The Strategic Review of the Blue Badge Scheme:

An independent report by
Rob Smith
2007
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Main Report

Introduction

1. On 27 March 2007 the then Transport Minister, Gillian Merron, announced a rapid Strategic Review of the Blue Badge Parking Scheme for disabled people. I was appointed as an independent consultant to set out options for the future development of the Scheme. This report is intended to aid Ministers in developing a comprehensive Blue Badge reform strategy by spring 2008. The methodology for the Review and a list of stakeholders who I held discussions with as part of the Review are at Annex A. I am very grateful to all those who participated in the Review and to the Department for Transport (DfT) team who provided research, analysis and administrative support. This Review is about the Scheme in England, although there has been consultation with colleagues in other parts of the UK. I was asked to cover the ground in as succinct and pithy a way as possible so the Review could be read comfortably at one sitting.

2. The first parking scheme for disabled people (the Orange Badge Scheme) was created in 1971 to promote greater independent mobility and social inclusion. The Blue Badge Scheme as we know it today was introduced on 1 April 2000. An overview of the concessions provided by the Scheme is at Annex B. There are currently approximately 2.3 million Blue Badge holders in the UK and if current trends continue there are likely to be over 3 million by 2012. This compares to an estimated 673,000 Orange Badges on issue in England at 31 March 1987 and 1.64 million at 31 March 1997.

3. The current eligibility criteria for a Blue Badge are at Annex C. It is estimated that around a third of holders receive the Badge automatically ‘without further assessment’ (the vast majority of which are in receipt of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance [HRMCDLA], around 2 per cent of individual Badge holders are registered blind and less than 1 per cent are in receipt of the War Pensioners’ Mobility Supplement). Around two-thirds of people receive their Badges through the assessed eligibility criteria.

4. The Government conducted an earlier review of the Blue Badge Scheme, which culminated in 47 recommendations from the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) in 2002. A list of these recommendations is set out at Annex D. The current Review was set up to chart a future direction for the development of
In particular the Government had in mind the:

i) significant progress made in making public transport more accessible (for example over a third of all trains and over half of the bus fleet are now accessible);

ii) increase in traffic congestion and the possible introduction of road pricing initiatives across the country; and

iii) greater emphasis on bringing together budgets in the hands of those with particular needs to choose the provision they require, rather than subsidising particular services.

Thus, while the Government has made and is making improvements (including for example enhanced enforcement procedures and better designed Badges), there remains a need for a new strategic vision for the next five to ten years.

When conducting the Review, I was asked to keep in mind four key principles for the Scheme; that it should be:

i) clear – easy to understand by all;

ii) fair – consistently administered and focused on those most in need;

iii) robust – effective at preventing and addressing abuse; and

iv) integrated – supportive of other Government initiatives.

A number of general conclusions, following fairly comprehensive discussions and a review of research, have informed my thinking on the future of the Blue Badge Scheme and related issues. There appears to be a broad consensus that:

i) there is a continuing need for a scheme that offers parking concessions to those who have severe difficulties in walking;

ii) most people who really need these concessions on mobility grounds receive a Badge (although there are strong and credible representations on behalf of a number of other groups with particular conditions – see paragraphs 16 to 21);

iii) there is a concern that some people who may not have a clear and compelling need for a Badge may receive one through the assessed eligibility category;

iv) the Scheme is undermined by high and continuing levels of various other types of abuse;

v) the Scheme brand is well recognised by holders and non-holders but the detailed rules etc. are not well known; and

vi) disabled people should have a real choice as to how to travel around and therefore alternatives to car use should be readily and consistently available to them.
9. Stakeholder views and analysis of current trends suggest that overall the purpose of the Scheme should be as follows: to facilitate access to amenities etc for those who for reasons of severe disability would otherwise be unable to enjoy such amenities. However, given increasing car use and consequent congestion and environmental issues, as well as significant investment in accessible public transport, the Scheme should not unnecessarily incentivise car use. This approach reflects the strategic direction of the DfT as influenced by the Eddington review. But a realistic view has to be taken about the practicalities of the alternatives in different parts of the country, in urban and rural areas, and in terms of the individual circumstances of disabled people. The emphasis should therefore be on retaining a viable and sustainable parking scheme, while promoting genuine choice in terms of alternatives to private car use.

10. The Review now considers the key issues as follows:
   i) Who should be eligible for concessions?
   ii) What should those concessions be?
   iii) Improving the administration of the Scheme and tackling abuse.
   iv) Providing choice.

11. At the end of each section I set out my considerations for Ministers. They are, of course, not exhaustive and there are pros and cons to each and every one (including resourcing issues). Different permutations are possible; however, better administration generally holds the key to allowing some of the other flexibilities to be pursued if Ministers wish.

Eligibility

12. There is a clear case for providing parking concessions for those who would not be able to access work, shopping, leisure and other activities without such concessions. At the same time, the more people who have these concessions, the higher the risk of abuse and the less accessible (given the finite number of concessionary bays etc.) those concessions become. The growth of the elderly population is putting more pressure on provision. So, given the increasing restrictions on parking in many areas, the value of the concessions is increasing, and it is understandable that many groups would like to have access to the Scheme. The issue therefore is what should constitute severe disability for the purposes of the Scheme.

13. For the integrity of the Badge to be maintained, it remains necessary to restrict eligibility to those most in need. There is a general view that for people who claimed the HRMCDLA before their 65th birthday, the benefit remains a good indicator of that need in terms of physical mobility. A brief description of this benefit and its assessment is at Annex E. It is also widely accepted that the other specific categories of disability referred to in the ‘automatic without further assessment’ eligibility criteria represent people with severe need. The ‘eligibility
subject to further assessment' category (referred to as 'assessed eligibility' in this Review) is necessary at the least to cater for those over 65 who would, but for their age, be entitled to the HRMCDLA. It has been suggested that the assessed eligibility category should be limited to people over 65 who are not already on HRMCDLA, but this would undoubtedly create hardship for those with severe disability who for one reason or another do not either apply or qualify for the HRMCDLA (for example, some people do not want to claim the benefit through choice, but need the parking concessions under the Scheme because of genuine mobility problems).

14. It should, however, be possible to be more rigorous about the fair and consistent application of the criteria by changes to the assessment system (see paragraphs 53 to 55) and through clearer guidance on how the assessed eligibility category should be applied. The DfT intends to issue new local authority guidance in early 2008. This raises a further issue of the extent to which the system should allow local judgement in the light of local circumstances to play a part in determining who should get Badges (which itself is part of a bigger question of whether the scheme is essentially local or national in character (see paragraphs 57 to 59). Opinions are divided amongst the stakeholders I consulted on the issue of local judgement; with one view being that the Scheme is akin to a national benefit and as far as is possible exactly the same judgements should be made on the same qualifying conditions in every part of the country.

15. Others argue that there needs to be an element of flexibility to allow for individual circumstance and local conditions. I am more drawn to this approach, but in either case it would be necessary for the centre to set out in more detail how the assessed eligibility category should be applied and in which circumstances local judgement should play a part. Clearly there is local discretion about how parking needs are best met, and this is rightly a matter for local authorities.

16. In response to the 2002 DPTAC recommendations (at Annex D) the Government commissioned research into the mobility needs of other groups of disabled people that are not covered by the current eligibility criteria. A summary of this research is at Annex C. The research concluded that the most pressing case was for disabled people who are physically able to walk, but require physical contact and supervision to safely cross the road on account of a disability. These might be, for example, people with the most severe forms of autism or Alzheimer’s disease who, for reason of age or other circumstances, have not qualified for, or applied for, HRMCDLA. The researchers suggested a new category of those requiring constant assistance of this nature.

17. There is clearly a real issue in relation to people with this type of impairment, although there is also a danger of widening access to the Scheme in a way that would be difficult to control. Also the most valuable benefits to this group might be a subset of the total benefits (for example more assured parking in particular settings). This in turn raises the possibility of having different Badges with different entitlements, but in my view the simplicity principle should rule this out. There is
a case for extending Badges to this group, but a more restrictive definition than that suggested should be sought with assessment safeguards (maybe including a consultant’s signature) built in. The assessed criteria could be used to achieve this.

18. An interesting suggestion made is that carers of children with severe autism, but without a Blue Badge, might be issued with a book of one day Blue Badge ‘vouchers’ for use at particularly difficult times. Complexity might rule this out, but it is a possibility if numbers of Badges for this condition were seen as a significant problem. Equally, other alternatives such as taxi vouchers might meet this particular set of needs.

19. The second group who seem to have a pressing case are those seeking short-term (that is less than three years) Badges for temporary disablement as the result of orthopaedic surgery or other debilitating conditions. This would include Badges for the carers of children over the age of 2 with severe, but temporary, mobility conditions that require them to have bulky medical equipment with them at all times. The Government has recently announced that under 2s in these circumstances can qualify for a Blue Badge, but if the condition continues past their second birthday they are currently technically no longer entitled to a Badge because the condition is still temporary.

20. The main arguments against temporary Badges centre around ensuring Badges are only used by those who are eligible for the necessary duration and ensuring that administrative processes can cope with the issue and recall of temporary Badges. Such Badges could be specially patterned to make clear they are temporary.

21. With the administrative improvements identified later in the report it may no longer be necessary to limit the Badge to three years for those who are likely to remain eligible for longer periods. Better administration could allow greater variety in Badge duration.

22. While the further flexibilities detailed above are likely to be of significant help to those in difficult circumstances, it is important that definitions and safeguards prevent the Scheme becoming overloaded. They would therefore need to go hand in hand with stronger anti-abuse and enforcement measures. They could also be trialled in particular areas to ensure that numbers could be adequately controlled. Where additional costs fell on local government because of any changes, these would have to be met by an increase in Revenue Funding under the ‘New Burdens’ procedure.

23. The key considerations for Ministers on eligibility are whether to:

i) issue clearer and more comprehensive guidance as to how the assessed eligibility criteria should be applied; paying particular attention to those under 65 who are not in receipt of the HRMCDLA and those over 65 who seek to qualify on grounds other than they would be eligible for this benefit but for their age;
ii) extend the assessed eligibility criteria to cover people with very severe disabilities, who require physical supervision and contact to safely cross the road;

iii) further agree to the introduction of temporary Badges (lasting less than three years) for those who have had serious orthopaedic surgery (and for certain conditions affecting children over the age of 2); and

iv) explore any other widening of the criteria, providing that the Scheme remains practicable and protects the access of those who need the concession the most.

24. Any such changes could be phased or even piloted following a series of administrative improvements recommended later in this Review.

Concessions

25. At present, Blue Badges offer a range of formal and informal concessions:

i) more convenient parking as set out in the rules of use (see Annex B);

ii) greater assurance of parking;

iii) free parking in circumstances where others have to pay;

iv) discounts from certain congestion and road pricing schemes; and

v) a passport to other, mainly parking, opportunities off street, and in private and recreational cultural and retail settings.

26. This is a wide range and, given that there are no real intermediate arrangements, it strongly adds to the Badge’s value in terms of abuse. Other European countries have similar schemes to the Blue Badge Scheme, but the range of concessions offered differs (see Annex F). Various suggestions have been made for changes to these concessions in England.

27. There is a strong view from some users that many Badge holders are wary of using yellow lines for occasional parking. They argue that the three hour time limit on parking on single and double yellow lines should be abolished to help people using this type of parking for employment and other commitments that do not fit within the three-hour limit. The time limit for parking on yellow lines does not exist in Scotland and this is not reported to cause any significant traffic flow problems even in major cities. However, the English Scheme is already one of the most generous parking concessions of its kind in Europe and the 2002 DPTAC recommendations recommended no change to the existing yellow line concession. Furthermore, local authorities have powers to install designated disabled persons’ parking bays on-street, for example in town centres or outside a domestic residence, and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 also requires duty holders, such as employers, service providers, private clubs and public bodies delivering public functions, to make similar provision off-street if this would be a reasonable
adjustment under the Act. Market research conducted by the DFT as part of the Review (see Annex I) does not show high demand for the yellow line concession in its current format.

28. After considering the arguments, I think that, provided that greater anti-abuse measures are adopted (see Section 4 on Better Administration, starting at paragraph 45), abolishing the three-hour limit at least on single yellow lines might be a potentially helpful simplification of the Scheme and would benefit the minority of holders who have longer commitments either regularly or on a one-off basis. It has been suggested to me that councils may need power to designate more areas where no parking is allowed (in addition to no loading) etc. I have not seen persuasive evidence on this, but it could be a quid pro quo for abolishing the three-hour limit. The DfT may wish to give local authorities discretion to pilot this mixed approach – perhaps at first in particular areas where the time constraint is an issue – following appropriate modelling and an impact assessment in light of its goal of reducing traffic congestion.

29. The greater assurance of parking depends both on the availability of bays (disabled and other), the total number of users in the locality, and the rate of abuse. It appears generally that there is not widespread concern about the total provision of bays (although more would be welcomed by disability groups) and DfT guidance on this is thought to be clear and helpful. Abuse is dealt with later, as are issues related to private retail and recreational etc. parking (see paragraph 60). Special considerations apply to parking at hospitals, GP practices and clinics. As service providers, the owners and operators of these facilities are under a duty to consider what might be reasonable in terms of the provision and enforcement of disabled persons’ parking bays. It is best practice for operators at these locations to make certain there is sufficient available parking for Blue Badge holders and close monitoring to prevent abuse. Survey evidence suggests that holders see off-street parking as equally or more valued than on-street parking and consideration should be given to including public off-street parking within the Scheme while continuing to give local authorities discretion over charging in those locations.

30. I have considered the issue as to whether the fiscal concessions covered by the Badge are too generous and serve mainly to encourage abuse. Some argue that convenience and assurance are enough and that there is no need for the Badge to offer free or subsidised parking. Others that Badge holders should pay a minimum charge on all occasions. There has not been a definitive study of how much councils collectively forego annually as a result of Blue Badge concessions and more research is needed in this area. Information obtained from an Automobile Association (AA) public information leaflet and the European Commission show that some European countries, including France (except Paris), Denmark, Portugal and Luxembourg do make a charge for the use of parking for disabled people (see Annex F).

31. There are, however, significant arguments against introducing charging for parking. One issue is that not all driving Badge holders can cope with parking meters and other pay machines (although moves towards using mobile phone technology
may change this over time). More persuasive are the arguments that many Badge holders are in receipt of flat rate benefits and this would act to reduce their value, and that to make paying work all yellow line concessions would need to be withdrawn, or there would be a strong financial incentive to use yellow lines rather than bays.

32. An alternative would be to compensate Badge holders for charging by increasing relevant benefits, thus reducing the incentive for abuse whilst not disadvantaging Badge holders. Such a change would fit well with the current trend of introducing individual social care budgets to promote greater choice and control for the individual (see Annex G). However, while it might be helpful to run some carefully controlled and well-communicated experiments of this nature, it is difficult to see how any wholesale change would do other than lead to large scale ‘winners and losers’ in users’ own eyes and would almost certainly disadvantage those who currently make significant use of the Badge. Some users see the Scheme, including its fiscal elements, as part of the ‘inclusive infrastructure’ (that is in the same light as accessible public transport). The view could also be taken that the fiscal element provides an unhelpful incentive for vehicle use as against other transport alternatives.

33. Some of the same arguments apply to whether there should be a charge for the Badge itself. The current maximum £2 charge that can be levied by local authorities often costs more than this to collect, and does not offer any disincentive to abuse. Scotland has already increased the maximum charge that local authorities can choose to collect to £20. Recent research conducted by the Department of Health\(^1\) came up with an average administration cost of around £35 per Badge (not including Badge fee processing costs) for 2006/07 (although some local authorities suggest that costs are considerably higher). More generally, there is a trend to make a charge for the issue of enabling documentation (for example passports, driving licences etc.). If the Blue Badge is seen as part of the overall social care benefit arrangements then there are arguments against levying any charge. However, a one-off charge for a Badge conferring such significant benefits might not be seen as unreasonable overall, and even more so if all or some of the income could be devoted to further improvements in the Scheme itself (for example funding a central data sharing system – see paragraph 49).

34. Issues relating to other parking concessions which the Badge may give access to are dealt with later (see paragraph 36). However, there is also the emerging matter of concessions granted via the Badge for congestion and road pricing schemes. Some groups have argued that the Government should have a policy that Blue Badge holders should be exempt from charges for all such schemes (as part of the ‘inclusive infrastructure’ argument – see paragraph 32). Given, however, that current and future schemes will differ from each other in timing and nature this could be seen as too broad brush an approach, and for the foreseeable future.

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\(^1\) The Care Services Efficiency Delivery Programme, Blue Badge Initiative (Department of Health: June 2006)
those sponsoring schemes might therefore continue to consider the range and nature of exemptions to be given.

