

Blue Badge Statistics: Guidance 2010/11



Guidance for completing Statistics Form STATS104: Disabled Persons Parking Badge Return

Please only enter 0 where the answer to the question is 0; if you are unable to answer any questions, please leave these blank and include a note in the comments section at the end of the form. The more information you are able to give in the comments, the less likely it is that you will be contacted for clarification after you have submitted the form.

Local authorities may wish to note that, from January 2012, some of the data requested in the form will be collected by the Blue Badge Improvement Service for all those local authorities that have signed up to the service.

New Questions for 2010-11

Respondents will find that some new questions have been added to the survey this year. These are to provide baseline information for the work that is currently being undertaken to improve Blue Badge services. We expect that local authorities may not be able to respond to new questions this year and we would be grateful for any data that can be provided.

In Section 2 on new and renewal applications, questions on successful renewal applications have been removed. We are now asking for data on total number of applications in addition to numbers of new applications. We have also added a question on the number of applications that are made in the subject to further assessment categories.

In Section 2 on assessments, we are now asking for data on total assessments and on assessments for new applications. We have also added a question on desk-based assessments.

Section 1 – Total Number of Badges on Issue at 31 March 2011.

1.1 This section covers the number of badges issued from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011 and the total number of badges on issue as at 31 March 2011. This includes badges issued to individuals and organisations in accordance with the eligibility criteria in the regulations that govern the Blue Badge scheme, i.e. the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) Regulations 2000, as amended by the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2007¹ ("the Regulations").

¹ The Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 entered into force on 17 June 2011, but changes under these regulations will not affect badges issued within the reporting period.

1.2 Individual eligibility is considered in terms of being either 'eligible without further assessment' (previously known as the 'automatic criteria') or 'eligible subject to further assessment' (previously known as the 'discretionary criteria'). For detailed information on eligibility and assessments please see Chapter 4 of the Department for Transport's (DfT's) 2011 document "The Blue Badge Scheme Local Authority Guidance (England)". A copy can be viewed and downloaded from the DfT's website at:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/blue-badge-scheme-local-authority-guidance/>

1.3 Questions 1a to 1c ask for the number of people who were issued with a badge from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011 and the total number of people with badges at 31 March 2011) 'without further assessment', i.e. people who are more than two years old and fall within one or more of the following descriptions:

- i. receives the Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance (HRMCDLA);
- ii. receives a War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement (WPMS); or
- iii. is registered blind.

1.4 Questions 1d to 1f asks for the number of people who were issued with a badge from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011 and the total number of people with badges at 31 March 2011) 'subject to further assessment'; i.e. people who fall within one or more of the following descriptions:

- i. 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;
- ii. is more than two years old and has a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking;
- iii. is under two years old and has a condition that requires that they must always be accompanied by bulky medical equipment which cannot be carried around with the child without great difficulty; or
- iv. is under two years old and has a condition that requires that they must always be kept near a motor vehicle 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.

1.5 Badges should not be issued to people who do not meet one of the above eligibility criteria. When a medical opinion is needed regarding eligibility, the DfT strongly recommends that independent health professionals, such as occupational therapists or physiotherapists, should undertake assessments. From 2012, the DfT will be amending regulations to require the wider use of independent mobility assessments to confirm eligibility under the criterion above, at paragraph 1.4ii.

1.6 Question 1g asks for the number of organisational badges issued from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011 and the total number of organisational badges on issue as at 31 March 2011. A badge may be issued to an organisation ('organisation' is defined in the Regulations as meaning an organisation concerned with the care of disabled persons) for a motor vehicle; when the vehicle is to be used to carry specified disabled persons (specified in the Regulations i.e. people who would qualify for a badge under one or more of the eligibility criteria mentioned in 1a to 1f).

1.7 Question 1ji asks for the number of organisations which hold Blue Badges, as one organisation can hold a number of badges for different vehicles.

Section 2 – Number of Applications and Assessments

2.1 Section 2 covers the number of new and renewal applications received during the reporting period, and how the applicant's eligibility was assessed.

