London Borough of Lewisham

Blue Badge Scheme Procedure

October 2026

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1. Introduction

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

1.2 The aim of the scheme is to help people with severe mobility problems caused by visible and non-visible ("hidden") disabilities to access goods and services, by allowing them to park close to their destination. The scheme is open to eligible people irrespective of whether they are travelling as a driver or as a passenger.

1.3 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. The concessions given to Blue Badge holders in England are summarised below.

1.4 The parking concessions available to Blue Badge holders are governed by the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Exemptions for Disabled Persons) (England) Regulations 2000. The effect of the Regulations is to require local authorities to include in Traffic Management Orders certain exemptions in favour of vehicles displaying a Blue Badge. These include:

- 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; and
- 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.

1.5 The legal framework for the scheme is set out in the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended). 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.

1.6 The Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) Regulations 2000 were most recently amended with effect from 30 August 2019. This Procedure reflects those amendments and takes account of the Department for Transport's Blue Badge Scheme Local Authority Guidance (England), updated on 3 June 2025. It will be reviewed and revised as necessary to reflect future changes to the legislation or guidance.

1.7 The Council is responsible for the day-to-day administration and enforcement of the scheme, including determining and implementing administrative, assessment and enforcement procedures within the legislative framework. This Procedure sets out the general rules the Council will use when administering the scheme.

2. Who is eligible?

2.1 Before issuing a Blue Badge, the Council is required to be satisfied that an individual or organisation meets the eligibility criteria set out in legislation.

A. Individual applicants

2.2 An individual may qualify as "eligible without further assessment" (previously known as "automatic" eligibility) or as "eligible subject to further assessment" (previously known as "discretionary" eligibility).

Type 1: eligible without further assessment

2.3 A person who is more than two years old will qualify as eligible without further assessment if they:

- Receive the Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance (HRMCDLA); or
- Receive the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and have obtained 8 points or more under the "moving around" activity; or
- Receive the mobility component of PIP and have obtained 10 points specifically for Descriptor E under the "planning and following journeys"

activity, on the grounds that they are unable to undertake any journey because it would cause them overwhelming psychological distress; or

- Are registered as severely sight impaired (registered blind); or
- Receive War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement (WPMS); or
- Have 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.

DETAILED NOTES:

1. Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP) awards are not included in the Type 1 eligibility criteria.
2. For applicants in receipt of PIP, the Council will not base a decision to award a Blue Badge on a combined score from both the "planning and following journeys" and "moving around" Mobility Activity. If an applicant does not meet the required score for either Mobility Activity, then they fail to meet either of the above Type 1 eligible without further assessment PIP criteria but may be considered instead under the Type 2 subject to further assessment criteria (see below).
3. While cumulative points under the "moving around" mobility activity can count towards qualification under this criterion, this does not apply to the "planning and following journeys" mobility activity. Under the "planning and following journeys" mobility activity only a score of 10 points for Descriptor E ("cannot undertake any journey because it would cause overwhelming psychological distress to the claimant") counts as meeting eligibility. Applicants in receipt of 10 points for Descriptor D, or 12 points for Descriptor F under the "planning and following journeys" mobility activity do not qualify under this criterion. Such applicants should be considered under the Type 2 subject to further assessment criteria (see below).

Proof of entitlement

2.4 The Council will use the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Searchlight system to verify an applicant's current entitlement to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Applicants are therefore not normally required to provide their DLA or PIP award letter when applying. If entitlement cannot be confirmed through Searchlight, the Council may ask the applicant to provide current documentary evidence of their qualifying award.

