

Blue Badges: What are the eligibility and assessment criteria?

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This is the first in a series of blog articles discussing the Blue Badge scheme, which will look in turn at its eligibility and assessment criteria, the application and appeal process, and the Welsh Government's expansion of the scheme.

The [Blue Badge scheme](#) provides a national arrangement of parking concessions for disabled people, and operates throughout the UK. The responsibility for the scheme in Wales lies with the Welsh Government, but it is administered by individual local authorities, who issue the badges.

Eligibility

There are two different categories of eligibility for a Blue Badge. Some people can receive a Blue Badge automatically, which is called 'eligible without further assessment'. An individual will be eligible without further assessment, if they:

- Are registered as blind/ severely sight impaired;
- Receive the War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement;
- Receive the higher rate of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA);
- Receive the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and they score at least 8 points in relation to the 'moving around' activity in the PIP assessment, or at least 12 points in the mobility activity for planning and following journeys;
- Have been awarded a lump sum benefit from the Armed Forces Compensation scheme (tariffs 1–8). They have also been certified as having a permanent and substantial disability which means they cannot walk or find walking very difficult; or
- Have been awarded a lump sum benefit from the Armed Forces Compensation scheme at tariff level 6 for a mental disorder.



If an individual was on the higher rate mobility component of DLA, but had to claim PIP instead, and did not receive sufficient points to be eligible for a Blue Badge, they can continue to use the badge until it expires.

If none of these conditions apply, an individual may still be eligible 'subject to further assessment'. This applies if the individual:

- Has a permanent or substantial disability which means they cannot walk or find walking very difficult;
- Is a driver and has severe upper limb disabilities;
- As a result of a mental disorder, is unable to follow the route of a familiar journey without the assistance of another person. Anyone aged over two years old can be eligible under this condition, including people over 65 years old;
- Is applying on behalf of a child over two with a permanent or substantial disability which means they cannot walk or find walking very difficult; or
- Is applying on behalf of a child under three with a medical condition that requires them to be close to a vehicle for emergency medical treatment or transporting bulky medical equipment.

Assessment

If the applicant is eligible subject to further assessment, the local authority will look at the evidence of their disability to decide whether they will receive a Blue Badge. Some individuals may be required to have an independent mobility assessment. If they have applied for, or held, a Blue Badge previously, this assessment may have been carried out by the individual's GP. Assessments may now be carried out by an independent mobility assessor. This is usually a medical professional such as an occupational therapist or physiotherapist, who has never previously treated the individual.

Assessing walking ability





An individual will receive a Blue Badge if they can walk only with great difficulty, and at an extremely slow pace or with excessive pain. No other factors, such as how difficult the individual finds it to carry objects, will be taken into account. The difficulties must be permanent and not temporary.

Assessing upper limb abilities

If a person has severe upper limb disabilities, they will be eligible for a Blue Badge if all the following apply, they:

- Drive a vehicle regularly;
- Have a severe disability in both arms; and
- Are unable or would find it difficult to use a parking meter.

An individual will not be eligible for a Blue Badge if they have severe upper limb disabilities and only travel as a passenger.

Assessing mental disorder

If an individual applies for a Blue Badge because, as a result of a mental disorder, they are unable to follow the route of a familiar journey without the assistance of another person, the local authority will look at the evidence of their disability. Before making a decision the local authority might:

- Check if the applicant is on the local authority learning disability register;
- Check if the applicant attends a memory clinic;
- Look at support for the applicant's application from a relevant health specialist; and
- Refer the applicant to the Independent Advisory Service for an assessment.



Much of the information above is taken from Citizens Advice's Advisernet website.

This is the first in a series of blog articles discussing the Blue Badge scheme. Tomorrow's blog will explain the application and appeal process for Blue Badge applicants.

Article by [Megan Jones](#), National Assembly for Wales Research Service.

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