

Councillor Briefing on Blue Badges
Prepared by Adult Social Care
06 February 2020

Purpose of the briefing

From 1st September 2019 changes were made to the Blue Badge criteria to include hidden disabilities. This briefing explains the changes to the Blue Badge criteria to aid you in discussions with your constituents.

Definition of hidden disabilities

This will include conditions such as dementia, learning disabilities, mental illness, anxiety disorders, autism. However, a diagnosis on its own does not automatically entitle an individual to a Blue Badge.

The Department for Transport (DfT) describes the need for Blue Badge under a hidden disability as including “people who cannot walk without considerable psychological distress or risking serious harm”.

Criteria

Automatic criteria (without further assessment)

One or more of the following:

- Higher rate of mobility component of Disabled Living Allowance
- Receives the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and has obtained 8 points or more under ‘moving around’ mobility component of PIP
- Receives the mobility component of PIP and has obtained 10 points specifically under “planning and following journeys: cannot undertake any journey because it would cause overwhelming psychological distress to the claimant”
- Severely sight impaired
- Receives War Pensioners Mobility Supplement
- Tariff 1-8-Armed forces compensation scheme and certified as having a permanent disability affecting ability to walk.

Discretionary criteria (eligibility subject to further assessment)

A person who has an enduring and substantial disability which causes them, during the course of a journey to;

- be unable to walk; or
- experience very considerable difficulties whilst walking, which may include very considerable psychological distress; or
- be at risk of serious harm when walking; or pose, when walking, a risk of serious harm to any other person.

Further guidance is provided by the DfT and guides the decision-making process.

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

- Becoming physical aggressive towards others
- Refusing to walk altogether, dropping to the floor
- Wandering off or running away

- Disobeying, ignoring or being unaware of clear instructions
- Experience very severe or over whelming anxiety
- 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 or experiences listed above

The Blue Badge service needs to be satisfied that such difficulties cannot otherwise be managed through reasonable coping strategies e.g. the person needs to be accompanied anyway.

Blue Badge process

People are encouraged to use the website and complete the online application form. Alongside this the applicant should also provide supporting documentation to assist with the decision making. We do go back to individuals for further information / evidence as necessary to ensure that we have all available information.

The application will then be reviewed to determine if it meets the automatic or discretionary criteria. For discretionary applications for hidden disability, the application will go to an internal panel for consideration.

What happens if a Blue Badge is declined?

The person will be written to explaining the reason for the application being declined. At this point if the individual has further information, we will review the application.

If the application remains declined the individual has the right to make a complaint using the council's complaint procedure, at which point the situation will be investigated.

How to find out more

People can apply for a Disabled Person's Blue Badge via: <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/search#?cludoquery=blue%20badge&cludopage=1>

Please note we are currently updating the website.

If you have any enquiries of this nature, please contact Melanie O'Rourke, Assistant Director of Adult Social Care, melanie.o'rourke@bracknell-forest.gov.uk