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

2.5 An applicant receiving HRMCDLA will have an award notice or annual uprating letter from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) confirming their entitlement. Older award letters, including those describing an award as “indefinite” or “for life”, may not confirm current entitlement because awards remain subject to review. If the applicant does not have a current letter, they should contact DWP to request one using the appropriate details below:

If the applicant was born after 8 April 1948

- Telephone: 0800 121 4600
- Relay UK: 18001 then 0800 121 4600
- Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

If the applicant was born on or before 8 April 1948

- Telephone: 0800 731 0122
- Relay UK: 18001 then 0800 731 0122
- Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

2.6 If the applicant has already made a claim for Personal Independence Payment, they should contact the PIP enquiry line using the details in the relevant PIP section below.

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

2.7 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, their entitlement must include one of the following descriptors:

- 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 stand, aided or unaided, or move more than 1 metre. (12 points).

2.8 PIP awards may be for a fixed period or “ongoing” and remain subject to review. Older decision letters may therefore not provide reliable evidence of current entitlement. Where entitlement cannot be confirmed through the DWP checking system, the Council may ask the applicant to provide their most recent PIP decision letter or other current evidence issued by DWP.

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

- Telephone: 0800 121 4433
- Relay UK: 18001 then 0800 121 4433
- Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

2.10 If the applicant submits a document as proof of eligibility that does not specify the descriptor through which they are in receipt of PIP, the Council will not issue a Blue Badge based on this document.

Proof of receipt of a score of 10 points under Activity 11, Descriptor E of the “planning and following a journey” activity of the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment.

2.11 Under the “planning and following journeys” activity, the decision letter will describe the barriers the applicant may face that are associated with their mental, cognitive or sensory ability when making a journey. For the applicant to be eligible for a Blue Badge without further assessment, their entitlement must include the following descriptor; no other descriptor under this activity will qualify:

“Cannot undertake any journey because it would cause overwhelming psychological distress to the claimant” (10 points).

2.12 PIP awards may be for a fixed period or “ongoing” and remain subject to review. Older decision letters may therefore not provide reliable evidence of current entitlement. Where entitlement cannot be confirmed through the DWP checking system, the Council may ask the applicant to provide their most recent PIP decision letter or other current evidence issued by DWP.

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

- Telephone: 0800 121 4433
- Relay UK: 18001 then 0800 121 4433
- Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

2.14 If the applicant submits a document as proof of eligibility that does not specify the descriptor through which they are in receipt of PIP, the Council will not issue a Blue Badge based on this document.

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

2.15 An applicant who is severely sight impaired (formerly known as “registered blind”) will often be registered with the Council’s Social Services Department.

2.16 The formal notification used to certify a person as severely sight impaired is a Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI), completed by a consultant ophthalmologist. Applicants may be asked to provide a copy of their CVI where the Council cannot otherwise confirm their registration. Further information about the CVI and registering a vision impairment is available on GOV.UK at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-published-on-registering-a-vision-impairment-as-a-disability

Proof of receipt of War Pensioners’ Mobility Supplement (WPMS)

2.17 An applicant receiving War Pensioners’ Mobility Supplement (WPMS) should provide evidence of their current award from Veterans UK. Veterans UK can be contacted using the following details:

- Email: veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk
- Freephone (UK only): 0808 1914 218
- Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm

Proof of a lump sum benefit within tariff levels 1 to 8 of the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation) Scheme and certification of a permanent and substantial disability affecting walking

2.18 An applicant with the above award and certification will have an award letter from Veterans UK 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 whilst walking."

Type 2: eligible subject to further assessment

2.19 A person who is more than two years old will qualify as eligible if they:

- Drive a vehicle regularly, have a severe disability in both arms and are unable to operate, or have considerable difficulty in operating, all, or some types of parking meter; or
- Have an enduring and substantial disability which causes them, during the course of a journey, to:
    - Be unable to walk;
    - Experience very considerable difficulty whilst walking, which may include very considerable psychological distress; or
    - Be at risk of serious harm when walking; or pose, when walking, a risk of serious harm to any other person.

2.20 If the Council considers it self-evident from the information and evidence provided by the applicant that they fall within one of the above descriptions of difficulty whilst walking, it may award a Blue Badge without an expert assessment. If eligibility is not self-evident from the information and evidence provided by the applicant, the Council will refer the application to an independent expert assessor to determine whether the applicant meets the relevant eligibility criteria.

