

## **Fact Sheet 17**

### **The Blue Badge Scheme and Parking Issues**

The Blue Badge is two sided and laminated to prevent damage and alteration. On the front is the wheelchair logo, the expiry date, the issuing authority name and the serial number. On the reverse are the photo, name and signature of the disabled holder.

#### **You can get a badge if:**

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 have a severe disability in both upper limbs, regularly drive a motor vehicle but cannot turn the steering wheel of a motor vehicle by hand even if that wheel is fitted with a turning knob; or

You have a permanent and substantial disability that means you are unable to walk or have very considerable difficulty walking.

The first three categories have automatic entitlement to a badge and the only evidence required with an application is proof of receipt of the benefit or registration as a blind person. In the other two discretionary categories the issuing authority will ask for additional information and may ask for a report from an appropriate medical expert, who may wish to examine you.

Children under two years of age do not qualify for a badge, but this is likely to change in the near future.

#### **Where to apply**

Applications for a badge can only be made to an issuing authority:

#### **In England and Wales**

To the social Services Department of your County, Unitary, Metropolitan District or London Borough Council.

#### **In Scotland**

To the Chief Executive or Social Work Department of your local Council.

#### **In Northern Ireland**

To the Disabled Persons Badge scheme Central Office, Enniskillen – telephone 028 6634 3700

You will need to provide 2 passport size photos of the disabled person. This may be a problem for those who cannot get in to an automatic photo booth, but there are alternatives. Many photo shops, such as snappy snaps, offer a quick and low cost system using a hand held camera.

The issuing authority may charge a fee not exceeding £2.

### **How to use the Badge**

You must display the badge on top of the dashboard or fascia panel of a vehicle with the front of the badge (i.e. the side showing the wheelchair –user symbol) facing forward. The badge should only be displayed when using the benefits under the Scheme. Never stick it to the windscreen.

Badges last for three years only. Many authorities do not issue renewal reminders so do check and reapply in good time. You may get a parking ticket if you use an expired badge.

### **How to use the special parking disc**

In England and Wales you will need a parking disc (which you can get from the authority issuing the badge) when you park on yellow lines or in a designated “Disabled” space that has a time limit.

The disc must be set to show the time of arrival. Disabled people living in Scotland or Northern Ireland who intend to visit England or Wales should be able to get the disc from their issuing authority or from The Disabled Drivers association.

With a valid properly used and correctly displayed Blue badge you can usually –  
Park for up to 3 hours where parking is prohibited. In Scotland there is no time limit.  
Park without payment in a pay and display or parking meter bay.

Park in a designated “Disabled” bay. There is no time limit unless the sign by the bay shows one.

The whole of the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, the City of Westminster, and the City of London and part of the borough of Camden only recognise the Blue Badge for parking in designated “Disabled” bays. Do not park in bays designated as being for a specific individual badge holder. They also allow badge holders to park for a further period of one hour once the period paid for at a meter or pay and display bay has expired. Restrictions also apply at airports.

Vehicles cannot legally be wheel clamped on the public highway for parking offences provided a valid Blue Badge is correctly displayed on the vehicle. However, you should be aware that if you park improperly on privately owned land you might risk having your vehicle wheel clamped.

Officially the Blue Badge only applies on the public highway. It is, however widely recognised as giving access to designated bays in car parks and to free or reduced charges in some car parks. There is no right to concessions in car parks so do always check carefully what the local rules are.

Badges can only be issued to a disabled person and can only be used when that person is using the vehicle. When parking the disabled person must either be in the vehicle when it arrives at the parking place or in the vehicle when it leaves. The badge must not be used in any other circumstances.

Misuse can result in the issue of a parking ticket but also a potential fine of £1,000 for the driver and withdrawal of the badge. Enforcement will become easier later this year when police, traffic wardens and parking attendants will be given the power to inspect the photo on the reverse of the badge.

In certain circumstances badges can be issued to organisations transporting disabled people. The rules are very similar.

The Blue Badge is not a licence to park anywhere.

**You must NOT park:**

During the time a ban on loading or unloading is in force

Where there are double white lines in the centre of the road even if one of the lines is broken;

In a bus or tram lane during its hours of operation;

In a cycle lane;

On any clearway, double or single red lines during their hours of operation;

On pedestrian crossings;

On zig-zag markings before and after pedestrian crossings;

In parking places reserved for specific users e.g. residents only, permit holders only, loading bays, taxis, cycles, unless there are signs showing that you may do so, or you have checked with the local authority's Highway Department that you may do so;

In suspended meter bays or when use of the meter is prohibited;

Where temporary restrictions on parking are in force along a length of road e.g. as indicated by no-waiting cones; or

On school "keep clear" markings during the hours shown on a yellow no-stopping plate.

If you are in any doubt about how parking restrictions are marked, or where no one should park you will find clear guidance in the Highway Code.

**For general advice on parking and disabled people contact**

The Blue Badge Network 01384 257001 [www.bluebadgenetwork.org](http://www.bluebadgenetwork.org)

The Disabled Drivers Association 0870 770 3333 [www.dda.org.uk](http://www.dda.org.uk)

The Disabled Drivers Motor Club 01832 734724 [www.ddmc.org.uk](http://www.ddmc.org.uk)

The Wheelchair Users Group 01303 226500 [www.wheelchairusers.org.uk](http://www.wheelchairusers.org.uk)