

Blue Badge Reform

Blue Badge Reform Programme

March 2010 update



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Latest Blue Badge News

Implementing the Blue Badge Reform Programme - Consultation Document

On March 22nd, the Department published for consultation a package of proposals to allow us to achieve our goals for improving the Blue Badge Scheme. This consultation sets out how we propose to:

- Improve the enforcement regime to tackle misuse and abuse, including possible amendments to primary and secondary legislation;
- distribute funding to local authorities to help them to establish robust Badge eligibility assessment practices;
- extend the eligibility criteria to more children under three years of age with specific medical conditions and to certain seriously disabled service personnel and veterans; and
- amend the primary legislation that covers the Blue Badge scheme. In particular, on appeals, guidance to local authorities on independent medical assessments, data-sharing, non-residents, organisational badges and other administrative arrangements.

The consultation can be found at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/open/2010-20/>.

The consultation will close on **Friday 2nd July 2010**, and responses should be sent to bbes@dft.gsi.gov.uk or to Katherine Lancaster, Travel Concessions Division, Department for Transport, 3/19 Great Minster House, 76 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DR.

The Department intends to consult on other aspects of the reform programme later in 2010 and in 2011, including proposals for redesigning the Badge and extending eligibility to people with serious cognitive impairments and with serious temporary disabilities, lasting at least one year.

June Seminar

The DfT will arrange a consultation event for June, for non-local authority stakeholders and interest groups, where those affected by the issues raised in the reform programme will have an opportunity to discuss these with officials from the Department. If you are interested in attending this, please contact katherine.lancaster@dft.gsi.gov.uk.

Data Sharing Workshops

In the December Newsletter we announced a series of workshops to be held with local authorities from both administering and enforcing local authorities to discuss potential options for the data-sharing project. We would like to thank everyone who came to the workshops for their extremely valuable input. 180 local authorities were represented over the 3 workshops held in York, London and Bath. We would also like to thank those who took the time to complete the on-line questionnaire sent out following the workshops.

A report of the key findings from the workshops has been compiled. This and the findings from the on-line questionnaire will be incorporated into the business base for the data sharing project.

Local Authority Centres of Excellence

The eight local authority Centres of Excellence (CoEs) have continued to actively implement their plans to share their good practices with neighbouring authorities. For example:

- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) held a good practice event on Blue Badge enforcement in February. A single point of contact will be identified in each local authority to improve the exchange of information between local

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authorities in the region. RMBC has also launched an on-line Blue Badge fraud report to encourage customers to report suspected misuse/fraud. The customer can remain anonymous if they chose.

- Birmingham and Coventry will be holding their 2nd Workshop for neighbouring local authorities on 30th March. This event will be used to share information within their region and provide updates on recent developments.

The work of the CoEs will be consolidated and shared with other local authorities. As part of this, researchers at Integrated Transport Planning and TAS will be conducting a telephone survey with neighbouring local authorities to evaluate the impact of the CoE initiative. We would welcome your involvement if you are contacted as part of this survey.

Blue Badge Administration and Assessment Good Practice

A team of researchers from Integrated Transport Planning and TAS have carried out in-depth interviews with the 8 Blue Badge Centres of Excellence and 25 other local authorities to gather evidence of good administration and eligibility assessment practices.

The project is investigating good practices throughout the whole Badge administration process, in terms of fairness and targeting, cost-efficiency, resistance to misuse and abuse and customer-friendliness. The work is specifically focussing on identifying, developing and promoting robust eligibility assessments.

Together with ITP and TAS, we have held two workshops with stakeholders to inform the work and to test the emerging findings. The first event, held in January, included representatives from Government Departments, such as DH and DWP, the local authority Blue Badge Centres of Excellence and representatives from disabled people's groups. The second, held in March, was attended by officials from 34 local authorities who had not previously been directly involved. We would like to thank participants for their valuable input.

Once this project is complete, we intend to issue practical, case study based guidance aimed at improving the quality and consistency of Scheme administration and eligibility assessment.

New Blue Badge Statistics

The latest statistics on the number of badges on issue have been published. For those who wish to view them, they are on the Blue Badge pages of the DfT

website and can be viewed at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/public/parkingbadges/>.

High Level Implementation Plan

The Department has published a High Level Implementation Plan which can be viewed on the Department's website at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/bluebadgerefom/reformstrategy/>. It explains the purpose and objectives of the Blue Badge reform programme, and sets out the key programme messages, providing a high level timescale for milestones of various projects within the programme. The timing of these milestones may change from time-to-time as the programme evolves but this document will be kept up-to-date with the latest information.

Keeping in Touch

Remember, you can contact the Blue Badge Advice Line on either 020 7944 2914 or 0161 367 0009 or by email at blue.badge@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Any enquiries to the Blue Badge team at the Department can be sent to bbes@dft.gsi.gov.uk

We try to keep our contacts lists as up to date as we can. Please do introduce yourself if you are a new member of staff in your organisation and would like to be notified of Blue Badge news in the future, or if you do not currently receive correspondence from us and would like to.