2.21 An expert assessor is someone who:

- Has an appropriate professional qualification, together with the knowledge and experience needed to assess whether an applicant meets the relevant eligibility criteria;
- Is not employed or engaged as a General Practitioner (GP) to provide medical services to the applicant; and

- Is not, in the Council's opinion, precluded by reason of their relationship with the applicant from providing an impartial assessment of whether or not the applicant meets the prescribed criteria.

2.22 Expert assessors may include, for example, Clinical Psychologists, Neurologists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and Psychiatrists.

2.23 Any of the above types of difficulty whilst walking could potentially be caused by a physical disability, or by a mental, or non-visible ("hidden") disability. In either case, the Council will need to be satisfied that the disability experienced by the applicant will endure for at least the next three years.

2.24 "Unable to walk", "very considerable difficulty whilst walking" and "serious harm" during the course of a journey are high thresholds that will be applied to all applicants equally, whether their disability is physical/visible or mental/non-visible ("hidden"). Before issuing a Blue Badge, the Council (or an expert assessor) will need to be satisfied that the applicant will suffer such a level of difficulty or risk of serious harm "more often than not" whilst walking in the course of a journey.

2.25 In addition, a child under the age of three will be eligible for a Blue Badge if, on account of a condition, they:

- must always be accompanied by bulky medical equipment which cannot be carried around with the child without great difficulty; or
- 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.

Type 2 assessments: general considerations

2.26 The following are general considerations that will be taken into account when determining eligibility subject to further assessment:

- An applicant's ability to carry parcels and luggage, or to follow a journey independently, will not be considered;
- A Blue Badge will not be refused solely on the basis that a future medical intervention could improve the applicant's mobility. If, at the time of assessment, the applicant is considered to have a substantial disability that

will last for at least the next three years (i.e. is enduring) which causes them, during the course of a journey, to suffer one of the prescribed effects, then they will be issued with a badge and reminded of their duty to return it if their mobility improves;

- Eligibility for the Blue Badge scheme is not determined solely by the presence or absence of a particular diagnosis or condition. An applicant may be eligible if they have an enduring and substantial disability which causes them, during the course of a journey, to be unable to walk, experience very considerable difficulty whilst walking, which may include very considerable psychological distress, be at risk of serious harm when walking, or pose a risk of serious harm to another person when walking.
- On a case-by-case basis, the Council will consider the extent to which a Blue Badge will assist the applicant with the nature of difficulty they experience whilst walking. The primary benefit conferred on a Blue Badge holder is the ability to park close to a destination. If this will not assist the applicant with the difficulties they experience, then the Council will not issue a Blue Badge.

Assessing people with severe difficulty in both arms

2.27 This 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.

2.28 When making an assessment under this criterion, the Council will 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 or machines for issuing pay-and-display tickets.

2.29 This criterion 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.

2.30 Most drivers with disabilities in both arms drive an adapted vehicle and should be able to provide vehicle registration or 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). 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.

2.31 A Blue Badge will not be issued under this criterion to a person who travels solely as a passenger or to a person who only has difficulty carrying parcels, shopping, or other heavy objects such as luggage.

Assessing people who are unable to walk

2.32 To qualify under this criterion, an applicant must have an enduring (lasting for at least the next three years) and substantial disability that means they are unable to walk during the course of a journey:

- The applicant needs to show that, because of their enduring and substantial disability, they cannot walk during the course of a journey;
- Being unable to walk means that they cannot take a single step;
- Walking involves always having one foot on the ground.

2.33 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 an enduring and substantial disability and not due to a temporary impairment, such as their legs being in plaster).

Assessing people who experience very considerable difficulty whilst walking, which may include very considerable psychological distress

2.34 To qualify under this criterion, an applicant must have an enduring (lasting for at least the next three years) and substantial disability that means they have very considerable difficulty whilst walking during the course of a journey. This may include very considerable psychological distress.

