

Darlington Borough Council

# Blue Badge Policy Statement

September 2025

**Darlington Borough Council**  
**Provision of Blue Badge Parking Permit – Policy Statement**  
**September 2025**

**Purpose**

1. To ensure that Darlington Borough Council supports the mobility needs of its residents through the provision of Blue Badges to those who are eligible to receive one.
2. This policy outlines:
  - a) The purpose of the scheme (e.g., supporting mobility needs).
  - b) The alignment to the Department of Transport regulations
  - c) States who is eligible and under what conditions.
  - d) Clarifies legal and ethical standards (e.g., correct use, consequences of misuse).
  - e) Provides guidance for appeals and organisational badge use.

**The purpose of the blue badge scheme**

3. The Blue Badge scheme is designed to:
  - a) Support people with severe mobility problems, including those with visible and non-visible (hidden) disabilities.
  - b) Enable easier access to goods and services by allowing eligible individuals to park closer to their destination.
  - c) Provide national on-street parking concessions, such as:
    - i. Free parking at meters and pay-and-display bays.
    - ii. Parking on yellow lines for up to 3 hours (unless loading restrictions apply).
    - iii. Use of designated disabled parking bays without time limits (unless otherwise stated).
4. The scheme applies to individuals travelling as drivers or passengers and aims to reduce barriers to independence and participation in daily life.

**Alignment with Department for Transport Regulations**

5. The scheme is governed by legislation set out by the Department for Transport (DfT), which:
  - a) Defines eligibility criteria for badge issuance.
  - b) Sets rules for badge display, use, and enforcement.

- c) Establishes maximum fees, validity periods, and conditions for withdrawal or return of badges.
  - d) Provides non-statutory guidance to local authorities to ensure consistency and good practice.
6. Darlington Borough Council, are responsible for:
- a) Administering applications and assessments.
  - b) Enforcing correct badge use.
  - c) Communicating with enforcement teams to prevent misuse.
7. The DfT ensures the scheme remains fair, accessible, and legally compliant, while allowing councils flexibility in implementation.
8. [The Blue Badge scheme: rights and responsibilities in England - GOV.UK](#)
9. [Blue Badge scheme local authority guidance \(England\) - GOV.UK](#)

### **Eligibility Conditions.**

#### *Automatic Qualification*

10. Residents will automatically qualify for a Blue Badge if they are aged 3 or over and at least one of the following applies:
- a) Receive the higher rate of the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance.
  - b) Receive a Personal Independence Payment due to not being able to walk more than 50 metres.
  - c) Are registered blind.
  - d) Receive a War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement.
  - e) Have received a lump sum benefit within tariff levels 1 to 8 of the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation) Scheme and have been certified as having a permanent and substantial disability that causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking.
  - f) Receive the mobility component of PIP and have 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 overwhelming psychological distress.
  - g) Attendance Allowance receipts will automatically qualify.
11. Where there is any score other than 10 points under descriptor E, in the 'planning and following journeys' activity of PIP residents may still be eligible for a Blue Badge but do not automatically qualify. Evidence to demonstrate eligibility which will be assessed as part of the application process.

### **Residents who may be eligible**

12. Residents may be eligible for a badge if one or more of the following applies:

- a) Cannot walk at all.
- b) Cannot walk without help from someone else or using mobility aids.
- c) Find walking very difficult due to pain, breathlessness or the time it takes.
- d) Walking is dangerous to the resident's health and safety.
- e) Have a life limiting illness, which means the resident cannot walk or find walking very difficult and have a SR1 form.
- f) Have a severe disability in both arms and drive regularly, but cannot operate pay-and-display parking machines.
- g) Have a child under the age of 3 with a medical condition that means the child always needs to be accompanied by bulky medical equipment.
- h) Have a child under the age of 3 with a medical condition that means the child must always be kept near a vehicle in case they need emergency medical treatment.
- i) Are constantly a significant risk to themselves or others near vehicles, in traffic or car parks.
- j) Struggle severely to plan or follow a journey.
- k) Find it difficult or impossible to control their actions and lack awareness of the impact they could have on others.
- l) Regularly have intense and overwhelming responses to situations causing temporary loss of behavioural control.
- m) Frequently become extremely anxious or fearful of public/open spaces.