35. **The key considerations for Ministers on concessions are whether to:**
   
i) experiment with abolishing the three-hour time limit on Blue Badge Parking on single yellow lines in certain locations. It could be either increased, to say 7 hours, to allow for employment etc. but prevent ‘permanent’ parking or abolished altogether on the basis that ‘permanent’ parking is unlikely;
   
ii) bring ‘off street’ parking formally within the ambit of the Scheme and if so whether to restrict in any way the charging regime for Blue Badge holders off-street;
   
iii) separate the convenience benefits from the fiscal benefits of the Scheme, possibly linked to a move towards individual budgets covering transport concessions;
   
iv) introduce a £20 (or other) charge for the Badge itself either nationally or at local authority discretion, and whether any of that charge should be specifically used for Scheme improvements; or
   
v) introduce a specific policy on concessions in relation to congestion charges, tolls and other road pricing regimes or constitute to leave these to local operators to determine in the light of the nature of the schemes themselves.

**London and other local schemes**

36. There is a particular issue relating to the different set of arrangements for Blue Badge holders in the centre of London (that is all or parts of the four central London Boroughs). Officially known in legislation as the ‘London Concession’ (although this term is disliked by many), this is a more restrictive regime than that which operates elsewhere in England (and is summarised at Annex H).

37. A number of stakeholders would like to see the special regime abolished and the four Boroughs reverting to the national scheme. However, there are undoubtedly unique, and to my mind persuasive, considerations that apply to traffic management in the heart of the capital city. These include complex bus and retail support vehicle access, strong demand for limited residential parking spaces, and security issues. Furthermore, there is no conclusive evidence based on the commercial impact of making changes to the current regime. This would be a necessary prerequisite to revoking the concession, however, research of this nature would be methodologically complex and difficult to execute.

38. It is, however, very confusing for Blue Badge holders to be faced with what appear to be four separate special regimes in the four central London Boroughs. The Boroughs have already significantly harmonised their arrangements for visiting Badge holders and it would seem sensible for these to now be presented and publicised as a single Central London Scheme and the arrangements and
boundaries made clear for those visiting the area. Special consideration needs to be given to Blue Badge parking provision in and around the major hospitals as they attract significant occasional visitors for specialist consultation and/or treatment (although hospital car parks themselves are of course ‘off street’ and not currently covered by the Scheme).

39. There are arguments as to whether the four Boroughs’ own schemes for disabled residents and workers should also be harmonized, but the case here is less strong given the fact that these clients tend to be familiar with the areas and the arrangements. Similarly, there are arguments for changing the boundaries of the special arrangements, for example to make them coterminous with the Central London Congestion Charge area. While this has some attractions (for example it is a traffic management not a ‘political’ boundary, which is clearly signposted to non-residents), the changes involved could confuse local residents of the four Boroughs in the short term and would bring in areas and Boroughs that are not now affected. It could also exclude some areas that arguably require the special regime.

40. Some other places (for example York) also have local restrictions in certain areas. There should be clear criteria for all such schemes, which should be implemented sparingly.

41. Key considerations for Ministers in relation to the Central London ‘Concession’ and other special schemes are whether to:
   i) continue to allow these special arrangements to exist in relation to central London;
   ii) encourage the Boroughs to present and publicise harmonised arrangements for Blue Badge holders visiting their areas, whilst allowing current arrangements for residents and worker Badges to continue;
   iii) redraw the boundaries for the Central London Scheme; or
   iv) allow other areas to have local schemes and what conditions or limitations to apply.

**Better administration and enforcement**

42. The Government has taken a number of steps to improve the administration of the Blue Badge Scheme and prevent abuse. In particular, the Badge design has recently been altered to aid parking enforcement and comprehensive revised local authority guidance and good practice advice is due for issue in early 2008. These new initiatives will understandably take time to bed down and deliver a significant impact through DfT monitoring.

43. In the meantime, there continues to be a very strong view amongst stakeholders that, despite these improvements, levels of abuse continue to be unacceptably high, and threaten the future viability of the Scheme. Hard evidence on a national basis is less easy to come by, partly because of the nature of the Scheme itself.
There seems little doubt, however, that even if the wilder estimates of abuse are overstated, it remains a substantial issue and requires further action if the credibility of the Scheme is to be maintained and changes made (for example on temporary Badges).

44. There are a variety of types of Blue Badge abuse:
   i) theft and forgery of Badges;
   ii) use of expired Badges or those belonging to people who have died;
   iii) non-Badge holders parking in disabled persons bays;
   iv) non-Badge holders using Blue Badges belonging to others but not to transport the Badge holder; and
   v) people gaining Badges by exaggerating their need when applying.

45. There are a number of options that offer the potential to significantly reduce abuse; in particular:
   i) greater use of technological innovation in monitoring and enforcement arrangements;
   ii) design improvements in the Badge and support arrangements; and
   iii) more consistent and rigorous enforcement across the country.

46. There are numerous emerging technologies which could be employed as part of the Blue Badge Scheme to help strengthen defences against abuse, including the possible use of tags, smart cards and bar codes. These are outlined at Annex J. The upshot is that there should be technologies available that would allow encrypted details and images of the Badge and Badge holders to be read remotely. But more careful scoping is needed of the various possibilities to ensure the cost/benefits add up and crucially that the reliability factor will be sufficiently high. It is also naturally more important to focus on business requirements than specific technological solutions, and to ensure that technical solutions are integrated with requirements for wider DfT policies such as concessionary travel.

47. Although there is legal provision for local authorities to record the vehicle or vehicles for which each Badge is held, this has never been enforced. As a result, there continues to be a problem that the Badge in whatever form can be misappropriated and used in any vehicle. Enforcing authorities then have to wait for a person to return to the vehicle and wait again if the person then says they have dropped off or are about to pick up the Badge holder.

48. To receive 100 per cent discount from the London Congestion Charge all Badge holders have to nominate up to two vehicles (which can be changed over the internet or by phone) to which the discount will apply. Transport for London (TfL) estimate that, between August 2006-07, of the total 71,439 Badge holders who entered the congestion zone with the 100 per cent discount, about 61 per cent have registered
one vehicle and 29 per cent two vehicles. The DfT also conducted some market research as part of the Review (a summary of the results and methodology are set out at Annex I). The research showed that most (81 per cent) of Blue Badge holders surveyed had typically only displayed their Badges in 1–2 cars over the last 12 months. It would be a very significant aid to combating abuse through stolen or forged Badges if the provision to record Badges against specific vehicles was promoted and enforced. The DfT may also to wish consider incorporating it in further technological developments.

49. The DPTAC Review also recommended the introduction of a central database of Blue Badge holders. A full consideration of data-sharing technology is summarised at Annex J. Preliminary research suggests that a system of national data sharing would be feasible (although this does not need to be a national database). London Councils is currently implementing a database of lost, stolen and fraudulent Blue Badges for London and is also working with TfL to explore the option of developing a London database of all Badge holders. As the number of Badge holders increases and technologies become more sophisticated, the integrity of the Scheme is likely to be significantly enhanced by having reliable national data sharing arrangements. These could be centrally or locally managed, but sooner or later the question of whether the Scheme should continue to be administered locally will arise. For now a national data sharing system with local access and updating would seem a reasonable solution. Again a rigorous cost benefit analysis would be required, to ensure that any investment would be more than recouped by the reduction in abuse. In my view this is particularly likely if the data sharing system recorded the link between the Badge and the vehicle (or vehicles) for which it was held (see paragraph 47).

50. While such technological developments are being fully assessed, there is more that can be done to ensure Badges are uniformly more tamperproof, more clearly branded as non-transferable to prevent ‘lending of Badges’, and their key details (for example expiry date) harder to alter. The Government should issue clearer guidance as soon as possible to this effect. There has been some debate as to whether the photograph should be positioned face up to help prevent abuse, but the risk of victimisation remains, and hopefully encrypted details will be sufficient in the future to identify holders to those who need to know.

51. Similarly, a more uniform and consistent approach to monitoring and enforcement, with regular and random Badge checks and zero tolerance of abuse, should be instituted, with parking officers being given the power to confiscate suspicious Badges temporarily (rather than as now having to call a police officer to do so). Closer liaison with the police, particularly in urban areas, should be encouraged by government as a whole. The experience in many areas is that misappropriated or forged Badges are often a marker for wider vehicle-focused crime (that is failure to have MOT and/or insurance or road licence, and stolen vehicles). Higher fines could be levied on non-Badge holders using disabled persons’ parking bays with the possibility of the introduction of a scheme of penalty points on licences held in
reserve in case these actions prove insufficiently effective as a deterrent (although
the Home Office has taken the view hitherto that penalty points are appropriate
for offences involving a moving vehicle which are likely to cause danger, but are
usually disproportionate for other offences involving a vehicle).

52. It is my impression that groups representing Blue Badge holders would welcome
greater monitoring and scrutiny if it leads to a substantial reduction in abuse.
Several local authorities have begun to deploy specialist teams of parking
enforcement officers, who undertake targeted undercover surveillance operations
on people suspected of abusing the Scheme. This approach has greatly improved
prosecution rates in areas such as Wandsworth and Manchester, especially where
friends and relatives of Badge holders have frequently borrowed the holder’s
Badge. A number of local authorities have suggested that activities of this nature
need to be better resourced. This could potentially be overcome by channelling
some of the fine revenue from successful prosecutions to local authorities for
use in Blue Badge enforcement or by developing business cases based on the
potential cost benefits that could be achieved through improved enforcement
processes (for example through increased parking revenues).

53. On other administrative issues, there is certainly a view that greater consistency
of judgement by local authorities on the discretionary criteria would be of
considerable benefit. Currently issuing rates for Blue Badges are on average
around 45 per thousand of residential population, but can range from the low teens
to over hundred per thousand in different areas of the country. Some of this may
be explained by age demography, but the relativities are still striking.

54. Earlier in this Review the suggestion of better guidance on the assessed category
was examined. In addition to this it has been suggested that all local authorities
should appoint independent people to make the assessments on applications (for
example occupational therapists, retired GPs or specially trained personnel) and
that the applicant’s own GP should not play a key role in making the assessment
judgements as this places an unfair burden on the GP who has to maintain
the patient relationship into the future. Some authorities have already adopted
this arrangement which can increase both cost effectiveness and consistency.
A funding adjustment between the Primary Care Trust and the local authority could
help finance this change.

55. It should be possible more generally for local authorities to streamline the issuing
of Badges and take a more rigorous approach to retrieving expired Badges and
those of people who have died. The Department of Health has issued guidance
on how processing can be made more efficient as part of the Gershon reform
programme. Further action on encouraging local authorities to pursue best
practice in this arena is desirable. An analysis of local authority good practice and
areas where further assistance may be required is at Annex K.

56. DPTAC are right in suggesting that local authorities should introduce an appeals
process where this is not currently the case, although the grounds should be
such that people would not automatically be eligible to appeal merely because their application is rejected. Currently it is estimated that only 12 per cent of initial applicants are rejected, but the tightening of the discretionary category might lead to an increase in rejected applications and consequently the number of people wishing to appeal. Consistency of the appeals process across the country would be desirable.

57. A more radical approach would be to centralise the administration of the scheme (particularly if a central database is created). There are consistency and uniformity arguments in favour of this approach and some believe wholesale centralisation of the Scheme would improve effectiveness and efficiency. However, current thinking remains that services should be provided locally if there is a need for a local input and for links to other locally managed services. The Government should consider whether it would be right to give local authorities some additional financial or other type of incentive to improve their administration of the Blue Badge Scheme as a signal of the intent to ensure a more effective and rigorous regime for the future.

58. Concern was expressed by some stakeholders that there was not sufficient overt central governance of the Scheme, and it is for consideration whether even if the Scheme is not centralised it might benefit from a central full-time authority charged with its care and upkeep in liaison with local authorities, and with advising Ministers on issues and future developments. Such an authority would be small but could have responsibility for all or some of the following functions:

i) drawing up and issuing guidance on various aspects of the Blue Badge Scheme;

ii) ensuring consistent approaches across local authorities and examining apparent discrepancies and advising Ministers accordingly;

iii) responsibility for the application of new technologies and introducing and managing any central database;

iv) making recommendations on applications for special parking schemes in particular areas;

v) ensuring consistency in appeals procedures across the country; and

vi) advising Ministers of future developments.

59. While there are dangers in hiving off responsibility solely for a car-based Scheme, these are arguably outweighed by the advantages in having full-time central governance for the Scheme.

Other parking

60. So far as letters to government and complaints on internet sites etc. are concerned, a major source of concern and frustration by Badge holders is the abuse of disabled person parking bays in private retail and recreational settings by non-Badge holders. Operators have a duty under Part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to take reasonable steps to ensure that their services are
accessible to disabled people including the provision and enforcement of disabled persons’ parking bays. Some operators do monitor and take action, but in other cases it is even alleged that non-disabled staff use the disabled bays. This issue requires urgent and determined action in liaison with the sectors, which will build upon the initial work undertaken by earlier ‘Baywatch’ campaigns. A public consciousness campaign (see paragraph 61 below) will help, but this would be ineffective without comprehensive follow up action by operators themselves. Some operators have suggested that it would help if they had more discretion to alter the number of disabled persons’ parking bays in accordance with demand. This might be worth pursuing provided there were sufficient safeguards. Powers exist for private operators to invite local authorities to apply their enforcement regimes in private settings and if any sectors are slow to co-operate in introducing effective practice the Government might want to consider making local authority enforcement a default requirement.

Public awareness

61. There are strong arguments for the Government to launch a major public awareness campaign to support their new strategy. This would include such elements as:

i) a TV ad/poster campaign for respect for disabled persons’ parking bays (and why people might see others legitimately using them etc.);

ii) publicity for co-ordinated accessible disabled transport choices in particular areas; and

iii) regularly updating the advisory booklet for Badge holders that explains rights and responsibilities.

62. It would be open to Ministers to decide that the options for change set out in this Review justified a significant launch of a new Blue Badge strategy which was designed both to inform people of changes and also to raise public awareness of abuse issues and influence behaviour (as part of a sustained information campaign).

63. Key considerations for Ministers in better administration of the Blue Badge Scheme are whether to:

i) sanction the introduction of new technologies where a clear cost benefit can be shown;

ii) promote and enforce the provision for recording the vehicle (or vehicles) for which each Badge is held;

iii) agree to work being taken forward on the introduction of a national data sharing system for Badge holders;

iv) consider giving enforcement officers the power to confiscate Badges; promote increased targeted surveillance of people abusing the scheme; and explore the possibility of increasing fines for misuse;
v) institute a system of independent professionals to make assessment 
judgements and to set in train further action on good practice in administration 
by local authorities;

vi) consider the creation of a central Blue Badge authority with or without 
centralising more of the actual functions of the Scheme (for example issuing 
and withdrawing Badges);

vii) institute further action to combat abuse in other parking settings (especially 
retail and recreational); and

viii) initiate a major public awareness campaign in support of their new strategy and 
Blue Badge enforcement, and put in hand action to monitor the impact of the 
strategy.

Choice

64. At various points in this Review, I have mentioned that wherever practical disabled 
people should have the same choices as other members of society about how they 
travel in the light of, for example, convenience, cost, efficiency and environmental 
considerations. Making this choice more of a reality will enable more disabled 
people to use other forms of transport on suitable occasions. This would help 
to raise expectations and address the reported imbalance concerning disabled 
people not being able to travel as much as they wish to.

65. Greater co-ordinated action on transport for disabled people would also ensure 
that those without access to private vehicles are not significantly disadvantaged. 
While there is little data available on the socio-economic makeup of Blue Badge 
holders, and it should not be assumed that disabled people in disadvantaged 
areas do not have access to private vehicles, it is likely in terms of social inclusion 
that ensuring other transport options are viable in such areas would help. Indeed, 
the Government might want to consider encouraging further special initiatives 
in areas of disadvantage to address the transport needs of disabled people, 
particularly where this could enhance access to employment opportunities.

66. More generally there appears to be a need for greater co-ordination to ensure that 
policies on the provision of dropped curbs, parking near train stations, bus stations 
and park-and-ride, accessible trams, buses, trains, platforms, and ‘shop-mobility’ 
provision all work together to allow the maximum choice and maximum number of 
independent journeys. The Government should consider developing a ‘personal 
 mobility’ strategy and review its policy on the accessibility of public transport in 
light of these concerns.

67. A key reason for leaving Blue Badge administration with local authorities is that it 
is part of a complex web of services run by various different agencies that need 
to work together locally to improve mobility and to ensure that the significant 
investment being made on accessible transport (for example, £370 million is 
currently being invested in making train stations more accessible through the
‘Access for All’ initiative) leads to increased usage by disabled people. The local authority is in the best possible position to fulfil this leadership role. Consultation with disabled people about access is essential (and local authorities should be prepared to support local groups financially to provide such consultation). They might also introduce more ways of allowing local people to illustrate obstacles to local journeys and be prepared to act to help overcome these wherever possible.