2.35 The applicant will need to show that, as a result of their enduring and substantial disability, they are unable to walk very far without experiencing severe difficulty, so that their inability 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.

2.36 The assessment will consider the applicant's outdoor walking ability:

- The assessment will consider the applicant'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 will be considered in the course of a mobility assessment.
- It is not necessary for the assessment to be completed outdoors. However, the assessment will enable the healthcare professional conducting the mobility assessment to determine how the applicant would cope with walking outdoors based on their indoor walking ability.

2.37 In the context of walking disabilities that are predominantly physical in nature, very considerable difficulty whilst walking is likely to manifest through one or more of the following:

- The level of pain experienced by an individual when they are walking, or as a consequence of walking;
- The degree of breathlessness they incur when, or as a result of, walking;
- The distance over which an individual is able to walk;
- The speed at which an individual is able to walk;
- The length of time that an individual is able to walk for;
- The manner in which they walk; and
- Their use of walking aids.

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

2.38 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 enduring 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 whilst walking, or as a consequence of the effort of walking.

2.39 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.

2.40 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.

2.41 If an applicant is unable to walk 30 metres (33 yards) in total, then their walking ability is not appreciable, and they can be assessed as having very considerable difficulty in walking. The applicant may be considered 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 will not be assessed as eligible.

2.42 The speed at which they are able to walk. As a guide, a typical adult 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

2.43 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 walking through any other factors.

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

2.44 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.

2.45 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.

2.46 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.

Whether the applicant has very considerable psychological distress whilst walking during the course of a journey.

2.47 An applicant may also meet this criterion if they show that they experience very considerable psychological distress whilst walking as part of a journey. Where this may apply, applicants will be asked to provide the following information, for assessment by the Council (or an expert assessor):

- Identify the names and contact details of any health or social care practitioners involved in their diagnosis and ongoing treatment;
- Provide supporting evidence from any health or social care practitioners involved in their diagnosis and ongoing treatment;

- Provide any other supporting evidence, for example: diagnosis letters, care plans, patient summaries, education health and care (EHC) plans or disability benefits;
- Explain in their own words how their disability affects them whilst walking;
- Respond to questions about how their disability affects them whilst walking;
- Identify any coping strategies they use, and how effectively these work in practice;
- Document any treatment or medication they receive to help them manage their condition;
- Explain how they experience very severe or overwhelming anxiety (e.g. through hypervigilance);
- Explain how they experience an overwhelming sense of fear of public/open/busy spaces;
- Explain why they avoid some/all types of journeys due to the kinds of experiences listed above.

Assessing people who are at risk of serious harm when walking, or who pose a risk of serious harm to another person when walking

2.48 To qualify under this criterion, an applicant must have an enduring (which will last for at least the next three years) and substantial disability that means they are, during the course of a journey, at risk of serious harm when walking or pose, when walking, a risk of serious harm to another person. Where this may apply, applicants will be asked to provide the following information for assessment by the Council (or an expert assessor):

- Identify the names and contact details of any health or social care practitioners involved in their diagnosis and ongoing treatment;
- Provide supporting evidence from any health or social care practitioners involved in their diagnosis and ongoing treatment;
- Provide any other supporting evidence, for example: diagnosis letters, care plans, patient summaries, education health and care (EHC) plans or disability benefits.

2.49 If 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, then they will qualify under this criterion:

- The applicant needs to show that they should not walk very far because of the danger to their health;
- This may apply to 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.