2.2 Questions 2a asks for the number of new applications received (from individuals and organisations) during the reporting period from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011 and the number of these that were 'subject to further assessment' (i.e. within the eligibility criteria mentioned in 1d - 1f. The Questions in 2b relate to the number of successful and unsuccessful applications, and those that were successful following an appeal. Question 2bi asks how many of these applications were successful; not counting those that were successful following an appeal. Question 2bii asks for the number of appeals received by unsuccessful applicant and Question 2biii asks for the number of badges issued following an appeal. Please note that Question 2bii(a) asks whether the local authority has an appeals procedure in place to deal with unsuccessful applicants who would like to appeal the authority's decision. There is no legal requirement for local authorities to have an appeals procedure in place if someone disagrees with the reason why their application was not successful. However, local authorities are strongly recommended to establish an internal procedure to deal with appeals against an authority's decision not to issue a badge.

2.3 Questions 2c to 2e relate to the number of unsuccessful renewal applications and the reasons why these applications were unsuccessful. Under regulation 8 of the Regulations, 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 at least three relevant convictions;
- b) the applicant fails to provide the local authority with adequate evidence of their eligibility, either as an individual or as an eligible organisation;
- c) the applicant fails to pay the fee (if a fee is required); or
- d) the local authority believes that the applicant is not the person they are claiming to be, or would permit another person to whom the badge was not issued to use the badge.

2.4 Questions 2f to 2j ask how applications made under the “eligible subject to further assessment” walking criterion (i.e. people who would qualify for a badge under the eligibility criterion mentioned in 1e) are assessed.

2.5 Local authorities are responsible for issuing badges in accordance with the regulations. Although the DfT has issued guidance to local authorities on the administration of the scheme, including detailed advice on assessments, it is entirely a matter for local authorities to assess whether an applicant meets the eligibility criteria.

2.6 There are a number of ways that applications made under the “eligible subject to further assessment” are assessed. These include desk based assessments made by trained clerical assessors or health professionals using agreed set criteria or decision trees/matrixes. However, when eligibility is unclear, an in-person assessment of the applicant’s mobility is needed. This can be carried out by the applicant’s GP or by an independent mobility assessor, such as occupational therapists or physiotherapists (the latter approach is strongly recommended in the Department for Transport’s guidance to local authorities).

Section 3 – Number of Badges Withdrawn

3.1 This Section is about badges that have been withdrawn *during their issue period* (which is generally for 3 years). It is not the same as question 2c, which asks whether an expired badge was not renewed at the point that the holder attempted to renew it.

3.2 Question 3a asks for the number of valid badges withdrawn for misuse. Regulation 9(2) of the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) Regulations 2000, explain when local authorities can withdraw a badge for either misuse by the badge holder or a third party, or because it was obtained by false representation.

3.3 Question 3b asks for the number of valid badges that were withdrawn because the Badge holder ceased to be eligible e.g. because they were no longer disabled or died.

Section 4 – Number of Prosecutions for abuse of the scheme

4.1 This Section is about the number of people that were prosecuted for abuse of the Blue Badge scheme. By this we mean prosecuted in a court. We do not mean where a PCN was issued (unless the individual was also prosecuted in court).

4.2 Question 4a asks whether the local authority has a policy of prosecuting people for abuse of the blue Badge scheme. Although local authorities have powers to prosecute badge holders and third parties for Blue Badge abuse, not all local authorities use these powers. Question 4b asks for the total number of people prosecuted. Question 4c asks for the figure quoted in answer to Question 4b to be broken down to show i) the number of Badge holders prosecuted; and ii) the number of non-Badge holders prosecuted. Question 4d allows you to offer further information on

this issue.

Section 5 – Number of Badges Lost or Stolen

5.1 Question 5a asks for the number of badges reported lost during the year. Question 5b asks for a yes/no answer to the question of whether it is your practice to ask for a Police lost property number before you issue a replacement badge for those reported lost.

5.2 Question 5c asks for the number of badges reported stolen during the year. Question 5d asks for a yes/no answer to the question of whether it is your practice to ask for a Police crime reference number before you issue a replacement badge for those reported as stolen.

5.3 Question 5e simply asks for the total number of replacement Badges issued during the year (to replace lost **or** stolen badges).

DfT Traffic Division
Blue Badge Team

July 2011