68. Evidence on disabled people’s knowledge and experience of travelling by public transport is mixed (see Annex I for recent market research) and the Government might wish to consider pilot schemes along the lines of the recent GOJO initiative to encourage young people to try journeys where they might have been reluctant to do so because of uncertainties etc. The right balance of the provision of such alternatives in particular areas might helpfully be considered as part of these pilots, and they could pave the way for experimentation with a single direct mobility payment or card which sought to pool some or all of the current concessions and incentives.

69. The Blue Badge Scheme only makes sense within the wider context of improving overall travel opportunities for disabled people. This should also allow monitoring of choices over time and the possibility of rebalancing incentives where this seems appropriate.

70. Key considerations for Ministers on choice are whether to:
   i) develop further initiatives to assist disabled people in disadvantaged areas;
   ii) agree to further action to encourage local authorities to play a leadership role in the co-ordination of all aspects of accessible travel in their areas and take more action to facilitate journeys; and
   iii) consider piloting a trade off between Blue Badges and other forms of assisted transport in particular areas.

Conclusion

71. If a programme based on the options set out across this Review was to be implemented it would undoubtedly help to persuade disabled people that the Government was determined both to enhance the integrity of the Blue Badge Scheme itself, and also place it in the context of re-invigorated action on disabled access and mobility more generally, designed to make equality in terms of mobility and transport a reality.
Blue Badge Review bibliography

British Parking Association, *Parking Practice Note No 20 – Blue is the colour parking is the game: Controlling Blue Badge fraud and parking misuse in Edinburgh* (British Parking Association: January 2007)

Care Services Efficiency Delivery Programme, *Blue Badge Initiative* (Department of Health: June 2006)


Department of Health, *Our health, our care, our say* (Department of Health: November 2006)


Department for Transport, *Evidence based review on mobility; Choices and Barriers for different social groups* (Department for Transport: September 2006)

Department for Transport, *Consultation Document: The Blue Badge Scheme* (Department for Transport: March 2007)

Department for Transport, *Concessionary Bus Travel Bulletin #6* (Department for Transport: 29 June 2007)


Sir Rod Eddington, *The Eddington Transport Study* (Sir Rod Eddington: December 2006)


D. Jolly, M. Priestly, B. Matthews, *Secondary Analysis of Existing Data on Disabled People’s Use and Experience of Public Transport in Great Britain* (Disability Rights Commission: October 2006)


MVA Consultancy, *Feasibility Study on Developing a National Database of Blue Badge Holders* (Department for Transport: July 2006)


TTR, *Eligibility for the Blue Badge Scheme* (Department for Transport: January 2007)

TTR, *Tackling the Abuse of Off-Street Parking for Disabled People in Scotland* (Scottish Executive: September 2007)


Relevant Department for Transport publications

- The Blue Badge Scheme: rights and responsibilities in England
- Can I get a Blue Badge?
- Blue Badge Scheme: Arrangements for travelling to other countries
- Blue Badge Scheme – Misuse of off-street disabled persons’ parking spaces
- Guidance on the use of Tactile Paving Surfaces
- Inclusive Mobility: A guide to best practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure
- Measures to tackle abuse of the Blue Badge Scheme
- New Blue Badge Scheme Regulations (DfT Circular 03/2007)
- Parking in Central London for Blue Badge holders
- Toll concessions for Disabled Persons’ Badge Holders at road bridges and tunnels
- Traffic Advisory Leaflet (5/95) parking for disabled people

Relevant external publications

- Design of Buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people (British Standard 8300: 2001)
- European parking card for people with disabilities – How and where to use it in 29 Countries (AA Motoring Trust)
Legislation relating to the Blue Badge Scheme in England

The Disabled Persons’ Parking Badge Scheme came into operation on 1 December 1971 by means of Regulations made under Section 21 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (Badges for display on motor vehicles used by disabled persons).

The Scheme as it currently stands is governed by the following Regulations:

- The Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) Regulations 2000 (SI 2000/682);
- The Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2000 (SI 2000/1507);
- The Local Authorities’ Traffic Orders (Exemptions for Disabled Persons) (England ) Regulations 2000 (SI 2000/683);
- The Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 (SI 2007/2531); and

Other relevant legislation:

- Section 21A (Recognition of Badges issued outside Great Britain) of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970; and
- Sections 47 (Offences relating to designated parking places), 117 (Wrongful use of disabled person’s Badge) and 142(1)(General interpretation of Act) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (provides powers to tackle parking-related abuse of the Scheme).
Annex A
Review methodology and stakeholder consultation

1. Methodology

1.1 The Review was conducted initially through consideration of existing relevant documentation and research material. This was augmented by new material and analysis drawn up by the review support team (and reflected in the annexes to the Review Report).

1.2 Alongside this literature review there was a programme of consultation, on a non-attributable basis, with stakeholders including representative groups, local authorities, other government departments, professional bodies and individuals. A list of those stakeholders who participated in the Review is provided at Section 2 below.

1.3 The content of the Review seeks to reflect the contribution of these stakeholders, but is essentially the author’s personal overview of possible future directions for the Scheme.

1.4 The final content of the Review was determined by the author for consideration by the Government. It should not therefore be taken in any way to represent Government policy at this stage.

2. Stakeholder consultation

2.1 In the course of the review the author made contact in person or on the phone with the following organisations:

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<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Age Concern</td>
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<tr>
<td>Association of Chief Police Officers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Association of Directors of Social Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>British Parking Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>College of Occupational Therapists (Nomination)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact A Family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporation of London</td>
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### Organisation

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<th>Organisation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Disability Awareness in Action</td>
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<td>Disability Rights Commission (now part of the Equality and Human Rights Commission)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Practitioners Committee (GPC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guide Dogs for the Blind</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joint Committee on Mobility for Disabled People (JCMD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liverpool City Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Government Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>London Borough of Camden</td>
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<td>London Borough of Newham</td>
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<tr>
<td>London Borough of Westminster</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merseyside Passenger Travel Executive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobilise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea</td>
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#### 2.2

In addition, the author spoke with officials from central/regional government.

### Organisation

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<thead>
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<th>Organisation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Department for Regional Development Northern Ireland</td>
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<td>Communities and Local Government</td>
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<td>Department for Transport</td>
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<td>Department for Work and Pensions</td>
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<td>Department of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home Office</td>
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<td>Office of Disability Issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Scottish Executive</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Welsh Assembly</td>
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<td>Transport for London (TfL)</td>
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#### 2.3

The author also spoke with Kelly-Anne Rushton, Helen Grindrod and Rachel Dorsey (mothers who have been campaigning for the extension of the Scheme to children who rely on bulky medical equipment).
Annex B
Overview of the Blue Badge concessions and history

1. Blue Badge Scheme parking concessions

1.1 The Blue Badge Scheme provides a number of on-street parking concessions, with the primary purpose of enabling people with severe mobility problems to park as close as possible to their destination.

1.2 At present Blue Badges offer the following main concessions:
   a) free unlimited parking at ‘on-street’ parking meters, disabled bays and pay-and-display machines (unless there are time restrictions in force, which need to be obeyed);
   b) the ability to park for up to three hours on single or double yellow lines (unless loading restrictions are in place); and
   c) the ability to be picked up and to alight in locations where access is restricted.

1.3 The Blue Badge Scheme does not apply in the following locations:
   a) parts of central London (see 2.3 for details);
   b) road systems at airports;
   c) places where there are loading and unloading restrictions;
   d) private roads; and
   e) off-street car parks.

1.4 However, in reality it often tends to act as a de-facto passport for free or preferential parking in many of the above locations (for example supermarket, hospital and leisure centre car parks).

1.5 Badge holders are also prevented from parking on red lines in London (unless otherwise specified) and in a range of unsafe locations, such as at bus stops and zebra crossings, in line with the Highway Code.

2. The history of the concession

2.1 The Disabled Person’s Parking Badge Scheme (then known as the Orange Badge Scheme) was introduced in December 1971 through section 21 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.
Phase 1

2.2 In 1971 the following original parking concessions were provided:

a) parking without time limit where time is limited for other road users, except on yellow lines; and

b) exemption from meter charges and other parking charges where they apply to other road users.

2.3 At this point, concerns were raised about the potential congestion and security implications of providing these concessions in London. In response to these concerns, it was agreed that the concessions would not apply in the London Boroughs of Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, the City of London and parts of Camden. Instead these four boroughs were allowed to create their own local parking schemes for disabled people living or working in their boroughs. More information on the London concession is provided in Annex H of this report.

Phase 2

2.4 Following a review of the first few years of operation it was identified that it would be more beneficial for the needs of Badge holders if the concessions included parking on yellow lines. This came into force in England and Wales in 1975, but limited parking on yellow lines to a maximum period of two hours provided that loading or unloading bans were not in operation.

Phase 3

2.5 In April 1986 new regulations were introduced to prevent Badge holders from parking on yellow lines where loading or unloading restrictions are in force.

Phase 4

2.6 In March 1992 the time limit for parking on yellow lines was extended from two to three hours. This recognised that some Badge holders needed more time to do their daily business when having to use the yellow line concession.

Recent developments

2.7 Although not outlined in legislation, in February 2003, Transport for London (TfL) introduced the central London Congestion Charge in an area roughly similar, but not identical to the section of central London exempt from the Blue Badge Scheme. TfL made the independent decision to provide Badge holders with an exemption from the Scheme.
Annex C:
Summary of existing eligibility criteria and DfT research

Part 1: Existing eligibility criteria and DPTAC recommendations

1. Existing eligibility criteria

1.1 The English Blue Badge Scheme has two main eligibility routes – ‘automatic without further assessment’ criteria and the ‘eligibility subject to further assessment’ (referred to as the assessed eligibility criteria in this Review). People over the age of 2, who meet at least one of the following criteria, may be issued with a Badge without further assessment providing that they supply the correct supporting evidence:

a) receive the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance (HRMCDLA) except where the award is for a period of less than 12 months;

b) are registered blind; or

c) receive a War Pensioner’s Mobility Supplement (WPMS).

1.2 In addition, local authorities can also award Badges to people after further assessment if they are over the age of 2 and:

a) drive a vehicle regularly, have a severe disability in both arms, and are unable to operate, or have considerable difficulty in operating, all or some types of parking meter; or

b) are unable to walk or have considerable difficulty in walking because of permanent and substantial disability.

1.3 The last criterion is basically designed to provide a safety net for people unable or unwilling to claim the HRMCDLA. This includes individuals aged 65 or over who have not claimed for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) by their 65th birthday and so are no longer eligible for DLA but can claim Attendance Allowance which does not have a mobility component.

1.4 In addition, children under the age of 2 who, due to a specific medical condition, need to travel with bulky medical equipment or be close to a vehicle for emergency medical treatment may also be eligible for a Badge.
2. **Background statistics on eligibility for the Scheme as of 31 March 2007**

2.1 There are approximately 2.3 million Badges currently on issue in England. This accounts for around 4.5 per cent of the total population of England (based on 2005 ONS data).

2.2 The majority of Badges (approximately 99 per cent) are issued to individuals. Around 1 per cent are issued to organisations.

2.3 Around a third of individual Badges are issued based on the automatic eligibility criteria. Most of these are awarded to individuals in receipt of the HRMCDLA. Badge holders that are registered blind account for around 2 per cent of all individual Badges and those in receipt of the WPMS account for less than 1 per cent of all Badges.

2.4 Around two-thirds of individual Badges are issued on a discretionary basis mostly to people that are unable to walk or have severe walking difficulties, but are not eligible for or choose not to receive DLA.

2.5 Less than 1 per cent of all Badges are issued to people who qualify because they drive a vehicle regularly and have a severe disability in both arms which means that they are unable to operate or have considerable difficulty in operating all or some types of parking meter.

**DPTAC recommendations on eligibility**

3.1 In 2002, The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) completed a review of the Blue Badge Scheme and put forward 47 recommendations for its reform.

3.2 These included the following key recommendations on eligibility:

a) automatic eligibility should remain linked to the HRMCDLA and other existing automatic criteria;

b) children under 2 whose medical needs require the transport of bulky medical equipment at all times should be eligible;

c) further research should be conducted into the independent mobility needs of certain groups of people to determine whether there is a need for extending eligibility for a Badge, including people with mental health difficulties, severe learning disabilities, severe behavioural difficulties, severe autism, and people with partial sight;

d) independent mobility and eligibility should be assessed by an accredited health professional other than the applicant’s General Practitioner; and

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e) people with a clearly defined mobility impairment expected to last for a temporary period (but not less than 12 months) should be eligible for a Badge.3

3.3 The Government accepted all of these key recommendations pending their further consideration and research.

Part 2: Summary of eligibility research

4. Introduction and methodology

4.1 In April 2005, the Department for Transport (DfT) commissioned Transport and Travel Research Ltd (TTR) to conduct a research project to evaluate eligibility for the Blue Badge Scheme. The objective of the project was to assess whether people with certain disabilities, which do not necessarily affect their physical ability to walk, nevertheless have significant mobility difficulties that could be alleviated if they were to become eligible for the Scheme.

4.2 Based on the DPTAC recommendation (see paragraph 3.1), the project considered extending eligibility for parking concessions to five main groups of people:

- a) people with autism, and parents and carers of autistic children;
- b) people with Colitis or Crohn’s disease, or similar conditions;
- c) people with Alzheimer’s disease, or similar dementia, and their carers;
- d) people with learning difficulties and people with mental health difficulties; and
- e) people who are partially sighted.

4.3 The project assessed the mobility needs and aspirations of these groups and the impact of extending eligibility on the viability of the Scheme.

4.4 Evidence was gathered through a range of qualitative research techniques including focus group discussions, telephone interviews and face-to-face interviews with different stakeholder groups to understand user need and the impact of (and reaction to) extending the Scheme’s eligibility. This included discussions with: individuals falling within the groups being considered for eligibility; existing Blue Badge holders; non-Blue Badge holders; charities and organisations representing the interests of disabled people; and local authorities, administration and enforcement, and service providers.

Key findings and recommendations

4.5 The project concluded that there was a case to be made for extending eligibility to individuals falling under the categories outlined above whose level of disability imposed severe limitations on their personal mobility and safety – be this for

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physical or behavioural reasons. However, the project also identified significant potential issues associated with extending eligibility, including increased administrative complexity, greater potential for abuse, reduced benefit for other Blue Badge holders and a detrimental impact on other road users (for example as a result of reduced available parking spaces, increased congestion etc.). The project also identified quite widespread concern amongst existing Badge holders and non-Badge holders that the use of parking concessions by people whose disabilities were largely ‘invisible’ might also discredit the Scheme and undermine public confidence.

4.6 In light of these findings, the project sought a criterion for eligibility that
a) was based on a functional definition of a person’s capabilities;
b) did not medicalise entitlement to eligibility;
c) could be linked to the severity of different conditions; and
d) did not increase the number of Badge holders to the extent that the Scheme became less workable, or less beneficial to the people that it is designed to help.

4.7 Taking into consideration the interrelated issues of personal mobility and safety, the project used a definition based on the medical concept of ‘Attention’ whereby an individual needs physical help (as opposed to supervision, guidance or reassurance) from another person to be safe.

4.8 The project recommended that eligibility for the Blue Badge Scheme be extended to disabled people who meet the suggested criterion that “they require help, in the form of physical contact, from another person in order to cross a road safely, making due allowance of course for the normal range of development of road safety skills in children”.

4.9 The effect of using the suggested criteria would be to limit the number of people who would become newly eligible for the Blue Badge Scheme to those with a fairly high severity of condition.

4.10 The project acknowledged that individuals with colitis, Crohn’s disease or some other condition, which requires them to seek toilet facilities at short notice, would not typically fall under the suggested criterion, unless they had severe mobility issues. Rather than extending the Blue Badge Scheme to such individuals, the project recommended the use of alternative mechanisms such as the ‘I Can’t Wait’ cards used by members of the National Association for Colitis and Crohn’s disease.
5. **Assessing the case for extending eligibility**

5.1 The table below summarises the relative issues associated with extending eligibility to the different disability groups considered by the project, taking into account the impact that this would have on their personal mobility and safety and their existing eligibility for the HRMCDLA and Blue Badge Scheme.

**Table 3.1: Assessment of extending eligibility to different disability groups**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
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| Autism     | - There may be a case for extending eligibility to those at the most severe end of the spectrum.  
- Parking concessions would make it easier and safer for the individual (particularly children) to walk to destinations, improving their access to facilities and recreational activities (for example libraries). It would also help alleviate the pressure on carers and parents.  
- However, it is less clear where this threshold should be or how it should be assessed. One option, supported by the British Medical Association (BMA), would be for ‘statement’ children alone to be eligible.  
- Parents of children with autism over the age of 3 can already apply for HRMCDLA under the challenging behaviour ‘deeming provision’ and will automatically be entitled to a Blue Badge if they receive this benefit.  
- Individuals with autism may also have indirect access to a Badge if they are in residential care (particularly adults) and their care home has an organisational Badge. |
Disability Assessment

**Colitis or Crohn’s disease, or similar conditions**
- The main benefit of extending eligibility to such individuals would be to enable them to park close to toilet facilities in restricted areas for urgent defecation.
- However, this requirement could be met by alternative mechanisms to the Blue Badge such as the ‘I Can’t Wait’ cards used by members of the National Association for Colitis and Crohn’s disease.
- Including this group could also open the Scheme to other people with continence issues including people with irritable bowel syndrome and urinary incontinence, which would significantly increase the number of Badge holders.
- Those individuals with severe mobility issues as a result of their condition (particularly if they have complications such as arthritis, have had major bowel resections or are chronically malnourished) are likely to qualify for a Blue Badge either through receipt of HRMCDLA (around 8 per cent of people with these conditions qualify for HRMCDLA) or under the assessed eligibility criteria.