2.50 In the context of disabilities that are predominantly mental, or non-visible ("hidden") in nature, a risk of serious harm to self/others is likely to manifest as one or more of the following behaviours:

- Becoming physically aggressive towards others, possibly without intent or awareness of the impact their actions may have;
- Refusing to walk altogether, dropping to the floor, or becoming a dead-weight;
- Wandering off or running away, possibly without awareness of surroundings or their associated risks (e.g. nearby roads, car park environments);
- Disobeying, ignoring and/or being unaware of clear instructions;
- Experiencing very severe or overwhelming anxiety (e.g. through hypervigilance);
- Experiencing an overwhelming sense of fear of public/open/busy spaces;
- Experiencing serious harm or causing harm to others;
- Avoiding some/all types of journeys due to the kinds of experiences listed above.

2.51 The above list is not exhaustive. The Council (or an expert assessor) must be satisfied that there is a risk of serious harm to self/others when walking, during the course of a journey, and this is caused by an enduring and substantial disability, by evidence such as an EHC plan which clearly states the behavioural difficulties, risk of harm and mitigation strategies in place. Some of the behaviours listed above may be exhibited by children who do not have any enduring or substantial disability. The extent of any such behaviours and/or difficulties experienced by an applicant in relation to common developmental milestones will be considered.

2.52 The Council (or an expert assessor) will also need to be satisfied that such difficulties cannot be managed effectively through reasonable coping strategies. For example, where an applicant would only ever be accompanied by another person and that negates their “very considerable” difficulty, a Blue Badge would not help the applicant. Journey avoidance will not be considered an appropriate coping strategy.

Assessing children under the age of three

2.53 Children under the age of three are eligible for a Blue 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.

2.54 The medical equipment that is likely to come within the first criterion above includes ventilators, suction machines, feed pumps, parenteral equipment (equipment used to give nutrition, fluids or medication directly into the body without using the digestive system), syringe drivers, oxygen administration equipment and casts and associated medical equipment used to correct hip dysplasia. This is not an exhaustive list.

2.55 Examples of children with highly unstable medical conditions who need quick access to transport to hospital or home, or who may also need to stop in the vehicle to perform an urgent medical procedure include:

- 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.

2.56 This is not an exhaustive list.

B. Organisations

2.57 An organisational Blue 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 Blue Badge.

2.58 To be eligible, an organisation must be concerned with the care of disabled people who would themselves be eligible for a Blue Badge.

2.59 For the purpose of assessing organisational Blue Badge applications, the Council will consider “care” to mean ongoing responsibility for meeting the health, welfare, personal care, maintenance or protection needs of disabled people. This may include physical assistance with eating or drinking, toileting, washing, dressing, oral care or personal hygiene, or direct prompting and supervision where a person cannot carry out these activities without support. Providing transport, companionship, general encouragement or assistance with shopping or appointments will not, on its own, be considered sufficient care.

2.60 The Council will check whether the organisation in question:

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

2.61 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.

2.62 Taxi or private hire operators and community transport operators will not normally be eligible for an organisational Blue Badge as they are not usually concerned with the care of disabled people. Such operators are, of course, still able to use an individual’s Blue Badge when carrying that person as a passenger.

Assessing organisational Blue Badge applications

2.63 Applications for badges from organisations caring for disabled people will be examined to ensure that they are genuine and necessary. The Council will make this judgement, based on its local knowledge of the organisation concerned and the

information provided.

2.64 Organisations must apply using the Department for Transport's online application form and complete the declarations for organisational applicants. This includes confirming that the organisation is concerned with the care of disabled people who would meet one or more of the Blue Badge eligibility criteria and that the badge will be used only when transporting those people.

2.65 In order to assist the Council to determine their eligibility, applicant organisations should provide information about:

- The number of qualifying disabled people being cared for;
- 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 Blue Badge is likely to be used and for what purpose.

2.66 Personal vehicles belonging to employees or volunteers will not be accepted as vehicles used by the organisation to transport the people in its care. Vehicles must be operated by or on behalf of the organisation, have appropriate business-use insurance and be suitable for the needs of the disabled residents, patients or service users being transported.

