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## The Blue Badge Scheme: frequently asked questions

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## General

### Where can I get further information on the Blue Badge Scheme?

A list of the publications on the Scheme can be found at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/bluebadge/pubs/>. You can download these publications from this website, or obtain hard copies free from DfT Publications, Tel:0870 1226 236; Fax: 0870 1226 237; Textphone: 0870 1207 405 or online via [www.publications.dft.gov.uk](http://www.publications.dft.gov.uk).

## Applying for a badge

### Do I meet the eligibility criteria?

Eligibility is considered in terms of being '**eligible without further assessment**' or '**eligible subject to further assessment**'

Therefore you can get a badge without further assessment if you are more than two years old and fall within one or more of the following:

- you receive the higher rate of the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance;
- you receive a War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement;
- you are registered blind.

You can also get a badge subject to further assessment if:

- you are more than two years of age, drive a motor vehicle regularly, have a severe disability in both arms and are unable or find it difficult to operate all or some types of parking meter;
- you are more than two years of age, have a permanent and substantial disability which means you are unable to walk, or which makes walking very difficult;
- you are a child less than two years old who, because of a specific medical condition, needs to travel with bulky medical equipment or needs to be close to a vehicle for emergency medical treatment.

Further information is available in our leaflet 'Can I Get a Blue Badge'.

## **Do I need to own a car?**

There is no requirement for you to own a vehicle or be able to drive one. The badge is personal to you and can be used in any vehicle in which you are travelling as a passenger, which you have notified your local authority of, if requested.

## **How do I apply for a badge?**

Your local council is responsible for administering the Scheme and issuing badges.. They will send you an application form which you will need to return with 2 recent (passport sized) photographs of yourself. In some areas you can begin your Blue Badge application on the internet through your local council's website. Some will charge an application fee (maximum of £2).

## **How do I find contact details for my local council?**

The address and telephone number of your local council will be in your local telephone directory or on the website [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk), under 'find your local council'.

## **Will I need to be assessed by a doctor?**

If you do not meet one of the 'Eligible without further assessment' criteria, such as being in receipt of the higher rate of the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance, your eligibility will need to be assessed by your local authority. The assessment arrangements are for individual authorities to decide but you will be asked to answer a series of questions to help them determine your eligibility. The authority may also ask your permission to seek further information from your doctor or ask you to see an independent health professional, such as a physiotherapist or occupational therapist.

## **How long are badges issued for?**

Most badges are issued for three years only. However, certain exceptions apply and are explained below.

In the case of children under two, the badge will be issued for a maximum period of two years ending on the day immediately following their second birthday.

Where entitlement for a Blue Badge is linked to Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance (HRMCDLA) and War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement (WPMS) the period of issue should be linked to the period of receipt of that allowance, where that period is less than three years.

Where HRMCDLA or WPMS has been granted for a period longer than three years, the badge can still only be issued for the maximum three year period. The badge should continue to be reviewed on a three yearly cycle.

## **Why can't badges be issued for life?**

Issuing badges for a maximum three year period allows local authorities the opportunity to re-assess badge holders when their badges expire to ensure that they 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 disability 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 loss of limbs), the opportunity to renew the badge allows the local authority to ensure that the holder's personal details, such as their address, are unchanged.

## **I have been refused a badge, can I appeal?**

There is no right of appeal against a local authority's decision to refuse a blue badge, but an unsuccessful applicant may ask the authority to reconsider the case if they feel that their mobility problems have become more serious or if they think that all the relevant facts were not taken into consideration at the time of the assessment.

## **Information for badge holders**

### **Who can use my badge?**

The badge is for your use and benefit only. It must not be displayed unless you are using it directly. Do not allow other people to use your badge to do something for you, such as shopping or collecting something for you, unless you are travelling with them.

It is a criminal offence for you or anyone else to misuse your badge, and it can lead to a £1,000 fine

### **How should I display my badge and time clock?**

The badge should be displayed on the dashboard or fascia panel of your vehicle where it can be clearly read through the front windscreen. The front of the badge should face upwards, showing the wheelchair symbol.