**Alzheimer’s disease or other forms of dementia**
- There may be a case for extending eligibility to people with severe dementia (that is during the later stages of the condition).
- Minimal walking distances and familiarity are key factors in enabling people with Alzheimer’s to access a facility/service safely with ease and comfort. As such, the main benefit would be to the individual in terms of improved access to key services as well as to leisure and social activities which are essential in stimulating the mind and slowing down the progression of the disease. It would also help alleviate the pressure on carers (who are often older relatives).
- However, diagnosis of such cases could be difficult and clear guidelines on what conditions were covered and what evidence could be provided would be required.
- The more severe cases are likely to be eligible for HRMCDLA and therefore qualify for a Blue Badge. However, less severe cases are likely to be entitled to the Lower Rate Mobility Component of the DLA (LRMCDLA) and are unlikely to qualify for a Blue Badge under the current criteria.
- Individuals may also have indirect access to a Badge if they are in residential care (particularly adults) and their care home has an organisational Badge.
### Disability: Learning disabilities and mental health difficulties

- There may be a case for extending eligibility to those individuals at the severe end of the spectrum (that is with severe functional problems).
- Benefits could include reducing the stress of carers, minimising the potential for accidents and, through enabling greater mobility, improving social inclusion of the individual (for example by making leisure facilities more accessible).
- However, diagnosis of such cases could be difficult and careful assessment, through the provision of robust evidence and careful scrutiny, would be needed to ensure that only the most severe cases were granted a Badge.
- The more severe cases are likely to be eligible for HRMCDLA and therefore qualify for a Blue Badge. However, less severe cases are likely to be entitled to the LRMCDLA and are unlikely to qualify for a Blue Badge under the current criteria.
- Individuals may also have indirect access to a Badge if they are in residential care (particularly adults) and their care home has an organisational Badge.

### Disability: Partially sighted

- The main benefit of extending eligibility to such individuals would be increased personal safety through avoidance of crossing roads, large car parks and street furniture which would lead to enhanced mobility.
- It would also address the inequality that currently exists between partially sighted and registered blind people under the current eligibility criteria of the Blue Badge Scheme even though the mobility experiences and aspirations of these two groups are similar.
- However, assessment could be an issue as the majority of partially sighted people are not registered. Also, the degree of sight impairment can vary quite considerably across this category.
- Also two-thirds of this population are likely to be over 75 and have other mobility issues that might enable them to qualify for a Blue Badge under the current eligibility criteria.
5.2 The effect of using the proposed criterion (of needing physical assistance to cross a road safely) would be to limit the number of people who would become newly eligible for the Blue Badge Scheme to those with a fairly high severity of condition. This would be likely to include individuals with severe autism, Alzheimer’s disease, other forms of dementia and learning difficulties, but would not cover the majority of people with mental health difficulties, colitis and Crohn’s disease and partially sighted people unless they had severe mobility issues as a result of or in addition to their condition.

6. Alternatives to the Blue Badge

6.1 The requirement for people with Colitis, Crohn’s disease or a related condition to be able to park in restricted areas to access toilet facilities could be met by the use of alternative mechanisms to inform parking enforcement officials and the general public if an individual has had to stop for this reason. This could either be introduced and managed on a local basis by local authorities or through promoting recognition of a national scheme such as the ‘I Can’t Wait’ cards currently used by members of the National Association for Colitis and Crohn’s disease.

6.2 It is difficult to generalise about suitable alternatives for other disability groups covered by the project. For the most severe cases covered by the suggested criterion, taxis, rather than public transport or demand-responsive transport such as Dial-a-Ride, would be the best alternative to private transport as this would provide the equivalent door-to-door service in a secure environment. This could be supported through the provision of taxi vouchers – although depending on the frequency of use this could be less economically viable than providing a Blue Badge.

6.3 Further work is required to understand the benefits that would be provided by a Blue Badge for those not currently covered by the Scheme versus other suitable alternatives.

7. Temporary disability

7.1 The project also considered the option of providing eligibility to individuals in the stated disability groups on a temporary or partial basis. This option is particularly relevant as many of the stated conditions follow a fluctuating course and the response to treatment also varies according to the individual. Whilst the provision of temporary or tiered Badges could help provide a more tailored means of meeting individual needs and ensure that people only received a Badge for as long as they need it, this approach would make the Scheme more complex and would have implications for its administration. Depending on the condition, it could also be difficult to make up-front decisions at the point of application about how long the condition (or severity of condition) was likely to last. As such, temporary/partial Badges were not pursued by the project as an attractive alternative for the disability groups considered.
7.2 This issue also affects other groups with temporary disabilities not considered by the project, including children over the age of 2 suffering medical conditions such as dysplasia who are not eligible for a Badge under the current Scheme. Further work is required to assess the feasibility of providing Badges to people with temporary disabilities.

8. Cost/benefit analysis of proposed approach

Benefits:

8.1 The main benefits of implementing the proposed criterion are difficult to quantify, but would be around:

a) improved well-being of successful Blue Badge applicants as a result of reduced pain and anxiety and enhanced mobility;

b) reduced stress and pressure on carers of a disabled person; and

c) reduced number of pedestrian casualties.

8.2 There may also be cross-sector benefits such as reductions in costs to the health sector and social services for domiciliary services, as a result of patients and clients being able to be taken for appointments by car.

8.3 Further research is needed on what the benefits of extending the Scheme would be versus the use of other alternatives.

Costs:

8.4 The main quantifiable costs would be around:

d) additional resources required to administer the Scheme in terms of processing applications; and

e) medical examinations required to support applications.

8.5 Some initial work has been done around estimating these costs, but they are difficult to quantify and further work is required.

8.6 There would also be a cost to the DfT for making changes to the legislation governing the scheme, developing and producing robust guidelines to support the assessment process, and any accompanying awareness and publicity campaign.

8.7 An increase in Blue Badges may also result in a loss of revenue by operators of road and bridge tolls in the UK where concessions are available for Badge holders and by the providers of private parking where they took the decision to increase the number of free spaces available to Badge holders as a result of the change.
8.8 There are also potentially a number of significant intangible costs associated with this approach including:

f) Scheme being discredited in the eyes of the general public as a result of people being seen to benefit from the Scheme without displaying any outward signs of being disabled (although this would be counterbalanced if eligibility were only extended to very severe cases who were seen to need physical assistance);

g) negative impact on levels of congestion in towns (for instance as a result of more people parking on double yellow lines) and the availability of parking spaces for non-Badge holders (which in turn might lead to more illegal parking);

h) Scheme being less beneficial for existing Badge holders due to an increase in demand for places where the Badge can be used (both on-street and off-street); and

i) increased abuse (or perceived abuse) if more Badges are made available and eligibility is extended to people who appear less obviously to need a Badge.
In 2002 the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) made the following recommendations to the Government for reforming the Blue Badge Scheme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DPTAC recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Eligibility should remain linked to the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance (HRMCDLA) and other existing automatic criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Eligibility is considered in terms of either being ‘automatic without further assessment’ (under the criteria described in recommendation 1) or 'eligible subject to further assessment’. The terminology ‘Discretionary’ should be replaced with ‘Assessed Eligibility’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Eligibility criteria under ‘further assessment’ should be consistent nationally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Eligibility criteria under ‘further assessment’ should only be used for those who; are aged 65 or over who, but for their age, would have met the criteria for the HRMCDLA or are under 65 but would qualify for the HRMCDLA or to be registered blind but have chosen not to do so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Children under 2 whose medical needs require the transport of bulky medical equipment at all times should be eligible although this must be subject to further assessment and will need clear definition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The Department for Transport (DfT), on behalf of all four UK administrations, should issue guidance tightly specifying the criteria for further assessment and support training in its application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. There is further research into the independent mobility needs of certain groups of people to determine whether there is a need for extending the eligibility for a Badge. These groups include: people with mental health problems; partially sighted people; people with severe learning difficulties or severe behavioural difficulties; and people with severe autism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. A transitional arrangement be established to enable those people immediately affected by the revised eligibility criteria to retain their Badges until expiry of their current Badge or their next assessment (three years or less).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## DPTAC recommendation

| 9. | Assessments of independent mobility are required where people do not automatically qualify and should be undertaken by an accredited health professional other than the applicant’s GP in line with DfT guidance. |
| 10. | Local authority staff should, following appropriate training, process the application on the basis of DfT guidance and the independent mobility assessment. |
| 11. | The Scheme should continue to be a national Scheme for on-street parking concessions administered locally. |
| 12. | Local authorities should continue to be responsible for administering the Scheme, but there should be no rigid determination of which Department should be responsible within any one authority. |
| 13. | There should be a national (centrally funded) database of Badge holders operated by a relevant body, such as the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency. |
| 14. | The period of issue for Badges should be no more than three years before renewal is required and no less than 12 months. |
| 15. | Where entitlement is linked to the HRMC/DLA, the period of issue should be linked to that of receipt of that allowance. |
| 16. | Where automatic entitlement to a Badge is linked to the HRMC/DLA all applicants should give explicit consent to agreeing to the sharing of personal data under the Data Protection Act. |
| 17. | The Scheme must be properly resourced by Government at both national and local level to make the Scheme effective. |
| 18. | There should be no fee to the applicant for the issue of a Badge. |
| 19. | A refusal by the local authority to issue a Badge should be accompanied by a statement of the reasons for refusal and an explanation of the appeals process. |
| 20. | There should be a uniform two-tier appeals system throughout the UK as follows: 
  a) an initial right of appeal to the local authority to review the grounds of refusal; and 
  b) a subsequent right of appeal to a local government ombudsman if the applicant believes that the local authority has not followed the due process correctly. |
<p>| 21. | DfT should issue guidance to local authorities on: a) establishing an appeals Scheme; and b) the grounds for appeal. |
| 22. | Renewal reminders should be issued automatically through the central database three months before expiry to ensure no gap in usage before a new Badge is issued. |
| 23. | Return of the Badge should be added into the action pack when registering a death. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DPTAC recommendation</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24. There should be no charge for replacement for Badges stolen or otherwise damaged provided the applicant produces a crime number or returns the damaged Badge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Replacement Badges should have a new serial number.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Persistent loss of a Badge may require the removal of entitlement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Temporary Badges should be available for people with a clearly defined temporary mobility impairment for a period as specified under Recommendation 14 (over 12 months but less than three years) but requiring an independent mobility assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. An alternative wording to ‘institutional’ should be used, such as organisation or group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. The issue of such Badges should be restricted, perhaps equivalent to Disabled Passenger Vehicle tax-exempt class process for organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. There should be no charge for such Badges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Local Disabled Parking Schemes involving further application for exemption from parking restrictions for on-street parking should be abolished.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Central London Boroughs should not be exempt from the national Scheme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. The existing restrictions of three hours for parking without charge on single or double yellow lines in England and Wales with the use of a parking disc (time clock) should remain. There should continue to be no time limit introduced in Scotland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Legislation be introduced at the earliest opportunity in England and Wales to enable Badges to be checked by police officers, traffic wardens and parking attendants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Consideration be given to the early introduction of smart cards linked to the national database to aid enforcement and facilitate concessions on payments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Illegal use of Badges should be prosecuted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Penalty notices should also be issued to Badge holders parking on street illegally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Guidance should be issued on appropriate penalties for abuse by Badge holders and when it is appropriate to withdraw a Badge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Penalties should increase with the incidence of abuse, leading to the withdrawal of the Badge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Penalty notices should be issued to every vehicle owner not displaying a Badge when the vehicle is parked in an on-street parking space designated for Badge holders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### DPTAC recommendation

| 41. | Penalties should be increased and include points on driving licences to strengthen the deterrence for misuse of designated disabled persons parking spaces on the street by non Badge holders and for misuse of Badges by non Badge holders. |
| 42. | There should be more information, training and publicity about the purpose of the Scheme for Badge holders and non Badge holders, including those responsible for administering and enforcing it. |
| 43. | This information should be available in alternative media and targeted at specific audiences. |
| 44. | Local authorities must be required to include policies on designated parking provision for Badge holders in their local transport planning process (local transport plans, strategies and implementation plans). |
| 45. | The provision of parking for Badge holders should be enhanced by: |
|     | a) requiring local authorities through their planning policies and procedures to include parking strategies in all developments to determine the percentage and/or minimum numbers of designated parking spaces available for Blue Badge holders; and |
|     | b) requiring service to provide and manage off-street car parking to maintain accessible parking for Badge holders to the agreed standards contained within current National Planning Policy Guidance notes PPG13 and DfT Traffic Advisory Leaflet 5/95 and the equivalent guidance in other parts of the UK. |
| 46. | Employers should be required to make parking places available to disabled employees and visitors with Badges to reduce pressure on public parking provision and to ensure that their parking provision is respected. |
| 47. | Badge holders should be exempt from congestion charging. |
Annex E

Eligibility for Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance

In order to qualify for the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance (HRMCDLA) individuals need to show that they:

a) cannot walk; or

b) are virtually unable to walk (see Category B below); or

c) the exertion required to walk would endanger their life or lead to a serious deterioration in their health; or

d) have had both legs amputated or one leg amputated and are without the other leg, or are without both legs; or

e) are both deaf and blind; or

f) are entitled to the Higher Rate Care Component of the Disability Living Allowance and are severely mentally impaired with extremely disruptive behavioural problems; or

g) are switching from the pre-1976 invalid vehicle scheme.

Category A

Being unable to walk means that a person cannot take a single step. Applicants need to show that they cannot put one foot in front of the other because of their disability. Walking involves always having one foot on the ground. Individuals are considered unable to walk if their only way of getting about is to ‘swing through crutches’.
**Category B**

In order to make a decision on an individual’s eligibility under this criterion the decision maker will have to consider whether their ability to walk out of doors is so limited that:

- the distance over which they can walk;
- the speed at which they can walk;
- the length of time for which they can walk; and
- the manner in which they can walk

causes such severe discomfort that they are virtually unable to walk.

**Category C**

The test here is whether the exertion required to walk would constitute a danger to an individual’s life or whether it would be likely to lead to a serious deterioration in their health.

They need to show that they should not walk very far because of the danger to their health.

This criteria is intended for people with serious chest, lung or heart conditions. Some people with haemophilia may also qualify for the higher rate in this way. The serious deterioration does not need to be permanent but it should require medical intervention for them to recover.

They will need to show that any danger to their health is a direct result of the physical effort required to walk.

People with epilepsy will need to show that any fits were brought about by the effort required to walk.

**Category D**

This category covers individuals that have had both legs amputated at levels which are either through or above the ankle, or one leg amputated and are without the other leg, or are without both legs to the same extent as if they had been amputated.
### Category E

An individual must be at least 80 per cent disabled resulting from loss of hearing and 100 per cent disabled resulting from loss of sight.

They need to show that being deaf and blind means that they cannot walk to any intended or required destination without the help of someone else.

The 2001 Royal National Institute for the Deaf factsheet on DLA states:

“You will be classed as 100 per cent disabled due to blindness if your sight loss is such that you are ‘unable to perform work for which eyesight is essential’. People who are registered blind, or whose sight loss is such that they could be registered blind, are treated as 100 per cent disabled. You will be treated as 80 per cent disabled from deafness if your level of hearing loss is at least 87dB in both ears at frequencies 1, 2 and 3 kHz taking into account a hearing aid if you usually use one.”

### Category F

An individual will need to show that:

- they are entitled to the Care Component of DLA at the higher rate; and
- they suffer from arrested or incomplete development of the brain; and
- their brain impairment means that they exhibit disruptive behaviour; and
- the nature of their behaviour means that another person has to be present and watching over them in order to prevent injury to themselves and others and/or damage to property.
Annex F
European comparisons and good practice

1. Administration

1.1 Most European Union (EU) Member States have established a parking card scheme. However, those that have not grant parking privileges to disabled people by issuing them with a wheelchair symbol or other symbols, which they display in a vehicle to distinguish that it is driven by a disabled person or transporting a disabled person.

1.2 In most EU Member States local authorities are responsible for issuing Blue Badges and the police are responsible for policing the Scheme.

2. Eligibility criteria

2.1 In most of the EU Member States, Blue Badges are issued to people with severe and/or permanent mobility impairment. The degree of disability is evaluated through walking inability, such as an inability to do more than 100 metres without the help of someone else, a permanent impairment on both upper and lower limbs or a minimum degree of body injury.

