusive) of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme <u>and</u> have been certified as having a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking.</li> <li>• None of the above apply</li> </ul>	<p><i>go to Part 13</i></p> <p><i>go to Part 7</i></p>
<p><b>Part 7</b></p>	

<p>I represent an organisation that is <u>concerned with the care of, and provides transportation for</u>, disabled people who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• over the age of two and have a <u>permanent</u> and substantial disability which means they are unable to walk; and/or</li> <li>• over the age of two and have a <u>permanent</u> and substantial disability which means they have very considerable difficulty in walking; and/or</li> <li>• over the age of two, drive a vehicle regularly, and have a severe disability in <u>both</u> arms that means they are <u>unable</u> to operate all or some types of parking meter; and/or</li> <li>• over the age of two, drive a vehicle regularly, and have a severe disability in <u>both</u> arms that means they have <u>considerable difficulty</u> operating all or some types of parking meter; and/or</li> <li>• under the age of three and have a medical condition that means they must always be accompanied by bulky medical equipment; and/or</li> <li>• under the age of three and have a medical condition that means they must always be kept near a vehicle in case they need emergency medical treatment.</li> <li>• None of the above apply</li> </ul>	<p><i>go to Part 13</i></p> <p><i>go to Part 15</i></p>
<p><b>Part 8</b> You are likely to be eligible to receive a Blue Badge without further assessment if you can provide evidence of the entitlement described in the application form and can provide proof of your identity and residency.</p>	
<p><b>Part 9</b> You may be eligible for a Blue Badge, but your eligibility will need to be assessed by your local authority. This may mean that they ask you to attend a mobility assessment.</p>	
<p><b>Part 10</b> You may be eligible for a Blue Badge, but your eligibility will need to be assessed by your local authority. This may mean that they seek further information from healthcare professionals who know you.</p>	
<p><b>Part 11</b> You are not eligible to receive a Blue Badge because you are not resident in England.</p>	
<p><b>Part 12</b> You are unlikely to be eligible to receive a Blue Badge because the information you have provided indicates that you are unlikely to meet the qualifying criteria. Your local authority may be able to provide information about other services and support that you may be able to access to help with your mobility.</p>	
<p><b>Part 13</b> Your organisation may be eligible to receive a Blue Badge. Your local authority may require further evidence that the disabled people in your care are themselves eligible for a badge and may arrange to visit your organisation.</p>	

<p><b>Part 14</b></p> <p>Your organisation is not eligible to receive a Blue Badge because the disabled people you care for are not residents in England.</p>
<p><b>Part 15</b></p> <p>Your organisation is unlikely to be eligible to receive a Blue Badge because the information you have provided indicates that you are unlikely to meet the qualifying criteria.</p>

# Appendix J: Quick Wins

The independent review identified the following Quick Wins. They are intended as a guide for local authorities. They are not mandatory and it remains the responsibility of local authorities to determine and implement administrative, assessment and enforcement procedures which they believe are in accordance with the governing legislation.

<b>Blue Badge Scheme publicity and information:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signposting the Blue Badge scheme from other relevant local authority services.</li> <li>• Developing clearly presented written information about the Blue Badge scheme in easy to understand language, and with due consideration of the needs of different community groups and those with specialised information needs.</li> <li>• Establishing accurate, clearly presented and thoughtfully designed Blue Badge web-pages.</li> <li>• Providing disability and equality awareness training for all members of staff who regularly deal with applicants and Blue Badge holders.</li> </ul>
<b>Blue Badge application process:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using a simple eligibility checker to help potential applicants understand whether they are likely to be eligible for a badge.</li> <li>• Including questions that ask for detailed information about the applicant's disability and mobility difficulties in the application form, to allow informed eligibility decisions to be made.</li> <li>• Produce more detailed notes for the applicant to read if they are seeking further information about the eligibility criteria or Blue Badge scheme.</li> <li>• Making the Blue Badge application form available as a downloadable file.</li> <li>• Requiring applicants' proof of their entitlement to the Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of DLA to be dated within the last 12 months and including contact information for the Pension, Disability &amp; Carers Service in the Blue Badge application form guidance notes.</li> <li>• Including declarations in application forms in order to unlock access to relevant existing records held by the council in relation to Blue Badge applicants.</li> <li>• Including declarations in the application form to counter misuse and abuse of badges.</li> <li>• Providing support to applicants who need help in completing the Blue Badge application form.</li> <li>• Ensuring that applicants understand that they must complete all relevant parts of the application form in order for their application to be processed.</li> <li>• Including reminder checklists at the end of the Blue Badge application form.</li> </ul>

<b>Organisational Blue Badge practices:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing a separate organisational Blue Badge application form based on the organisational badge questions in the model form.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing defined local criteria for the award/refusal of organisational Blue Badges based on due consideration of the regulations and DfT scheme guidance, and local understanding of the organisations that have a genuine need for a Blue Badge.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request applicant organisations submit a declaration with their application form, on their letterhead, stating that they are an organisation concerned with the care of disabled people, who would themselves qualify for a badge, and that they will only be using the badge when transporting those people.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducting site visits to the premises of organisational Blue Badge applicants in order to verify claims they have made in their application forms.</li> </ul>
<b>Eligibility assessment process under the 'eligible subject to further assessment' walking criterion:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing the ability to cross-check existing council records to seek evidence of applicants' eligibility for a Blue Badge under the 'subject to further assessment' criteria</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopting a desk-based assessment tool that has been designed with input from appropriately qualified healthcare professionals with experience of conducting Blue Badge mobility assessments, and which is used to filter those applicants that self-evidently do / do not meet the eligibility criteria and who do not need to be seen in person for a mobility assessment.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joining-up Blue Badge eligibility assessments with those for other relevant concessions such as Concessionary Travel passes, Taxi Cards, home adaptations and social care</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allowing the healthcare professionals who conduct in-person mobility assessments to advise on whether or not a successful applicant needs to be re-assessed when they apply to renew the badge.</li> </ul>
<b>Administering the scheme after assessment:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issuing detailed refusal letters which explain why an individual's Blue Badge application was refused, with specific reference to the relevant Blue Badge eligibility criterion.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicating in writing that an applicant can appeal a refusal, and offering unsuccessful applicants up to 28 days to express their intention to appeal a local authority's decision.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distinguishing between a 'review' of the local authority's decision and a 'complaint' about the local authority's practices when handling appeals.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that all successful applicants are properly informed about how they can and cannot use the badge and when and how it should be returned to the issuing authority.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtaining a declaration from successful applicants that the Blue Badge has been received and that it will only be used by the badge holder in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the booklet 'The Blue Badge Scheme: Rights and Responsibilities'.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issuing new, renewal and replacement Blue Badges in-person to an applicant wherever possible.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Including reminders in death registry packs to encourage the return of Blue Badges.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recording the detail of deceased badge holders using updates from council registrars.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requiring a crime reference number from applicants reporting a badge as stolen. If a lost property reference number is available then this should be provided, however this reference number is not mandatory.</li> </ul>
<b>Enforcing the scheme:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable the public to report suspected misuse, and to follow up on such reports by taking appropriate action to deter misuse.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide on-street enforcement teams with data on locally issued badges, e.g. badge reported as lost or stolen, so that these badges can be easily recognised if used.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with other local authorities to share enforcement intelligence, including on badge status and abuse, to facilitate improved enforcement.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage on-street enforcement officers to check the authenticity of suspicious badges by accessing BBIS from handheld devices or by contacting back office staff.</li> </ul>