2.67 Where relatively few people meet the eligibility criteria for a badge in the organisation, the Council's general approach is that it would be preferable for the disabled people themselves to apply for Blue Badges, rather than have one issued to an organisation. This then allows the holder to use the Blue Badge issued to them in any vehicle in which they are travelling, as either a driver or passenger.

2.68 Organisational Blue Badges will be issued to the organisation and not to individual employees. All employees of the organisation who will be using the badge are 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 Blue Badge, and that if they use the Blue Badge to take advantage of the concessions when there are no passengers in the vehicle who are themselves eligible for a Blue Badge, they could face a fine of up to £1,000.

3. How to apply

Applying for a Blue Badge

3.1 Applicants can use the GOV.UK Blue Badge online service to check whether they may be eligible and to apply for a Blue Badge.

3.2 A decision on eligibility can only be made after the Council has received and assessed a completed application and any required supporting evidence.

3.3 Applicants who are unable to complete the online application independently are encouraged to ask a family member, friend, carer, support worker or other trusted person to help them. If they do not have anyone who can assist, they should contact the Council using the details in section 8 so that their support needs can be discussed.

Medical information

3.4 Applicants should answer all the questions on the application as fully as they can and in particular should provide detailed information about their condition and how it causes them to:

- Be unable to walk;
- Experience very considerable difficulty whilst walking, which may include very considerable psychological distress; or
- Be at risk of serious harm when walking; or pose, when walking, a risk of serious harm to any other person.

3.5 Providing detailed information and evidence will help the Council assess the application without unnecessary delay and may reduce the need for further information or an expert assessment.

Personal data

3.6 Personal data will be required in order to issue a Blue Badge, and this is requested in the application, including: full name, gender (including non-binary gender marker), date of birth, birth name, national insurance number, current address and postcode, main phone number and number of current Blue Badge (if reapplying).

3.7 The Council is required to carry out identity and residency checks on individual applicants to help prevent and detect fraud.

Photographs

3.8 Blue Badges include a digitally scanned, passport-style photograph. Every individual applicant must supply a passport-sized and passport standard photograph clearly showing their full face so that they can be easily identified. This requirement does not apply to organisational applicants.

3.9 The requirements for the standard of photograph on the Blue Badge are set out in legislation and follow closely the requirements 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:

- in colour;
- 45 millimetres in height and 35 millimetres in width (passport size);
- taken:
    - within the month prior to the date of the application;
    - against a light grey or cream background
- undamaged;
- free from “redeye”, shadows, reflection, or glare from spectacles;
- 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):
    - facing forward;
    - with nothing covering the face;
    - looking straight at the camera;
    - with a neutral expression and mouth closed;
    - with eyes open and clearly visible (without sunglasses or tinted spectacles and without hair or spectacle frames obscuring the eyes);
- in sharp focus and clear;
- printed professionally or in digital format;
- a true likeness, without amendment.

3.10 If a Blue Badge is issued, the Council will keep a digital copy of the photograph on its file, in accordance with guidance from the Department for Transport.

Declarations

3.11 Before submitting an application, applicants must confirm that the information they have provided is complete and accurate and agree to the declarations and data-use terms shown in the GOV.UK Blue Badge online service.

4. Grounds for refusal

4.1 The Council may refuse to issue a Blue Badge in any of the following circumstances under regulation 8 of the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) Regulations 2000:

- 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
- the applicant fails to provide the local authority with adequate evidence of their eligibility, either as an individual or as an eligible organisation; or
- the applicant fails to pay the fee chargeable for the issue of a badge; or
- the Council (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
- the applicant fails to provide evidence of residency; or
- the applicant already holds a valid badge issued by another issuing authority; or
- where an expert assessment is required, the expert assessor is unable to confirm, based on the information and evidence available, that the applicant meets the eligibility criteria.

4.2 A relevant conviction includes offences involving the misuse, fraudulent use, alteration or unlawful use of a Blue Badge, as defined in the relevant legislation.