2.2 Most EU Member States also issue Badges to people with a visual impairment. Some EU Member States grant parking cards to people with a hearing impairment and a few to people with a learning disability, such as autism.

2.3 In most EU Member States a medical certificate is required in order to prove a disability and to obtain a parking card.
### Parking concessions

The following tables have been compiled using information contained in the AA’s leaflet *European parking card for people with disabilities* and information provided by the European Commission.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries where you cannot park</th>
<th>Countries where you can park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Denmark <em>(for 15 minutes)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Estonia <em>(must park on footpath without causing obstruction)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>Germany <em>(up to 3 hours)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Hungary <em>(up to 1 hour)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Lithuania <em>(only if not causing an obstruction)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Netherlands <em>(up to 3 hours)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>Slovenia <em>(up to 2 hours)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Sweden <em>(up to 3 hours)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td><strong>UK</strong> <em>(up to 3 hours – unless sign says “no loading or unloading” – and no limit in Scotland)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liechtenstein</td>
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<td>Luxembourg</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
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<td>Portugal</td>
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<td>Slovakia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Free parking on roads restricted by time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries where you can park without time limit</th>
<th>Countries where you can park with a specified time limit</th>
<th>Countries where concessions vary – need to check locally</th>
<th>Countries where time limits must be observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Denmark (1 hour where parking is limited to 15–30 minutes. Unlimited where parking is limited to 3 hours)</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Germany (24 hours)</td>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>Hungary (1 hour)</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Netherlands (up to 3 hours)</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Liechtenstein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Sweden (3 hours where parking is limited to under 3 hours. 24 hours where parking is limited to over 3 hours)</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
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<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
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<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>Slovenia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norway (unless a time limit is specified for vehicles displaying disabled parking card)</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>UK</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## THE STRATEGIC REVIEW OF THE BLUE BADGE SCHEME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries where parking is free</th>
<th>Countries where fees and time limits vary – check locally</th>
<th>Countries where payment is required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria (most areas)</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium (most areas)</td>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>Denmark (however, if maximum payment made, parking is unlimited)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>France (except Paris)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Greece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland (unlimited)</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Italy (unlimited)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany (up to 24 hours)</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hungary (1 hour)</td>
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<td>Liechtenstein</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norway (unlimited)</td>
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<td>Luxembourg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lithuania (unlimited – only in spaces marked by wheelchair symbol)</td>
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<td>Malta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
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<td>Portugal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slovakia (unlimited – only in spaces marked by wheelchair symbol)</td>
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<td>Slovenia</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>UK (unlimited)</strong></td>
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<td>Switzerland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Driving and parking in pedestrian zones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries where this is forbidden</th>
<th>Countries where local concessions may allow it</th>
<th>Countries where this is allowed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Sweden (up to 3 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
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<td>Finland</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Parking in car parks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries where no concessions available</th>
<th>Countries where some car parks allow free parking</th>
<th>Countries where parking is free</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Italy <em>(public car parks and some private car parks)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark <em>(if maximum payment made, can park for unlimited time)</em></td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
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<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Cyprus</td>
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<td>Switzerland</td>
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<td>UK</td>
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</table>
4. **Good practice**

4.1 Most EU Member States reported problems with fraud, theft and misuse of the Blue Badge. Accordingly, the European Commission identified and endorsed the following good practices introduced by some EU Member States:

a) tackle fraud by putting additional safety marks on the cards, such as holograms and registration numbers;

b) establish two different forms of parking card, to identify a disabled driver’s vehicle from vehicles driven by non-disabled drivers transporting a disabled person;

c) establish a registration scheme of lost and stolen parking cards; and

d) raise awareness on the correct use of the Blue Badge and holder’s responsibilities.
Annex G
Direct payment options

1. **Introduction**

1.1 There is a current move across Government towards giving UK citizens a greater degree of choice and control in how they receive their services. The concept of direct payments is central to this agenda, whereby the citizen is treated as a consumer and given a sum of money which they can use to procure tailor-made solutions for their own needs as an alternative to direct service provision.

1.2 In line with this trend, one option for the Blue Badge Scheme would be to replace the fiscal benefits it provides with a direct payment. This approach could potentially ring-fence the fiscal benefits for Badge holders which in turn could help reduce abuse of the Scheme by non-eligible people who obtain and use the Badge to benefit from free parking and to access other indirect concessions such as exemption from the London Congestion Charge. It could also provide a more flexible means of meeting the diverse transport needs of people with restricted mobility.

1.3 This paper explores the practical application of this approach and potential delivery options. The paper concludes that the concept is viable as a long-term alternative for replacing the fiscal elements of the Blue Badge Scheme and likely to deliver benefits, but that it would need to sit alongside a review of the overall financial provision made for meeting the transport needs of people with restricted mobility (for example through transport concessions and the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance [DLA]), in corporate work on individual travel budgets and wider Government policy on the use of direct payments. It could also only occur alongside changes to the accessible parking concessions currently offered by the Blue Badge Scheme.

2. **Background on direct payments**

2.1 The impetus for replacing specific service provision with direct payments has mainly come from the social care sector where they are seen as a possible means of providing greater choice and flexibility and getting better value out of existing spend.

2.2 Direct payments have long been championed by disability rights groups as key to the Independent Living agenda, enfranchising disabled people to make their own
decisions about how their care needs are met rather than receiving services based on preconceived assumptions about what they need and how they should live.

2.3 With the passing of the Community Care (Direct Payments) Act in 1996, power was extended to local authorities from April 1997 to make cash payments (known as Direct Payments), in lieu of local authority-commissioned services, to disabled people to enable them to take responsibility for their own care arrangements. Initial take up of Direct Payments has been relatively slow and the Department of Health recently launched the Direct Payment Uptake project to support local councils to overcome barriers to offering Direct Payments.

2.4 Building on the successful features of Direct Payments, the Department of Health has started piloting the use of Individual Budgets where a personalised budget is created through combining a number of revenue streams which the individual can then use to design a support package that best meets their needs. The Government is also looking at how direct payments can be used to support its reform of Housing Benefit with the introduction of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) to replace the payment of Housing Benefit to low income tenants in the private rented sector.

2.5 A key issue that has had to be addressed when designing and delivering these schemes is the degree of control exerted over how payments are spent. With increased choice comes greater individual responsibility and as a result both the authority and the recipient need to accept a degree of managed risk. There has been much debate about what degree of risk is acceptable when replacing services with direct payments and the processes that need to be in place to ensure clear lines of accountability.4

**Potential application for the Blue Badge Scheme**

3.1 At present there are three major direct concessions associated with the Blue Badge Scheme:

a) ability to park at ‘on-street’ metered bays, without time limit and free of charge;

b) park on yellow lines for up to three hours; and

c) pick up and alight in a range of prohibited locations.

3.2 The scheme also provides a range of indirect benefits such as an exemption from the London Congestion Charge, road toll concessions and use of parking bays for disabled people at supermarkets. These benefits are not formerly part of the Scheme but are offered up at the discretion of individual local authorities and car park owners in line with their Disability Discrimination Act requirements.

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4 See, for example, Department of Health, *Independence, choice and risk: a guide to best practice in supported decision making* (Department of Health: May 2007).
3.3 In line with trends towards replacing defined benefits and services with direct payments in the social care sector, a similar approach could be adopted for the Blue Badge Scheme to separate its fiscal and accessibility aspects.

3.4 The Scheme would continue to provide accessible on-street parking spaces for people with severe mobility issues, but the entitlement to free parking could be removed and Badge holders could receive a direct payment instead. Badge holders could use this payment as they choose – to meet their parking or other transport costs. This approach could also be extended for other indirect financial concessions associated with the Scheme such as road toll concessions and exemption from city centre congestion charges.

3.5 This approach could potentially provide Badge holders with a more flexible means of meeting their mobility needs. It could also significantly reduce abuse of the Scheme by non-eligible people obtaining and using Badges to benefit from free parking and other indirect financial concessions.

3.6 There are two main types of this abuse:
   a) use of lost, stolen or forged Badges; and
   b) illegitimate use by family members or friends.

3.7 The second type is anecdotally more common and is more difficult to detect and address. Replacing the fiscal concessions with a direct payment could ring fence the financial benefits of the scheme for Badge holders, making the Badge less attractive to non-eligible people and consequently less vulnerable to this kind of abuse.

3.8 However, any move towards direct payment provision is unlikely to work unless the current yellow line concession is amended, as if retained in its current format, it is likely that Blue Badge holders would use this concession rather than pay for parking, which in turn would have an impact on traffic management, particularly in town and city centres.

3.9 Government would also need to consider the wider impact on the flexibility and availability of local parking provision (for example would more dedicated parking for the disabled bays need to be provided to replace former yellow line provision?) and how this would sit with European reciprocity regulations and the 1995 and 2005 Disability Discrimination Acts.

3.10 Further consideration would also be needed on the overall strategic fit of this approach with Government policy on meeting the transport needs of people with severe mobility issues including the role of concessionary travel and the Mobility Component of the DLA.
4. Design considerations

4.1 Assuming that the issues raised in 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9 can be resolved, a number of strategic decisions would be needed on the design of the Scheme including the payment’s value, funding, roll out and control. These issues are considered in more detail below.

**What would the payment replace and how would it be valued?**

4.2 As outlined above, the clearest financial concession offered by the Blue Badge Scheme is the ability to park at ‘on street’ metered bays free of charge and arguably the simplest approach would be to remove this concession and offer a replacement payment instead. Other indirect financial concessions, such as the exemption from the London Congestion Charge, could then be added at a local level.

4.3 A national or local flat rate could be introduced or a more personalised payment based on individual need and circumstance. A flat rate approach would be the most simple to administer, but could lead to large scale winners and losers as it would not reflect the personal value placed by individuals on the current concession which varies considerably depending on degree of use, local parking costs, access to alternative means of transport, personal financial situation, etc.

**How would it be funded?**

4.4 Additional funding would be required to deliver the payment, but this could potentially be clawed back from local authorities based on increases in parking revenue that they experienced as a result of removing the financial concession.

**How would it be implemented?**

4.5 A decision would be needed as to whether the direct payment was compulsory or optional. An optional scheme would allow phased implementation as new Badges were issued, but would involve operating dual systems which could add significant administration and enforcement complexity, fundamentally undermining the viability and potential benefits of adopting a direct payment approach.

4.6 A more practical approach would be to roll the direct payment out to all existing and new Blue Badge holders. However, the ability of vulnerable recipients to manage such payments would need to be considered and separate arrangements might be required to ensure that their transport needs continued to be met. In addition, changes would be required to meters to enable their use by individuals who are currently eligible for a Blue Badge because they have problems operating parking meters (for example through the introduction of cashless meters).

4.7 The implications of extending the group to any new eligibility groups (for example people with behavioural issues) and their ability to manage a direct payment would also need to be considered.
What controls would be required?

4.8 A key question that would need to be addressed is the degree of control that was exerted over how payments were made and what they were used for. Both the authority and the recipient would need to accept a degree of managed risk.

4.9 The Blue Badge Scheme (like other concessions and subsidies) has a defined function. If the free parking concession was replaced with a payment, Government would need to decide whether this payment could only be used on parking or transport related services or whether the recipient would be allowed to make their own decisions about how it should be used.

4.10 The degree of control desired would influence payment and monitoring options. Payments could either be made direct to the individual or through a third party (for example representative, trust, brokerage agency or local authority care manager) with the requirement for individuals to account for how this was spent if desired. Alternatively the payment could be made in the form of vouchers or drawn down from an account (for example using a separate smart card that was not linked to the Blue Badge Scheme) – these payment methods could potentially offer a means of exerting control without adding administration complexity. However, their financial desirability could make them vulnerable to fraudulent use and could detract from the use of direct payments to counter existing abuse of the Blue Badge Scheme through removing its fiscal benefits.

4.11 Given that the main objectives of introducing a direct payment would be to provide recipients with greater control on how their needs were met and to counter abuse of the existing Blue Badge Scheme, it seems that direct payment into the individual’s bank account (or third party) would be the most suitable approach.

5. Delivery options

5.1 The direct parking for the disabled payment could be delivered in a number of ways. It could be integrated with an existing direct payment scheme, combined with other transport concessions to create a single direct mobility payment, or delivered as a standalone payment. The available options are considered in more detail below.
**Option 1: Integrate payment with Mobility Component of the DLA**

The Mobility Component of the DLA is available for people with severe mobility issues who become disabled before age 65. There are two rates of allowance depending on the level of disability:

- the lower rate for individuals that need guidance or supervision out of doors;
- and
- the higher rate for individuals with other, more severe, walking difficulties.

People in receipt of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the DLA (HRMCDLA) are automatically eligible for a Blue Badge and around a third of Badge holders fall into this category. In addition, a significant number of Badge holders are also in receipt of the Lower Rate Mobility Component of the DLA (LRMCDLA). One option, therefore, would be to provide an enhanced payment for Blue Badge holders in receipt of the Mobility Component of the DLA.

**Option 2: Adopt hybrid approach combining DLA integration with local discretion**

Building on Option 1, an alternative approach would be to combine enhancing the allowance for Blue Badge holders in receipt of the Mobility Component of the DLA and enable local authorities to make discretionary payments to other eligibility groups.

**Option 3: Create a single direct mobility payment or Individual Transport Budget**

This option would involve combining the parking for the disabled payment with the removal of other existing transport concessions to form a single direct mobility payment or Individual Transport Budget. The Department for Transport is currently looking at whether and how Individual Transport Budgets can be used to tackle transport-related social exclusion for those with the greatest need. However, more work is needed to understand their strategic fit with, and impact on, current provision for people with restricted mobility, including DLA and concessionary travel.

**Option 4: Integrate with Individual Budgets**

This option would involve integrating the parking for the disabled payment as an additional revenue stream for Individual Budgets.
Option 5: Create standalone parking for the disabled payment

This option would involve designing standalone parking for the disabled payment to replace specific financial concessions associated with the Blue Badge Scheme.

6. Conclusion

6.1 There are some attractions to removing some or all of the fiscal benefits associated with the Blue Badge Scheme and replacing this with a direct payment. This would be in line with wider trends in social care, could potentially provide a more flexible means of meeting the diverse transport needs of people with restricted mobility and could help tackle abuse of the Blue Badge Scheme.

6.2 However, this option would need to be developed in conjunction with a review of the overall financial provision made for meeting the travel needs of people with restricted mobility (for example through transport concessions and the Mobility Component of the DLA), corporate work on individual travel budgets and wider government policy on the use of direct payments. It could also only occur alongside changes to the Blue Badge concession.

6.3 As such, this Review recommends that this approach be considered as a potential long-term option for providing the fiscal benefit of the Blue Badge Scheme. Work would also be required to review the parking concessions offered by the Blue Badge Scheme and the wider impact of introducing a direct payment including on the flexibility and availability of local parking provision and European reciprocity arrangements.
1.1 In 1971 the Blue Badge Scheme was created to enable people with severe mobility problems to park close to their destination. Due to concerns about the levels of traffic congestion and security threats, it was decided that four central London local authorities should be given a concession/exemption from the Scheme.

1.2 The areas covered by the central London concession are:

a) Westminster  
b) City of London  
c) Kensington and Chelsea; and  
d) parts of Camden

1.3 The concession was granted with the understanding that the four London boroughs would establish their own local parking for the disabled schemes. Each of the four local schemes provides parking for the disabled concessions to local residents.

1.4 In all four local schemes, non-resident Blue Badge holders still benefit from limited access to parking bays for disabled people and the ability to park on yellow lines for varying periods of time. Full details of the local schemes are provided in a series of tables at Annex H.

1.5 In 2002 the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee recommended the abolition of the central London concession. The Government responded at this
time by stating that further research was required to establish an evidence base for
determining policy in this area.

1.6 The Department for Transport (DfT) set about commissioning an independent
research project. The research, which was conducted between 2004 and 2006, did
not produce a conclusive quantitative evidence base in terms of the likely impact
of any alteration or abolition of the concession.

1.7 The DfT can be seen to have the following options for taking things forward:

a) **Abolish the Central London Concession**: This would enable Blue Badge
holders visiting London to enjoy the same equity of access as experienced
elsewhere in the UK. However, the likely impact upon congestion, commerce
and security within the Capital remains untested. Although certain comparisons
can be drawn between Central Manchester or Birmingham, London arguably
remains a standalone case.

b) **Retain the Central London Concession as it is**: The Central London
boroughs have already significantly harmonized their arrangements for visiting
Badge holders. However, there is further scope for these arrangements to be
refined so that they are easier to understand for Badge holders.

c) **Further refine the Central London Concession**: This could involve further
refining the arrangements so that they are easier to understand for visiting
Badge holders. Given that Badge holders are given preferential parking
concessions in central London, albeit to a more limited degree than in the rest
of the UK, this option would also protect levels of congestion within the heart of
London. Any change in this direction might or might not involve realigning the
area’s boundaries to correspond with the corresponding Transport for London
(TfL) congestion zone.