13. Evidence will be required to support applications. The type of evidence will depend on individual applications. This includes:

- a) A patient summary from GP surgery.
- b) Information about treatment received.
- c) Name and contact details for healthcare or associated professionals.
- d) Diagnosis letter.

### **Correct Use of Blue Badges**

14. It is against the law to:

- a) Use someone's Blue Badge when they are not with the recipient.
- b) Use a badge that isn't valid.
- c) Use a forged or copied badge.
- d) Use a badge that has been lost or stolen.

15. The named holder must be travelling in the vehicle with the applicant.

16. The badge must be displayed with the expiry date and the badge serial number facing upwards (the photo and badge holder's name should face down).

17. Darlington Borough Council's Civic Enforcement Officers will remove a badge that is being misused, this will be returned to Customer Services for investigation.
18. Misuse of a badge can lead to court action and a fine of up to £1000 in addition to any parking fine you receive.

### **Issuing of Replacement Badges**

19. There may be occasions when a replacement badge may be required. A replacement badge will only be considered for the following reasons:
  - a) Loss
  - b) Theft
  - c) Damage

### **Guidance on Appeals**

20. Where an application is declined by a Customer Service Advisor, applicants have the right to appeal. Reasons for the decline could include insufficient information in the application or the basic criteria is not met. This must be done in writing.
21. Appeals can be emailed to: [customerservices@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@darlington.gov.uk)
22. Appeals can also be posted to:  
  
Blue badge Stage 1 Appeals  
Customer Service Centre  
Town Hall  
Feethams  
Darlington  
DL1 5QT
23. All appeals are reviewed within 20 working days from receipt. Where an appeal is successful this will be referred to the Occupational Therapist, who will then carry out an independent mobility assessment. The application will then be progressed at the "refer to Occupational Therapist" stage above.
24. The outcome of all appeals will be in writing.
25. Where an application is declined by the Occupational Therapist an appeal can be made and this must be done in writing and include any medical evidence of relevant conditions and GP or consultant letter. The applicant will need to pay these costs.
26. The appeal will be passed to a Senior Occupational Therapist. The Senior OT will conduct a full review of all the evidence within 20 Working Days. The Senior OT will contact the applicant directly in writing with the outcome.

27. Where the individual remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal they may refer the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman can be contacted:

PO Box 4771  
Coventry  
CV4 0EH  
Telephone: 0300 061 0614

28. An applicant can reapply in 6 months' time

### **Issuing of Organisational Badges**

29. Organisations may also be eligible for a blue badge providing they meet the criteria.

- a) The business of the organisation cares for and transports disabled people who would themselves meet one or more of the eligibility criteria for the award of an individual Blue Badge; and
- b) Has a clear need for an organisational badge rather than using the individual Blue Badges of people it is transporting.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

30. This policy has been subject to an equality impact assessment and subsequently has no negative consequences on protected characteristics.

### **Compliance and review process**

31. This Policy complies with the Department of Transport regulations as outlined in section above.
32. This Policy will be subject to review in line with amendments and changes reflected in national guidance.

## Appendix one:

### **Blue Badge Application procedure.**

1. This procedure describes the **operational process** for Darlington Borough Council and applicants.

#### **Blue Badge Procedure:**

- a) Explains **how to apply** (online, phone, face-to-face).
- b) Details the **assessment process** (Customer Service Advisor, OT involvement).
- c) Lists **required evidence** and documentation.
- d) Covers **badge issuance**, renewal, and replacement.
- e) Outlines **appeal steps**, timelines, and escalation routes.

#### **How to apply for the service**

2. Darlington Borough Council operates the Blue Badge Scheme on behalf of the Department for Transport. Initial applications can be made online through the Council website at <https://www.darlington.gov.uk/adult-social-care/i-need-support/living-independently/travel/blue-badges>. Alternatively, telephone applications can be made directly with the council using telephone number 01325 405222.
3. Face to face appointments can be made who do need them.

#### **The Assessment Process**

4. The assessment process involves Customer Service Advisors reviewing all applications received, and where a decision cannot be reached, at this stage applications are referred to an Occupational Therapist for further assessment.
5. Blue badges last for 3 years, and a renewal application must be made 2 months before the expiry date.

#### **Required evidence and documentation**

#### **Blue Badge Eligibility Criteria**

##### *Automatic Qualification*

6. Residents will automatically qualify for a Blue Badge if they are aged 3 or over and at least one of the following applies:
  - a) Receive the higher rate of the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance.
  - b) Receive a Personal Independence Payment due to not being able to walk more than 50 metres.
  - c) Are registered blind.