4.3 If the Council refuses an application, it will provide reasons which are sufficient to enable the applicant to understand why the application has been refused. The applicant may request a review by sending to the Council a written request for a review. The request must be received by the Council within 4 weeks of the refusal. It must be clearly marked “Blue Badge Review Request” and must provide written reasons why the applicant contends that the refusal was wrong. Where possible, the review will be carried out by an officer who was not involved in the original decision.

5. Successful applications

5.1 Successful applicants will have their Blue Badge posted to them by Royal Mail. They should allow 28 days for delivery before reporting a delivery issue to the Council.

5.2 The applicant will be required to pay a fee of £10 before the Blue Badge is issued.

5.3 A parking clock will be issued with the Blue Badge. It must be displayed with the badge when parking on yellow lines or in parking bays where a time limit applies and must be set to show the time of arrival.

5.4 Successful applicants will receive a copy of the Department for Transport leaflet "The Blue Badge Scheme: rights and responsibilities" with their Blue Badge. The leaflet, which includes advice for individuals and organisations, is also available to download free of charge from the Department for Transport website: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-blue-badge-scheme-rights-and-responsibilities-in-england/the-blue-badge-scheme-rights-and-responsibilities-in-england

5.5 Most Blue Badges will be issued for three years. There are two exceptions:

- In the case of children under three, the maximum period for which the Blue Badge will be issued is the 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 Pensioners' 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 Blue Badge can be issued for 9 or 12 months if this corresponds with the period of issue of HRMCDLA, WPMS or PIP.

5.6 Blue Badge holders have a duty under Regulation 9 of the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) Regulations 2000 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.

5.7 An individual should not hold more than one valid Blue Badge at any time. If the applicant has previously held a badge, they must return the expired badge to the Council using the postal address provided in section 8. The badge should be cut in half before posting.

6. Reapplications

6.1 If an individual reapplies for a Blue Badge to be issued on expiry, the Council will need to:

- Confirm that individuals who were awarded a Blue Badge based on Type 1 without further assessment eligibility remain in receipt of qualifying benefits. If they no longer receive these benefits, then it may be necessary for the applicant to be assessed under the Type 2 subject to further assessment criteria to determine whether the applicant remains eligible.
- Check that individuals who were awarded a Blue Badge based on Type 2 subject to further assessment eligibility continue to meet the eligibility criteria and are therefore still in need of a Blue Badge. Although a Blue 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 Blue Badge holder has a permanent disability, which will not change, check that the applicant's personal details, such as their address, remain correct, and that an up-to-date photograph is obtained.

7. Replacements

7.1 Where a Blue Badge has been lost, stolen or damaged, the Council may issue a replacement badge. Once a badge is reported as lost, stolen or damaged, it will be cancelled immediately and will no longer be valid for use.

7.2 The expiry date shown on the replacement Blue Badge will be the same as the date that appeared on the original badge. The record of the original badge will be updated on the Blue Badge Digital Service to show that it is no longer valid, and this information will be passed to on-street enforcement teams.

7.3 Where a Blue Badge has been stolen, the badge holder must provide a police crime reference number. If a lost or stolen badge is subsequently found or recovered, it must be returned to the Council for secure destruction.

7.4 When a badge is reported as lost or stolen, the applicant must provide written details of the circumstances of the loss or theft. A replacement badge will not be issued until this information has been provided.

7.5 When a badge is reported as damaged, the badge holder must return it to the Council for inspection. A replacement badge will not be issued until the damaged badge has been returned.

7.6 If the existing badge is due to expire within three months, the badge holder should make a reapplication rather than request a replacement badge.

7.7 A fee of £10 must be paid before a replacement Blue Badge is issued.

8. Contact information

London Borough of Lewisham, Concessionary Awards Team

PO Box 4206, London, SE6 4BR

Online using the Concessionary Awards Enquiry Form

Telephone 020 8314 9844 Mondays and Tuesdays between 10am and 2pm