1.8 On the basis of previous research, stakeholder interviews and the evidence above,
option c appears to be the most balanced solution for improving consistency of
disabled access, making the Scheme easier to understand and integrating with
wider DfT policy flowing from the Eddington Transport Study.

1.9 If adopted, option c could be implemented through work with the four central
London boroughs and disability groups to ensure an appropriate revision of the
concession.
Annex Hi
Summary of the Central London Concession

1. **Summary of arrangements for visiting Blue Badge holders:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where Blue Badge holders cannot park</th>
<th>Where Blue Badge holders can park</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• In resident parking bays during controlled hours</td>
<td>• In <strong>pay &amp; display, meter and pay by phone</strong> bays: Blue Badge holders can stay for one extra hour for free after making an initial payment for parking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In pay &amp; display, meter and pay by phone bays without payment (during the controlled hours)</td>
<td>• Load/unload on <strong>yellow lines</strong> for 20 minutes to drop off or pick up a disabled person, or to collect goods as long as there are no loading restrictions (kerb stripes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• On double yellow lines</td>
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<tr>
<td>• On single yellow lines during the controlled hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>• On suspended parking bays</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In diplomatic bays</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In doctors’ bays</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In personalised numbered disabled bays provided for severely disabled residents</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Taxi stands</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Solo motorcycle parking bays</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Disabled parking bays provided by each of the central London authorities as part of their individual disabled parking schemes (see resident specific concessions below)</td>
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</table>

Where a valid Blue Badge permit has been correctly displayed, boroughs also undertake not to wheel clamp any vehicle. They will also avoid removing a vehicle with a valid Blue Badge permit, unless they are directed to by the police, or in the event of serious obstruction or danger to other traffic. If a vehicle with a Blue Badge is removed it will be relocated as near as possible to the original parking place.
2. Summary of additional borough-specific arrangements for visiting Blue Badge holders:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borough</th>
<th>Additional places where Blue Badge holders cannot park</th>
<th>Additional places where Blue Badge holders can park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Camden*</td>
<td>• Business parking bays</td>
<td>• Park for free in special Blue Badge parking bays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Traders’ parking bays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of London</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Park for free in special Blue Badge parking bays for up to 3 or 6 hours from Monday to Friday between 8.30am–6.30pm and for as long as they like outside these hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kensington and Chelsea</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Park for free in special Blue Badge parking bays for up to 4 hours from Monday to Friday between 8.30am–6.30pm and for as long as they like outside these hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westminster</td>
<td>• Hospital vehicle bays</td>
<td>• Park for free in special Blue Badge parking bays for up to 4 hours from Monday to Friday between 8.30am–6.30pm and for as long as they like outside these hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* NB Only part of Camden (south of Euston Road) is within the Central London area where Blue Badge parking concessions do not fully apply: in the rest of the borough the Blue Badge Scheme operates normally.
### 3. Local arrangements for disabled drivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borough</th>
<th>Local scheme concessions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Camden</strong></td>
<td><strong>Green Badge</strong> available for Camden residents, workers and students for use in nominated vehicles.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Green Badge Scheme is operated in the most congested area of the borough to the south of the Euston Road near the West End.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Green Badge holders can:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Park in a <strong>resident's bay</strong> without charge or time limit, on a <strong>parking meter</strong>, or in a <strong>pay &amp; display</strong> space as long as both Blue and Green Badges are clearly displayed, unless the bay is suspended; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Park for up to three hours on a single or double yellow line except where there is a loading ban in operation or in the Green Badge area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>City of London</strong></td>
<td><strong>Red Badge</strong> available for City workers and residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Red Badge holders are allowed free parking on pay &amp; display bays and can wait for a maximum period of 30 minutes on a single yellow line where a loading ban is not in force. These concessions are in addition to those available to Blue Badge holders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kensington and Chelsea</strong></td>
<td><strong>Purple Badge</strong> available for disabled Kensington and Chelsea residents, workers and students.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purple Badge holders can use their Badge to park in Kensington and Chelsea free of charge and without time restrictions in:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• any ‘on-street’ resident parking bay, as long as there is no parking suspension in force;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• any pay &amp; display bays as long as there is no parking suspension in force (the only exception to this rule is the pay &amp; display bays at Holland Park Avenue and Notting Hill Gate); and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• they can load/unload for up to 20 minutes on yellow lines to allow for a disabled person to be dropped off or picked up, or for collecting goods, as long as no loading restriction is in place (kerb stripes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borough</td>
<td>Local scheme concessions</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westminster</td>
<td><strong>White Badge</strong> available for disabled Westminster residents, workers, students, and hospital patients.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>White Badge holders can use their Badge to park in Westminster free of charge and without time restrictions in:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• any resident bay;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• any meter bay (even when out of order);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• any pay &amp; display bay or pay by phone bay;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• designated disabled bays for Blue Badge holders, but they are subject to the same time limits that apply for Blue Badge holders (currently 4 hours maximum stay); and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• they can load/unload for up to 20 minutes on yellow lines to allow for a disabled person to be dropped off or picked up, or for collecting goods, as long as no loading restriction is in place (kerb stripes).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Annex I
Summary of market research

1. Background and objectives

1.1 As part of the strategic review of the Blue Badge Disabled Parking Scheme, the Department for Transport (DfT) commissioned a module of questions in the British Market Research Bureau (BMRB) Face-to-Face Omnibus Survey to be carried out in July and August 2007.

1.2 The survey looked at how Badge holders across Great Britain use and value different concessions offered by the Scheme and their attitudes towards public transport as an alternative means of transport. The survey also sought to assess non Badge-holding drivers’ understanding and perception of the Scheme.

1.3 Due to the project’s timescales, a quota sample methodology was used (see section 3). Consequently the responses should be considered an overview of attitudes and not strictly representative of the target population.

2. Key findings

2.1 Most Blue Badge holders surveyed (81 per cent) have typically only displayed their Badges in 1–2 cars over the last 12 months. Over two-thirds (68 per cent) drive regularly.

2.2 Respondents are most likely to use their Badge to shop for food (75 per cent), attend medical appointments (41 per cent) and shop for goods and services (37 per cent).

2.3 The ability to park in off-street car parks (for example at supermarkets, hospitals etc) and in on-street disabled parking bays or metered spaces are the most frequently used concessions by respondents (used by 77 per cent and 53 per cent of respondents respectively at least once a week). The ability to be dropped off and picked up in prohibited places is considered to be the least useful concession (70 per cent of respondents never use this concession).

2.4 The Badge-holding respondents that do use the yellow line concession are unlikely to take advantage of the full 3 hours available (with 91 per cent tending to park for less than 2 hours).
2.5 The majority of Badge holders surveyed do not regularly use public transport (see table 5.3 on page 69). The main barriers to use are concerns around the reliability, cost and accessibility of services, and individual disability and health issues.

2.6 The majority (73 per cent) of non Badge-holding drivers surveyed claim awareness of the Scheme, but less were familiar with its actual rules.

2.7 Fairly low numbers of both Badge holders and non Badge-holding drivers are confident that the Scheme is being used predominantly by the people who need it most.

3. **Methodology**

3.1 BMRB’s regular Face-to-Face Omnibus Survey interviews a national sample of 2,000 adults across Great Britain each week using a random location sampling technique based on ACORN strata. This approach ensures that all area types are correctly represented, but individuals within households are not. Full details of the sample design, weighting procedures and statistical confidence limits are available on request from the DfT.

3.2 Questions on the Blue Badge Disabled Parking Scheme were incorporated into sufficient versions of the Face-to-Face Survey to generate the sample size required (a hard copy version of the questionnaire is available on request from the DfT).

3.3 The operational aspects of this project, including interviewing, were carried out by Kantar Operations. Interviews were carried out in-home by a fully-trained and briefed field force using a Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) system. Respondents were asked two ‘screening’ questions:

a) Do you drive nowadays, that is at least once a month, for business or leisure purposes?

b) Do you personally hold a Blue Badge?

Depending on their response, Badge holders and non Badge-holding drivers were then asked two different sets of questions.

3.4 Responses were entered into a laptop by the interviewer during the interview and the completed electronic questionnaire then sent to head office the morning after the interview took place for collation.

4. **Weighted sample description**

4.1 Post screening, the total weighted sample included 3,522 records (3,451 unweighted)\(^5\):

\(^5\) The sample has been weighted to ensure that demographic profiles matched those of all adults in Great Britain aged 15 years or over (see Annex A for more detail).

\(^6\) The responses of non Badge-holding drivers were only collected for the first two weeks of the survey.
ANNEX I: SUMMARY OF MARKET RESEARCH

a) 790 (883 unweighted) Blue Badge holders (aged 15+); and
b) 2,732 (2,568 unweighted) non Blue Badge-holding drivers (aged 17+).  

4.2 The weighted age and gender profiles of these datasets (against the same analysis of the total survey population) are shown in tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3.

Table 4.1: Weighted age and gender profile of Blue Badge holders aged 15+ (790 records)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age*</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15–24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Weighted age and gender profile of non Badge-holding drivers aged 17+ (2,732 records)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15–24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3: Weighted age and gender profile of total survey population (12,634 records)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15–24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Due to rounding these figures do not add up to 100 per cent

5. Detailed findings – Blue Badge holders (aged 15+)

Badge use and display

5.1 The majority (68 per cent) of respondents that have a Blue Badge drive nowadays (at least once a month).

5.2 Most respondents (81 per cent) have only displayed their Badge in one to two cars over the last 12 months. 12 per cent have displayed their Badge in three to five cars and only 2 per cent have displayed their Badge in more than five cars. 5 per cent of respondents have not displayed their Badge in any car over the last 12 months.
5.3 Respondents are most likely to use their Badge to shop for food (75 per cent), attend medical appointments (41 per cent), and shop for goods and services (37 per cent). A much smaller number are likely to use their Badge to get to and/or from work or a place of education (4 per cent and 2 per cent respectively). This result may partly be due to the age profile of respondents (with 58 per cent being 65 or over) and the provision of disabled bays by employers and educational authorities.

Use and perceived value of different concessions

5.4 The Blue Badge Disabled Parking Scheme provides three main concessions, the ability to:

a) park in ‘on-street’ metered bays, without time limit and free of charge;

b) park on yellow lines for up to three hours; and

c) be picked up and alight in a range of prohibited locations.

In addition, the Blue Badge is often used on a discretionary basis to determine eligibility for disabled bays in off-street car parks (for example at supermarkets, hospitals etc.). The survey looked at how these different concessions are used and valued by respondents.

5.5 The concessions most frequently used by respondents are the ability to park in off-street car parks and in on-street disabled parking bays or metered spaces, with 77 per cent and 53 per cent of respondents respectively using these concessions at least once a week.

5.6 The concessions least used by respondents are the ability to be picked up or dropped off in prohibited places and park on yellow lines, with 70 per cent and 40 per cent of respondents respectively claiming that they never use these provisions.

5.7 Table 5.1 provides a more detailed analysis of responses.
Table 5.1: Frequency of use of concessions by Badge holders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>In off-street car parks</th>
<th>On-street disabled bays/ metered spaces</th>
<th>On yellow lines</th>
<th>To be picked up/ dropped off</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At least once a week</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a fortnight</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less often than once a month</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.8 Of the respondents that do use the yellow line concession, the majority (58 per cent) tend to park for less than one hour. Only 8 per cent tend to park for between 2 and 3 hours and therefore take advantage of the full 3-hour concession available.

5.9 In line with the findings for frequency of use, half of respondents (50 per cent) find it most useful to use the Badge for off-street parking. However, marginally more respondents find the yellow line concession (22 per cent) rather than the ability to park at on-street disabled bays and metered spaces (19 per cent) the most useful concession. Only 6 per cent cited being able to be dropped off or picked up in prohibited locations as the most useful concession.

5.10 The reasons given by respondents for finding their selected concession the most useful were largely around convenience, proximity to destination, greater frequency of use and use for shopping. There was slight variation for different concessions, for example off-street parking being used for hospital appointments and yellow lines being used as a result of poor parking facilities. The top five reasons for each concession and the overall scheme are provided in table 5.2.

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7 Total number of respondents answering: 790 (weighted), 883 (unweighted).
### Table 5.2: Top five reasons for why selected concession is the most useful

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combined use (790)*</th>
<th>In off-street car parks (394)*</th>
<th>On-street disabled bays/ metered spaces (154)*</th>
<th>On yellow lines (173)*</th>
<th>To be picked up/dropped off (49)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to destination (16%)</td>
<td>Use most often (22%)</td>
<td>Convenient (16%)</td>
<td>Poor parking facilities (19%)</td>
<td>Convenient (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For shopping (15%)</td>
<td>For shopping (19%)</td>
<td>Easy/easier (16%)</td>
<td>Proximity to destination (17%)</td>
<td>Get dropped off (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use most often (13%)</td>
<td>Proximity to destination (17%)</td>
<td>Proximity to destination (15%)</td>
<td>Convenience (16%)</td>
<td>Easy/easier (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenient (12%)</td>
<td>For hospital appointments (16%)</td>
<td>For shopping (14%)</td>
<td>Only space available (14%)</td>
<td>Less far to walk (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy/easier (10%)</td>
<td>Easy/easier (9%)</td>
<td>Poor parking facilities (8%)</td>
<td>For shopping (11%)</td>
<td>Proximity to destination (11%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*weighted number of respondents who found this concession most useful

#### 5.11
Half of respondents (49 per cent) find the ability to be dropped off or picked up at prohibited places the least useful concession, in contrast to 24 per cent that selected the ability to park on yellow lines. A similar number of respondents cited the ability to use the Badge for on-street parking in disabled bays and metered spaces and off-street parking as the least useful concession (11 per cent and 7 per cent respectively).

#### 5.12
The most common reasons provided for selecting each concession were around lack of use and availability of spaces elsewhere. There was some variation across some of the top answers for the different concessions including:

- **d)** insufficient spaces preventing the use of the off-street and on-street parking concessions; and

- **e)** concern for personal safety and a desire to abide by the law preventing the use of yellow lines.

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8 Unweighted sample sizes: Total respondents – 883; Off street – 430; On street – 181; Yellow lines – 190; Dropped off/picked up – 60; 11 answered ‘none of these’.
Perception of Scheme

5.13 Most respondents (76 per cent) had found it easy to obtain a Badge. However, only 19 per cent are very confident that local authorities give Blue Badges to the people who need them most, whilst 39 per cent are quite confident, 20 per cent not very confident and 5 per cent not confident at all (15 per cent expressed no opinion).

5.14 Respondents were also similarly divided on whether the Scheme is actually being used predominantly by the people who need it most – with 12 per cent being very confident that it is in comparison to 38 per cent being quite confident, 30 per cent not very confident and 6 per cent not confident at all (13 per cent expressed no opinion).

Use and barriers to use of public transport

5.15 59 per cent of respondents have another form of concessionary travel pass (such as a bus pass) as a result of their disability and/or age. However, the majority of respondents do not regularly use public transport as outlined in table 5.3. There were subtle differences in the use and perceptions of public transport across different regions. This variation may be due to local conditions and provision – but these factors were not explored by the survey. It also may be that use of public transport is impacted by individual factors such as the nature of the respondent’s disability and personal circumstances which were also not covered by the survey.

Table 5.3 Frequency of use of public transport\(^9\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Local bus services</th>
<th>Local train, tram or underground</th>
<th>Taxis</th>
<th>Community transport/ dial-a-ride*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At least once a week</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a fortnight</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less often than once a month</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Due to rounding these figures do not add up to 100 per cent

5.16 Respondents were split over whether public transport is easy to use in their area, with 41 per cent believing it is easy and 43 per cent that it is difficult (of which 25
per cent thought it was very difficult). A more marked difference was identified in feelings towards how the physical accessibility of public transport has changed over the last five years, with 49 per cent believing that this has got easier in contrast to 15 per cent who believe it has become more difficult and 22 per cent who believe that there has been no change.

5.17 Over half of respondents (55 per cent) felt that there were no barriers preventing them from using public transport as much as they would like to. Where respondents felt there were barriers (44 per cent) these generally related to concerns about reliability and cost of service, accessibility of services, and individuals’ own disabilities and health problems presenting difficulties.

5.18 When asked whether there was anything the Government could do to encourage them to use public transport more frequently, 24 per cent of respondents said that there was nothing that the Government could do and 17 per cent that there was nothing the Government could do as they don’t use it. Where respondents thought that improvements could be made, these were generally around making the services more frequent, reliable, cheaper and accessible.

5.19 DfT may wish to analyse these results further in terms of promoting greater uptake of alternative means of transport by people with mobility issues.

6. **Key findings – non Badge-holding drivers (aged 17+)**

**Awareness and perception of Scheme**

6.1 The majority of non Badge-holding drivers surveyed (73 per cent) were aware of the Blue Badge Scheme. Of these, only 49 per cent claim they are actually familiar with the rules of the Scheme.

