

Benefits Series

The Blue Badge Scheme

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Please see our website for up-to-date information: www.downs-syndrome.org.uk

If you have concerns, please ring the DSA's Benefits Adviser: Helen Wild

Monday & Thursday 10am-4pm Tues & Weds 10am-12.30pm | Telephone: 0333 1212 300 option 1

The Blue Badge scheme operates throughout England and Wales (except for parts of central London). It is run by local councils.

The scheme helps people who have problems whilst walking, enabling them to park where there are parking restrictions, close to shops or public buildings etc. A car displaying a Blue Badge driven by a person who has a disability, or which has a passenger who has a disability, can be parked in some, but not all, parking restricted areas.

The car doesn't have to be driven by the person who has the disability, but they need to be in either the car, or the car must be used for the benefit of the badge holder.

Hidden disability criteria

In 2019, people with hidden disabilities were granted access to the scheme, allowing those with less obvious health conditions the same right to park in disabled bays as those with physical disabilities.

The changes meant councils had much clearer guidelines. Previously guidance was open to some interpretation.

What are the new criteria relevant for our members?

Eligible without further assessment

People may be issued a blue badge without further assessment if they are more than two years old and fall within one or more of the following descriptors

- Receiving the Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance or

- Have 8 points or more under the “**moving around**” activity of the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP); or
- Receive the mobility component of PIP and has 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.

Your local authority is unable to award a Blue Badge on a combined score from both the 'planning and following journeys' and 'moving around' Mobility Activity.

Eligible subject to further assessment

People who may be issued with a badge after further assessment are those more than two years old and may be described as.

A person who has been certified by an expert assessor as having an enduring and substantial disability which causes them, during a journey, to either:

- Be unable to walk.
- Experience very considerable difficulty **whilst** walking, which may include very considerable psychological distress.

Wording has been changed to mean difficulties occurring when out walking, rather than as a direct result of physical difficulty.

- Be at risk of serious harm when walking; or pose, when walking, a risk of serious harm to any other person.

Risk of serious harm reflects that some 'non-physical' disabilities give rise to behaviour or lack of situational awareness that present safety risks for the disabled person or for others.

Local authority guidelines.

To qualify under this criterion, an applicant must have any enduring (lasting for at least 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 themselves or any other person.

The DfT expects that, in the context of disabilities that are predominantly non-visible ('hidden') in nature, a risk of serious harm to self/others could manifest as one or more of the following behaviours:

- Becoming physically aggressive toward 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.

This list is not exhaustive and local authorities will need to satisfy themselves that the risk of serious harm to self/others when walking, during a journey, is caused by an enduring and substantial disability. In this context it is recognised that some of the listed behaviours, as well as others, may be exhibited ordinarily by children who do not have any enduring or substantial disability. It is therefore important for local authorities to consider the extent of any such behaviours and/or difficulties experienced by an applicant in relation to common developmental milestones.

Where you can park

Badge holders can park in spaces reserved for blue badge holders. They are also able to park on single or double yellow lines for up to three hours (unless in a “no loading” zone).

To apply for or renew a Blue Badge

Check your eligibility and apply for a Blue Badge at

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge>

A Blue Badge costs up to £10 in England and £20 in Scotland. It’s free in Wales.

You need

- A recent digital photo showing your head and shoulders.
- proof of identity (such as a passport or driving licence)
- proof of address (less than 12 months old)
- proof of benefits if applicable
- your National Insurance number (if you have one)
- Details of your current Blue Badge (if you’re reapplying)

Contact us

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