The associated time clock only needs to be displayed when you are parking on yellow lines or in a blue badge parking bay that has a time limit. In both cases, you should set the time of arrival on the clock and display it next to your badge on the dashboard or fascia panel.

Failure to display your badge and time clock properly could result in a parking ticket.

### **What parking concessions am I entitled to?**

The concessions blue badge holders are entitled to are explained in Section 2 of our explanatory booklet 'The Blue Badge Scheme: rights and responsibilities in England'.

## **Where can't I park?**

A blue badge is not a licence to park anywhere. Like other road users, you must obey the rules of the road, as laid out in the Highway Code and should not park where it would endanger, inconvenience or obstruct pedestrians or other road users. Further details are given in Section 2 of our booklet 'The Blue Badge Scheme: rights and responsibilities in England'.

If you fail to abide by these rules you may receive a parking ticket.

## **Can a traffic warden ask to see my badge?**

Yes. New powers have been granted to enforcement officers to inspect Blue Badges. The enforcement officers who have been given this new power are police officers, traffic wardens, local authority parking attendants and civil enforcement officers. These people should produce an identity card with their photograph on it to prove they are who they say they are.

## **Can I refuse to let an enforcement officer see my badge?**

No. If an enforcement officer asks to see your badge, you must show it to them. If you do not, you will be breaking the law and could be fined up to £1,000.

## **Can an enforcement officer take away my badge?**

No. Only the Police can seize Blue Badges.

## **Can my vehicle be wheelclamped?**

You cannot legally be wheelclamped on the public highway (on-street) for parking offences, provided you correctly display a valid Blue Badge.

However you must remember that parking in forbidden areas or where it would endanger or obstruct other road users is an offence, which could mean you get a parking fine. You could also be prosecuted, have your car towed away and your badge withdrawn.

## **What about parking in central London?**

The Blue Badge Scheme does not apply in the City of London, the City of Westminster, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and part of the London Borough of Camden.

However, those boroughs do offer a limited range of concessions including parking bays open to national blue badge holders. If you are planning to visit central London and intend to use your badge, you may wish to check first with the authorities concerned. Further advice and contact details for the boroughs are contained on pages 18, 26 and 27 of the booklet 'The Blue Badge Scheme: rights and responsibilities in England'.

## **What about off-street car parking?**

The parking concessions provided under the Blue Badge Scheme only apply to on-street parking. They do not apply in off-street car parks, such as supermarket or local authority car parks, or on the road systems at some airports. The conditions of use of off-street facilities are entirely down to the individual car park owner or operator to determine and these should be clearly displayed at the entrance. You should note that badge holders are not automatically exempt from charges in these car parks. If in doubt, ask an attendant.

## **Am I exempt from charges at toll crossings?**

Badge holders are exempt from a number of toll crossings across the United Kingdom. Details are contained on pages 40-47 of the booklet 'The Blue Badge Scheme: rights and responsibilities in England'.

## **Can I use my badge abroad?**

The blue badge design is now standard across the European Union and you are entitled to the local concessions which apply in each Member State. Please note that these do vary from country to country. Details are contained on pages 29-39 of our booklet 'The Blue Badge Scheme: rights and responsibilities in England'.

The arrangements that apply in countries outside of the European Union, such as the USA and Australia, are set out in our fact sheet 'Travelling to countries outside the European Union'.

## **My badge or time clock has been lost/stolen, who should I contact?**

You should contact the local council who issued the badge or time clock. If your badge has been stolen, you should also contact the police. They will give you a crime number which should be quoted when contacting the local council who can issue you with a replacement.

## **My badge is due to expire, what should I do?**

Contact your local council who will arrange for an application form to be sent to you.

## **I have changed my address; do I need to notify anybody?**

Yes. If you are moving within the same council area you need to let the issuing office know your new address for administrative purposes.

If you are moving to another council area you still need to let the issuing authority know your new address and contact your new council around 6 weeks before your badge is due to expire and they will send you the appropriate forms.

## **The badge is no longer needed, who should I return it to?**

If for any reason the badge is no longer required, it must be returned to the issuing authority (this will be stated on the front of the badge).

## **Who can I contact if I have a query about the Scheme?**

You can contact the Blue Badge Helpline on either 0207 944 2914 or 0845 130 6195. Or by email at [blue.badge@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:blue.badge@dft.gsi.gov.uk).