6.2 Those respondents aware of the Scheme were fairly evenly split about whether they think the Scheme is predominantly used by the people who need it most – although slightly more (47 per cent in comparison to 39 per cent) are not confident that it is. Those that were not familiar with the Scheme were more likely to have no opinion or be less confident that the Scheme is being used by the people that need it most – whereas levels of confidence were more evenly split for respondents that were familiar with the rules of the Scheme.
Annex J
Use of technology

1. Introduction
1.1 Abuse of the Blue Badge Scheme falls into three main categories:
   a) use of invalid (that is lost, stolen, duplicated or forged) Badges;
   b) misuse of valid Badges by family members or friends; or
   c) acquisition of Badges by individuals who do not have significant mobility issues during the application process.

1.2 Abuse (or perceived abuse) of the Scheme is a significant issue which has attracted high profile media coverage. Abuse is a particular problem within city centres, where high parking charges and limited parking spaces make the concessions offered to Blue Badge holders very appealing. The use of the Badge to obtain concessions in road pricing schemes such as the London Congestion Charge is also increasing the market value of the Badge with anecdotal evidence of Badges attracting up to £1,500 on the black market. This abuse can undermine the credibility and purpose of the Scheme and can have a direct impact on other policy areas such as traffic management and policing.

1.3 Closely linked to the issue of enforcement is administration. Current Scheme administration arrangements make sharing data for enforcement purposes (for example to identify invalid Badges) difficult and can increase the likelihood of inconsistent administration and assessment processes.

1.4 This Review examines how technology can be used to tackle abuse of the Blue Badge Scheme and support its efficient administration.

2. Summary
2.1 The Review concludes that going forward, Blue Badge administration and enforcement requirements could be met by a technology strategy that combines:
   a) a secure and machine readable Badge;
   b) a national framework for sharing Blue Badge data between issuing authorities and on-street parking enforcement teams; and
   c) a data storage approach that supports efficient and streamlined administration.
THE STRATEGIC REVIEW OF THE BLUE BADGE SCHEME

2.2 This Review identifies a number of possible immediate measures that could be implemented to improve administration and enforcement arrangements as well as potential long-term delivery options which will be explored further as part of the development of a comprehensive Blue Badge Reform Strategy by April 2008.

3.1 Background

3.1 Each Blue Badge Scheme operator manages the Scheme independently using their own systems and processes. The level of sophistication varies considerably from the use of paper records to sophisticated databases with a high degree of automation. This multiplicity and variety in administration set up can prevent the efficient sharing of Blue Badge information for enforcement and reporting purposes. It can also lead to inconsistent and cumbersome administration practices (particularly during the assessment stage).

3.2 There is currently no standard method for sharing information between the administration teams and on-street enforcement teams. Some local authorities do provide lists of lost and stolen Badges to their on-street enforcement teams, but in other areas information is exchanged manually and on an ad hoc basis – a time consuming process made even more difficult if the Badge under scrutiny is issued by an external authority.

3.3 The current format of the Badge also does not allow it to be easily read by on-street enforcement teams and is vulnerable to interference and forgery.

3.4 An increasing number of local authorities are looking at how technology can be harnessed to tackle enforcement and administration challenges (for example through the creation of databases of lost, stolen and forged Badges, electronic tagging, etc.). However, significant scope remains for using technology to support the delivery of the Blue Badge Scheme.

PART 1: DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

4. Administration and enforcement model

4.1 Blue Badge enforcement and administration has four main components:

a) **Scheme users** (or stakeholders) including primary users such as Badge holders, enforcement teams and administrators, and secondary users such as central government and the general public who interact with the Scheme;

b) the **Badge** used to signal whether the individual qualifies for the Scheme’s concessions and is the correct user;

c) the **database system** used to record information on Badge holders; and

d) other **related schemes or records of information** that link to the Blue Badge Scheme due to synergies in eligibility requirements or personal data.
This paper examines how technology can be used to improve delivery of the Scheme across these components.

## Scheme users

### 5. User requirements

#### 5.1 It is important that user requirements shape and determine the technology strategy adopted for the Blue Badge Scheme going forward. As the administration and enforcement model above illustrates, the Scheme has a number of different ‘users’ and their requirements are outlined in table 5.1.

### Table 5.1 User requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>• Robust administration and enforcement practices that ensure the Scheme continues to be viable and meets the needs of the people who need it most</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Robust and readily accessible national Blue Badge data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Robust privacy safeguards in place to ensure that Badge holder details are secure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Future scalability to handle:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– increases in Badge holder numbers; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– changes in Scheme design (for example changes in eligibility rules, Badge issue period)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strategic fit with other transport technology initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• EU interoperability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Value for money and, if possible, cost neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badge holders</td>
<td>• Tamper and forgery proof Badge design which is linked to the individual, is portable and keeps personal details secure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• User friendly, flexible and secure processes for applying for Badges and updating personal details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Streamlined approach with application and assessment processes for other related concessions and benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Easy and effective means of cancelling lost or stolen Badges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Badge which does not encourage car crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User</td>
<td>Requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General public</td>
<td>• Mechanism for reporting suspected cases of abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Access to information on Scheme rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheme administrator</td>
<td>• National secure framework for sharing data on valid and invalid Badges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Robust privacy safeguards in place to ensure that Badge holder details are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>secure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Streamlined, efficient and consistent administration processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Links with other databases/administration systems for validating data and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If local authorities continue to administer the Scheme, fit with other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>local administration systems and practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-street enforcement</td>
<td>• Easy, efficient and secure on-street means of identifying:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teams</td>
<td>– invalid Badges; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– use of valid Badges by non Badge holders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 The rest of this section looks at how technology can be used to enhance the other components of the administration and enforcement model taking into account the user requirements identified above.

### Blue Badge database options

6. Options for storing and sharing Blue Badge data

6.1 Enforcement and administration of the Scheme could be greatly enhanced by the introduction of a national framework for sharing Blue Badge data. This could be achieved by holding information on Blue Badge holders in a national database or by establishing greater links between local and regional databases. Each approach has its own different technical, legal and administration challenges as outlined below. Each approach would be subject to robust data protection measures being in place to ensure Badge holder privacy.
Option 1: National database system of Blue Badge holders

Create a new national database system of all registered Blue Badge holders by developing a new system, adapting and extending an existing Blue Badge system or modifying an existing national system to store Blue Badge data

In 2002, the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) completed a review of the Blue Badge Scheme and put forward 47 recommendations for its reform. One of their recommendations was that there should be a national (centrally funded) database of Badge holders operated by a relevant body, such as the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).10

The DfT subsequently commissioned a feasibility study by MVA Consultancy which concluded that a centralised database system was feasible, provided that a web-based solution was adopted whereby users would connect to the system via a standard web browser. This approach could support central or local administration (or a hybrid approach) and would be broadly supported by local authorities, particularly if an element of local control was retained.11 DPTAC also recommended that local authorities should continue to be responsible for administering the Scheme.12

Opportunities

- In theory a national database of Badge holders would provide the most robust means of identifying invalid Badges as these would not be recorded on the system (provided that the system was kept up to date).

- Centralised and consistent data storage could support the delivery of significant administration and reporting efficiencies (particularly if a centralised administration model was also adopted).

- It could facilitate the creation of links with other national schemes and databases (see section 8 below).

- There could also be opportunities for IT economies of scale.

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11 MVA Consultancy (2006), p. 13: The majority of local authorities that participated in the study conducted by MVA Consultancy in 2006 supported the idea of a national database. Support for a centrally administered database was less strong, but was still supported by over half of responding authorities. These findings are also supported by initial feedback received by DfT during visits to a number of local authorities as part of the September 2007 Strategic Review.
Option 1: National database system of Blue Badge holders

Create a new national database system of all registered Blue Badge holders by developing a new system, adapting and extending an existing Blue Badge system or modifying an existing national system to store Blue Badge data

Issues

- The development, implementation and maintenance of a central database would require high costs of investment and would require significant change to the status quo.
- The sheer volume of data held could present technical issues (for example in terms of data cleanliness and control) and might inhibit the delivery of key enforcement and administration benefits.
- Robust privacy safeguards would need to be in place to ensure that Badge holder details are secure.
- A national database approach might also undermine local ownership of the Scheme and the move towards decentralised delivery of policy – although the adoption of a local or hybrid administration model could help address this issue. It could also have a significant impact on other local authority policies and/or systems that are currently integrated or have links with Blue Badge administration.
- Administration efficiencies might be undermined by duplication of effort if local authorities continued to maintain their own databases or had trouble accessing the central database (for example due to limited internet access, IT failure etc.).
- Finally, public reception of a national database might be influenced by perception and reputation of other national systems.

The MVA Consultancy feasibility study estimated costs of around £1 million for developing a national database, but it is likely that total costs would be considerably higher when implementation, change management and ongoing maintenance costs are taken into account.13 Further work would be required to determine potential costs versus benefits, but recent research conducted into the feasibility of a London database of Badge holders suggest that a strong business case could be made based on direct cost savings as a result of reduced parking charges evasions (congestion charging evasion in the case of London) and theft and administration efficiencies.

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Option 2: Local or regional databases of Blue Badge holders

Maintain status quo of local databases and create a framework for nationally sharing Blue Badge data

An alternative approach would be to maintain local databases, but create a framework for nationally sharing data through:

- encouraging all operators to keep electronic records as the baseline option;
- supporting the creation of regional databases where appropriate (the Highland Council in Scotland has already adopted this approach and London Councils and Transport for London (TfL) are exploring the option of developing a London database of all Badge holders);
- specifying core data fields and mandatory data exchange formats to facilitate reporting between issuing authorities; and
- implementing hotlisting arrangements for lost, stolen and forged Badges based on the models used by UK banks and credit card companies and Oyster (London Councils are already piloting a London database of lost, stolen and fraudulent Badges).

Opportunities

- Maintaining a network of local Blue Badge databases with the option to develop regional databases where there was a strong business case could require less change to the status quo and would be more in line with the move towards decentralised policy delivery across government.
- If combined with the adoption of national hotlisting arrangements for lost, stolen and forged cards, there would be significant enforcement benefits.
- The specification of core data fields could support a move to more consistent and harmonised administration processes. The creation of regional databases would further support this process and could result in administration efficiencies, particularly where administration was also undertaken centrally.
- This approach would also not preclude, and indeed could help support, the move to a national database in the future.
### Option 2: Local or regional databases of Blue Badge holders

*Maintain status quo of local databases and create a framework for nationally sharing Blue Badge data*

**Issues**

- Financial investment would be required to help support local authorities to move to electronic record keeping, core data fields and standard data exchange formats, and national hotlisting arrangements.

- It might not achieve the same enforcement opportunities as a live national database of all Badge holders as hotlisting would only capture information on reported cases so would not facilitate on-street identification of unreported Badges.

- Robust privacy safeguards would need to be in place to ensure that Badge holder details are secure.

- It is unlikely to be as effective as a national database system at supporting consistent and harmonised administration processes, particularly as it could not support centralised administration on a national scale.

- There would not be the same potential for IT economies of scale.

- Further work would be required to understand the respective cost benefits of this approach against developing a national database system.

### 7. Options for enhancing system functionality

#### 7.1 In line with the user requirements outlined in Section 3 above, when specifying any new Blue Badge database system(s) opportunities for greater automation and self service should also be explored to ensure efficient administration and application processes. This could include:

- **a)** online application forms that link to the database to remove the need to manually re-enter online forms (although electronic signature issue would need to be addressed as well as the need to provide proof of eligibility and photos);

- **b)** automated administration processes, for example automatic generation of renewal letters and production of reports; and

- **c)** links with other systems to facilitate validation of data and reduce duplication (see Section 8).
8. Options for linking Blue Badge database with other systems/reports

8.1 Currently, local authorities require documentary evidence if an individual is applying under one of the ‘subject to further assessment’ eligibility criteria (that is if they are in receipt of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance [HRMCDLA] or War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement or are registered blind). Where this evidence is not provided or readily available, the local authority has to make manual checks with the appropriate body which can be a time consuming and resource intensive process. It also requires the Badge holder to provide duplicated information.

8.2 In the future, this process could be made more efficient and robust, if links were established between the relevant systems/electronic records and the Blue Badge database.

8.3 Blue Badge administration processes and data validity could be further enhanced by links with other systems, for example:

a) With the deceased register to allow automatic cancellation of Badges on the death of an individual; and

b) With other local authority systems to exchange data and avoid duplication of work.

8.4 The Blue Badge is also used as a gateway for other transport concessions and benefits including exemption from the London Congestion Charge. Currently ownership of the Blue Badge is validated through the provision of photocopied Badges and/or manual checks, but this process is open to abuse (for example through the use of stolen, duplication or counterfeit Badges). This process could be made more robust if checks could be made against live Blue Badge data.

8.5 Further work is required to ascertain what links would be feasible. Even where these are not possible now, opportunities for greater data sharing in the future can be created/preserved by identifying potential links and specifying minimum data fields and formats (including common identifiers) across related schemes.

8.6 In addition, sharing data to deliver government objectives needs to be balanced with protecting privacy and maintaining public confidence that their personal data is adequately protected against misuse in line with the publicly stated HM Government, Information Sharing Vision Statement (September 2006).
9. **Options for providing on-street database access to validate Badges**

9.1 Regardless of how data is stored and shared by scheme operators, enforcement benefits will only be fully realised if on-street parking enforcement teams can easily and securely access Blue Badge data when inspecting Badges. Rather than manually having to validate suspect Badges with the relevant issuing authority, the best way of doing this would be for enforcement teams to use PDA-type devices to check the status of specific Badges against the live database of Badge holders/hot lists of reported lost, stolen and forged Badges via a secure wireless connection (for example the GSM network). Alternatively, they could access a downloaded version of the relevant data, although this would provide less up-to-date information than a live connection.

9.2 Most local authority on-street parking enforcement teams are already issued with handheld devices for producing Parking Charge Notices (PCNs) – although the specification of these varies. However, further research is needed to understand whether additional functionality and memory could be added to these devices or whether new devices would be required. The Government would also need to consider how such devices were procured (for example using framework agreements). The pilot of the London Lost Stolen and Fraudulent Database (see Section 6) will be a good source of information on the practicalities of integrating Blue Badge database access with existing handheld devices.

10. **Options for enhancing Badge readability**

10.1 On-street parking enforcement officials also need a reliable and efficient means of collecting information on individual Badges when inspecting them with their handheld devices.

10.2 The most basic option would be for the parking enforcement official to manually input the TSO serial number of a Badge (or other unique identifier) into their handheld PDA and use this number to cross-reference against the database. Alternatively, technologies such as bar-coding, Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) and smart cards could be used to create machine readable Badges in line with DPTAC’s recommendations to the Government in 2002. These options are considered in more detail in table 10.1.

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Table 10.1: Assessment of Badge readability options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1      | Manual input of serial number | Manually input Badge serial number/other unique identifier | • Would require limited changes to existing Badge format as serial number already present on the front of the Badge  
• Likely to have lowest set up costs and ongoing maintenance costs  
• Would keep Blue Badge holder’s personal data secure | • Would be time consuming, prone to user error and could negatively impact the efficiency of the parking official  
• If only checked against lists of known lost, stolen and fraudulent Badges would not inherently help the identification of high quality forgeries  
• New or upgrades to existing PDA hardware may be required to deliver additional functionality (for example memory and input field)  
• Development work may be required to ensure that the same unique identifier is used by administration teams | Could be adopted as the baseline approach even if some local authorities adopted more technical solutions |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2      | Smart card  | - Would allow Badges to be read remotely  
         | technology to store electronic information on the Badge (a unique identifier) which could be read remotely | - Would keep Blue Badge holder’s personal data secure provided only Scheme-specific data held on chip  
         | | - Would make Badges more difficult to forge  
         | | - If ITSO* compliant, could potentially link up with other transport schemes, for example concessionary bus pass  
         | | - May be scope to use Badge to access other facilities reserved for disabled people (for example parking for the disabled spaces in private/supermarket car parks) and to facilitate concessions on payments  
         | | - Allows two-way exchange of information so that Badges can be invalidated when read | - Further research is required to ascertain whether smart cards can be read by handheld readers through windscreens and the reliability of reading Badges in this way  
         | | | - Would require significant infrastructure investment, for example issuing new Blue Badges with smartcard technology and enforcement officials with handheld readers and implementing required administration set up  
         | | | - Ongoing costs associated with maintaining technology | Could be a viable option and strategic fit with other transport initiatives, but further work is required on readability through windscreens |

*Integrated Transport Smartcard Organisation
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<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 3      | RFID tag   | - Would allow Badge to be read remotely and can be read over greater distances than electronic chips used in smart cards  
- Would keep Blue Badge holder's personal data secure provided only Scheme-specific data held on chip  
- Would make Badges more difficult to forge  
- Potential opportunity to link up with existing UK road toll schemes that use tags for contactless payment, for example to identify Blue Badge concessions  
- Likely to be consistent with trends in the wider parking sector which appears to be moving towards the use of RFID tagging for residential permits and meterless/ticketless payment solutions  
- Allows two-way exchange of information so that Badges can be invalidated when read | - Further research is required to ascertain whether RFID tags can be read by handheld readers through windscreens and the reliability of reading Badges in this way  
- Would require significant infrastructure investment for example issuing Badge holders with tags and enforcement officials with handheld readers and implementing required back office set up  
- Ongoing costs associated with maintaining technology | Could be a viable option and strategic fit with other transport initiatives, but further work is required on readability through windscreens |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Issues</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bar coding</td>
<td>Add a bar code to the front of the Badge which could be scanned optically by a handheld scanner. Would keep Blue Badge holder’s personal data secure and would make Badges more difficult to forge. Technology already being used by local authorities for parking permits.</td>
<td>Requires direct line of sight to operate which could pose accessibility issues in some circumstances. Investment would be needed to implement bar-coding software and hardware. Only allows one way exchange of data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. **Additional options for improving Badge security**

11.1 There are also opportunities to make other modifications to the format of the conventional Blue Badge to make it more secure, for example tamper proof self-sealing lamination, laser etched data.