- d) Receive a War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement.
  - e) Have received a lump sum benefit within tariff levels 1 to 8 of the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation) Scheme and have been certified as having a permanent and substantial disability that causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking.
  - f) Receive the mobility component of PIP and have 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 overwhelming psychological distress.
  - g) Attendance Allowance recipients will automatically be eligible.
7. Where there is any score other than 10 points under descriptor E, in the 'planning and following journeys' activity of PIP residents may still be eligible for a Blue Badge but do not automatically qualify. Evidence to demonstrate eligibility which will be assessed as part of the application.
8. Evidence will need to be provided to demonstrate eligibility which will be assessed as part of the application process.

#### **Residents who may be eligible**

9. Residents may be eligible for a badge if one or more of the following applies:
- a) Cannot walk at all.
  - b) Cannot walk without help from someone else or using mobility aids.
  - c) Find walking very difficult due to pain, breathlessness or the time it takes.
  - d) Walking is dangerous to your health and safety.
  - e) Have a life limiting illness, which means the resident cannot walk or find walking very difficult and have a SR1 form.
  - f) Have a severe disability in both arms and drive regularly, but cannot operate pay-and-display parking machines.
  - g) Have a child under the age of 3 with a medical condition that means the child always needs to be accompanied by bulky medical equipment.
  - h) Have a child under the age of 3 with a medical condition that means the child must always be kept near a vehicle in case they need emergency medical treatment.
  - i) Are constantly a significant risk to self or others near vehicles, in traffic or car parks.
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10. Evidence will be required to support applications. The type of evidence will depend on individual applications. This includes:
- a) A patient summary from GP surgery



- b) Information about treatment received
- c) Name and contact details for healthcare or associated professionals
- d) Diagnosis letter

### **Issuing of Blue Badges without further assessment**

11. When an application is made, we will ask the applicant for their **explicit consent** to access their existing Adults or Children's Social Care records in those cases where the Customer Service Advisor is unable to make a decision.
12. Where an application meets the criteria for the award of a blue badge without further assessment, the Customer Service Advisor will contact the applicant who will be asked to:
  - a) Give proof of any qualifying benefit.
  - b) Make payment of the fee associated with the award.
  - c) Submit two passport photographs.
13. Once the Council is in receipt of the above, the blue badge will be posted to the applicant at their home address.
14. Where we are unable to make a decision based on the information provided by the applicant, we will access any existing Adults or Children's Social Care records and review notes from any previous social care assessments and the outcome of these assessments, to see whether the applicant is likely to qualify for a Blue Badge. They may also view notes made in the records by occupational therapists, physiotherapists and social workers which may contain useful information that will enable them to make a decision. For example, this might include whether the applicant has been in hospital and/or the types of care they have been receiving from the Council or local health services.

### **Issuing of Badges with further assessment**

15. Where a decision cannot be made by the Customer Service Advisor, based on the information provided or by the OT based on the information held in our existing social care records, the OT will undertake an Independent Mobility Assessment.
16. The Occupational Therapist is a health professional with experience and knowledge of physical disability and mobility related problems and is considered competent to carry out the mobility assessment. This assessment provides the evidence to suggest that the person has or has not met the criteria.

### **Sharing of Information**

17. We will only access an applicant's social care records in those cases where they provide explicit consent for us to do so, at the point the application is made.

### **Correct Use of Blue Badges**

18. It is against the law to:

- a) use someone's Blue Badge when they are not with the recipient.
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- c) use a forged or copied badge
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### **Guidance on Appeals**

24. Where an application is declined by a Customer Service Advisor, applicants have the right to appeal. Reasons for the decline could include insufficient information in the application or the basic criteria is not met. This must be done in writing.

25. Appeals can be emailed to: [customerservices@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@darlington.gov.uk)

26. Appeals can also be posted to:

Blue badge Stage 1 Appeals  
Customer Service Centre  
Town Hall  
Feethams  
Darlington  
DL1 5QT

27. All appeals are reviewed within 20 working days from receipt. Where an appeal is successful this will be referred to the Occupational Therapist, who will then carry out an

independent mobility assessment. The application will then be progressed at the “refer to Occupational Therapist” stage above.

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32. An applicant can reapply in 6 months' time.