## **Misuse**

### **I think a badge is being misused, what should I do?**

Report the matter to your local council. If possible, you should get as many details as possible from the badge on display (name, serial number, expiry date, etc). The council will investigate the matter and take appropriate action if the badge can be shown to be displayed fraudulently.

## **Disabled Persons' Parking Bays**

### **Can I have a blue badge bay outside of my home?**

Your local council is responsible for the provision of Disabled Persons' Parking Bays. They can designate bays on the highway but this may not always be possible due to local traffic and safety conditions. Requests are considered on a case-by-case basis and you should contact your local council and ask for the Highways Department.

### **Who is responsible for the provisions of blue badge parking bays in town centres?**

The local council is responsible for the provision of all types of parking bays within their area. If you have any concerns about the provision of blue badge bays, you should contact them to discuss the matter.

### **I see many non-disabled people parking in off-street bays, such as supermarket car parks, who should I complain to?**

The blue badge bays provided in supermarket and other off-street car parks are not covered by the regulations governing the Blue Badge Scheme, which only apply to on-street bays. These bays are in most cases not legally enforceable and their use depends to a large extent on the courtesy and consideration of other drivers. If you see bays being abused by non-disabled people, we suggest you bring this to the attention of the appropriate store or car park operator.

## **Related Issues**

### **I have received a parking ticket whilst displaying my badge, can you help?**

The reason you have received a parking ticket will be indicated on the rear of the ticket itself. If you feel it was wrongly issued and wish to appeal, you should contact the parking enforcement office (whose details will also be on the rear of the ticket).

If this does not prove satisfactory, you may also wish to contact the National Parking Adjudication Service, an independent tribunal where impartial lawyers consider appeals by motorists and vehicle owners whose vehicles have been issued with a parking ticket (or have been removed or clamped) by councils in England and Wales. They can be contacted at the Parking and Traffic Appeals Service, PO Box 1010, Sutton, Surrey SM1 5SW, or by Tel: 0207 747 4700, Fax: 0207 747 4707, or by visiting their website: [www.parkingandtrafficappeals.gov.uk](http://www.parkingandtrafficappeals.gov.uk).

Please note that the Department for Transport has no powers to intervene in disputes over the issue of a parking ticket.

### **Do I qualify for exemption from road tax?**

The road tax exemption for disabled people is operated by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). It is entirely independent of the Blue Badge Scheme. In order to qualify for an exemption, you must:

- receive the higher rate of the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance; or
- receive War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement; and
- you have an invalid carriage.

To claim exemption from vehicle tax, the vehicle must be registered in your name or registered in the name of someone you nominate to drive for you (a nominee).

However, the vehicle must only be used for your purposes, for example shopping or getting prescriptions. If it is being used by the nominee or someone else for their own personal needs, then the exemption will be lost and the normal rate of vehicle tax must be paid.

To tax in the disabled tax class you'll need exemption certificate DLA404 if you get Disability Living Allowance or exemption certificate WPA442 if you get the War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement.

You can get further information about taxing your vehicle from [www.direct.gov.uk/motoring](http://www.direct.gov.uk/motoring).

### **Are Blue Badge holders exempt from the London congestion charge?**

Yes. To Qualify for exemption from the charge, you must pre-register with Transport for London (TfL) and pay a one-off registration fee of Â£10. You need to apply at least 10 days before your journey.

You can get a registration form by writing to Congestion Charging, PO Box 2985, Coventry CV7 8ZR, or by visiting their website at [www.cclondon.com](http://www.cclondon.com), or by calling their helpline on 0845 900 1234 (Minicom 020 7649 9123).

## **Advice for disabled people from Abroad**

The blue badge introduced a standard design of disabled persons' parking card across all European Union (EU) Member States. This enables disabled visitors from within the EU to enjoy the parking concessions provided in the UK by displaying the badge issued under their own national scheme.

For visitors from countries outside of the EU where no formal arrangements currently exist, UK parking enforcement officials may be prepared to recognise your disabled motorists' badges, although that will be entirely at their own discretion. We suggest that you bring your badge with you and check with the local police in the areas you intend to visit.