11.2 The DfT Blue Badge Policy Team is currently working with the DVLA and other relevant bodies to identify options for increasing the integral security of the Badge through the implementation of additional security features.

**Part 2: Proposed approach and possible next steps**

12. **Proposed technology strategy**

12.1 Going forward, Blue Badge administration and enforcement requirements could be met by a technology strategy that combines:

a) a secure and machine readable Badge;

b) a national framework for sharing Blue Badge data between issuing authorities and with on-street parking enforcement teams; and

c) a data storage approach that supports efficient and streamlined administration.

13. **Possible next steps**

**Short term**

13.1 To deliver this strategy, in the short term, immediate work could be undertaken to:

a) work with DVLA and other relevant bodies to identify options for increasing the integral security of the Badge through the implementation of additional security features;

b) conduct a research project to test the feasibility of different machine readable Badge options and review the scope and functionality of commonly deployed handheld enforcement devices;

c) support the development/piloting of local or regional schemes to tackle the use of invalid Badges where this type of abuse is prevalent;

d) encourage all issuing authorities or regional consortiums to move to electronic databases and the use of core data fields and more consistent administration processes (which in turn could support the move to a more centralised approach to data storage in the future);

e) encourage greater links between local authorities and on-street enforcement teams and the use of Badge serial numbers as a reference point;
f) take advantage of the data cleansing exercise currently being conducted by Local Transport Authorities prior to the implementation of concessionary bus fares in April 2008 to validate local Blue Badge records as there is considerable overlap between the two eligible populations; and

g) investigate the feasibility of the potential long-term solutions identified below.

Long term

13.2 The strategy proposed at 12.1 is deliberately technology agnostic to enable DfT to take advantage of emerging technologies and other corporate initiatives and to reflect changes in policy.

13.3 In the long term, one option would be to develop a standalone Blue Badge system using a combination of the data storage and machine readable Badge technologies identified above. This approach would arguably offer the most flexibility for developing a system that was tailor made for the Blue Badge. However, it may be difficult to develop the business case for a standalone scheme.

13.4 An alternative approach would be to develop a joint technological solution with another area of DfT subject to legal and commercial considerations.

13.5 These options will be considered further as part of the development of the comprehensive Blue Badge Reform Strategy.
Annex K
Blue Badge administration and enforcement

1. Introduction

1.1 Local authorities are currently responsible for administering and enforcing the Blue Badge Scheme using their own systems and processes.

1.2 One of the major criticisms of the current Scheme has been the extent of local variation in its administration and enforcement. There is consensus that a more consistent and uniform approach is required to ensure the Scheme’s continued viability.

1.3 This Review identifies current administration and enforcement issues and considers whether they can be effectively addressed by the promotion of good practice or whether more far reaching measures are required. It takes into account the recommendations on administration and enforcement made by The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) in 2002. It also looks more widely at whether an application fee should be charged and whether administration should remain with local authorities or whether there is a case for moving to a central administration model.

1.4 It concludes that Blue Badge administration and enforcement practices can be substantially improved through the better communication and sharing of good practice, but that this can only achieve so much and that additional measures also need to be considered to ensure that the Scheme is operated as robustly and efficiently as possible.

2. Overview of current administration practices

Processing applications

2.1 Allocation of responsibility for processing applications and issuing Badges varies by local authority, for example between adult social care and parking services. Some local authorities have also chosen to incorporate Blue Badge administration into their contact centre facility and this is one of three key recommendations.
made by the Department of Health’s Care Services Efficiency Delivery Programme (CSED) to streamline Blue Badge administration (see Annex Ki for more detail).\textsuperscript{16}

2.2 In most administrative models the potential applicant contacts the local authority directly for an application form or downloads this from the council website. They are then required to complete and submit a signed copy of the form, together with two passport size photographs, supporting evidence of their disability where required and application fee (if charged – see Section 4 for more details).

Assessing eligibility

2.3 There are two main eligibility routes – ‘eligible without further assessment’ (referred to as ‘automatic eligibility’ in this Review) and ‘eligible subject to further assessment’ (referred to as ‘assessed eligibility’ in this Review) – see Annex C on eligibility. Around a third of applications meet automatic qualifying criteria and local authorities can usually issue Badges to such individuals with minimal formality or further assessment provided that the individual has provided suitable evidence.

2.4 If the applicant does not automatically qualify, a judgement needs to be made on whether the nature and extent of an individual’s disability qualifies them for a Badge.

2.5 Most local authorities refer the application to the applicant’s GP for a professional opinion. The GP invariably charges for this service and this cost is either absorbed by the local Primary Care Trust (although there is no formal requirement for them to do so) or paid for directly by the local authority. Costs vary by local Primary Care Trust area, CSED research suggests that these can range from around £25 to £35, although the BMA guidelines on charging have been suspended and GPs can now determine the charge for themselves. Additional anecdotal evidence from local authorities suggests that GPs can charge up to £90 for assessment costs. GPs may also inevitably support the majority of their patients’ applications, which may then be accepted by the local authority.

2.6 In line with DPTAC and CSED recommendations, DfT recommends that such cases are assessed by independent health professionals, such as physiotherapists and occupational therapists, to increase consistency and ensure judgements are made based on mobility rather than medical conditions.\textsuperscript{17} CSED has also suggested that the assessed eligibility criteria can, in most cases, be assessed by a contact centre operative, subject to sufficient training. This is already being practiced at a number of councils such as Somerset and Wiltshire.

\textsuperscript{16} CSED (2006)
\textsuperscript{17} DPTAC (2002), p. 12, Recommendation 9.
Renewals

2.7 The same process is generally followed for the renewal of expired Badges. However, some local authorities do make use of past applications where these are available to support the renewal process.

2.8 DPTAC recommends that renewal notices should be issued automatically three months before expiry to ensure no gap in usage before a new Badge is issued. This also assists with local authority work and resource planning. However most local authorities do not currently issue reminders, often because they lack the system infrastructure and/or resource to do this or are concerned that the individual may have died, but are unable to check this.

Deaths

2.9 Legislation requires Badges to be immediately returned to the issuing authority if a Badge holder dies. Typically local authorities do not issue Badge recall notices when individuals die, but rely on friends or relations to return the Badge of their own accord. This is partly due to the sensitivity of the issue, but also due to lack of timely information, time and resource and an efficient means of issuing the notice. DfT supports the issuing of sensitive Badge recalls based upon the experience of local authorities who successfully retrieve Badges in a compassionate way.

Appeals

2.10 There is no legal requirement for local authorities to have an appeals procedure in place for unsuccessful applications unless the individual has been refused a Badge (having already held one) because they misused it and have had at least three relevant convictions in which case they have the right to appeal to the Secretary of State for Transport. However, under Regulation 8(3) of the 2000 Regulations, if a local authority receives an application and refuses to issue a Badge, they must let the applicant know in writing why their application was refused.

2.11 Unsuccessful applicants who consider that there have been procedural irregularities in dealing with their applications can also report their cases to the Local Government Ombudsman.

2.12 In some local authorities there is a de facto system of appeal where an applicant, who has been refused a Badge, contacts their local councillor or MP.

2.13 However, in line with DPTAC’s recommendations, DfT strongly recommends that local authorities develop their own internal procedures to deal with appeals, and some have done so.

3. **Key administration issues and their resolution by good practice or additional measures**

3.1 The table below summarises key issues associated with current administration processes and examines whether these can be addressed by good practice alone and, if not, what additional measures should be considered.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Key issues</th>
<th>Addressed by good practice?</th>
<th>Additional measures required?</th>
<th>Possible next steps</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applications</td>
<td><strong>Application process can be hindered by the submission of incomplete application forms or unsatisfactory evidence of disability</strong></td>
<td><strong>Provision of sufficient support and information to applicants at the front end of the process regarding their eligibility and application can enable better screening and assurance of complete applications first time</strong></td>
<td><strong>Greater use of the internet could be made to facilitate the application process. In particular, the submission of electronic/online forms could significantly reduce the amount of manual data entry required</strong></td>
<td><strong>Encourage local authorities to use the internet for initial applications where appropriate</strong>  &lt;br&gt; <strong>Proactively seek opportunities to enable a full online application option (for example investigate use of electronic signatures, scanned photographs and electronic evidence of disability)</strong></td>
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<td>Area</td>
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<td>Addressed by good practice?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eligibility without further assessment</td>
<td>• Significant time and resource can be spent manually checking alternative records if an individual is unable to provide adequate documentary evidence</td>
<td>• Other than ensuring that individuals understand what evidence they need to provide when they make their initial enquiry, little can be done to address this issue through good practice alone</td>
<td>• One option would be to provide Blue Badge administrators with direct access to alternative records where possible</td>
<td>• Work with relevant bodies to assess feasibility of Blue Badge administrators accessing the relevant records</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Applicants would also need to give their permission for their personal records to be used in this way</td>
<td>• Work with DfT lawyers to understand data protection issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessed eligibility</td>
<td>• Using the applicant’s own GP can place an unfair burden and put the doctor patient relationship under stress and can increase the application time and cost</td>
<td>• Independent health professionals, such as physiotherapists and occupational therapists, should be used in place of GPs where possible to undertake assessments</td>
<td>• Good practice can only go so far to ensure nationally consistent assessment processes (a key DPTAC recommendation)</td>
<td>• Work with Department of Health, medical professionals and local authorities to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• This approach is in line with both DPTAC’s and CSED’s recommendations.</td>
<td>• In addition, Government needs to be as prescriptive as possible when issuing guidance on eligibility</td>
<td>- provide detailed guidelines on eligibility criteria in new local authority guidance and update model application forms as appropriate</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Government could also consider the development of model decisions trees and/or a national training programme</td>
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</table>
### Area Key issues Addressed by good practice? Additional measures required? Possible next steps

- Administrators can also be supported to make their own informed decisions on assessed eligibility through the use of decisions trees/algorithms and targeted training so that only borderline cases need to be referred to independent medical professionals.

- Another option would be to encourage neighbouring local authorities to use the same independent health professionals and/or establish a system of peer-to-peer audits

- The use of independent medical professionals in lieu of GPs may not be feasible/economical in all cases for example in rural areas with a large geographic spread

- Also, the use of decision trees rather than independent medical assessments relies on information given by Badge holders rather than professional judgement so would need to be carefully monitored

- develop and pilot model decisions trees (these could be included as part of a central online tool kit for local authorities)

- investigate feasibility of developing a national training course for Blue Badge administrators (which could be delivered online or as a CD ROM)

- encourage peer-to-peer audits and the establishment of regional ‘good practice’ champions
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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Renewals</td>
<td>• Most local authorities do not issue renewal notices</td>
<td>• Local authorities can be encouraged to issue renewal notices before the Badge expires in conjunction with robust deceased practices (see below)</td>
<td>• Where local authorities lack sufficiently sophisticated system infrastructure to automate their renewal processes, it will be difficult for them to implement good practice</td>
<td>• Support local authorities to move to electronic (and more sophisticated) administration systems and highlight the opportunity for automating renewal processes</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• This works best when the renewal process can be automated in the administration system</td>
<td>• This gap needs to be addressed as part of the wider technology approach for administering the Blue Badge scheme considered in Annex J</td>
<td>• Seek opportunities for greater automation of administration processes (including renewal) when investigating the feasibility of other system options (see Annex J for more detail)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
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<td>Addressed by good practice?</td>
<td>Additional measures required?</td>
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</table>
| Deaths     | • Most local authorities do not proactively monitor deaths so that Badges can be cancelled and recall notices issued if appropriate which leads to invalid Badges remaining in circulation                                                                 | • To increase the likelihood of Badges being returned upon an individual's death, local authorities can include Blue Badge recall notices in their death registry packs (this is in line with DPTAC recommendations)\(^{23}\)  
• Local authorities can also regularly cross reference deaths registered in their area against their Blue Badge records  
• Local authorities participating in the National Fraud Initiative (NFI), run by the Audit Commission every two years, can also opt to include a comparison of their Blue Badge holder records against records of deceased persons as part of their audit | • DfT is looking to include the need to return Blue Badges in the death registration section of the Directgov website  
• As for renewals, when considering enhancements to specification of administration system functionality, it would be useful if cross checks against relevant records could be made more automated | • Promote good practice, including opportunities for cross referencing Blue Badge data against national death records, as part of local authority guidelines  
• Seek opportunities for linking with relevant records when investigating the feasibility of other system options |
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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appeals</td>
<td>There is currently no standard appeals process for individuals that have been refused Badges.</td>
<td>- Promote best practice and monitor its implementation.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Investigate the feasibility of introducing a national independent appeals process or establishing a regional or national independent appeals process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- If this approach does not achieve sufficient national consistency, investigate the feasibility of introducing a standard appeals process or establishing a national appeals procedure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- An alternative approach would be to develop a standard appeals process or establish a national independent appeals process (for example like the one used by the Department for Work and Pensions for benefit appeals).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Local authorities can establish their own appeal processes based on DfT guidelines which reflect DPTAC recommendations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **Application fee and current administration costs**

4.1 Under current legislation, local authorities can charge a Badge application fee of up to £2. However, the cost of processing this fee is around £12 to £25 (as estimated by the British Bankers’ Association).\(^{25}\) As a result a number of local authorities have chosen not to continue its collection for economic reasons. This approach is supported by the findings of the CSED programme which recommends that local authorities should consider removing the application fee if retained at its current level.

4.2 In 2002, DPTAC recommended that there should be no fee to the applicant for the issue of a Badge. However, an increased application fee could arguably help to discourage inappropriate applications and could be used to help fund better enforcement and Badge security, which could in turn reduce Badge theft and free up more parking spaces for those in need.

4.3 An increase in the Badge fee would mirror practice in Scotland, where local authorities have been able to charge up to £20 per application since April 2007.\(^{26}\) It would also reflect the charging approach adopted for other national identification and transport concession schemes (see Annex Kiii for other examples).

4.4 The application fee could also potentially be used by local authorities to recover some of the costs of administering the Scheme (particularly in the case of replacing lost or damaged Badges). It is difficult to gather reliable evidence on the costs of administering the Scheme as this varies depending on local authority practice and on what assumptions are used (for example whether overheads, IT costs are included). Recent research conducted by the Department of Health came up with an average administration cost of around £35 per Badge (not including Badge fee processing costs) for 2006/07 (although some local authorities suggest that costs are considerably higher).\(^{27}\)

4.5 It is recommended that further work be undertaken with a small group of local authorities to estimate administration and enforcement costs based on consistent assumptions and that this data be used to inform policy decisions on the application fee going forward.


\(^{26}\) The Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2007.

\(^{27}\) CSED (2006).
5. **Overview of current enforcement practices and powers**

5.1 Issuing authorities and on-street enforcement teams have a dual role to play in ensuring that the Scheme’s rules are adhered to. Responsibility for on-street enforcement typically falls to local authority parking attendants (depending on whether the local authority has opted for Decriminalised Parking Enforcement) or traffic wardens or less commonly to the police.

5.2 A number of powers are available to local authorities and on-street enforcement agencies to tackle different types of abuse as summarised at Annex Kii.

5.3 The extent to which enforcement is actively pursued varies by local authority depending, for example, on the prevalence of abuse, the pressure on parking spaces, available resources and whether or not the authority is operating in a decriminalised parking environment.

5.4 Local authority good practice involves close co-operation between the issuing authority and on-street enforcement teams and is usually linked to targeted surveillance operations. The following flowchart sets out good practice.

- **Record and store instances of lost, stolen and forged Badges, encouraging the public to report suspected abuse on the telephone.**
  - **Write to the Badge holder outlining the consequences of continued misuse so that Badge can be revoked if systematic abuse is identified.**
  - **Deploy a specialist team of Blue Badge enforcement officers who can proactively inspect Badges and build up evidence of systematic abuse through surveillance under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.**
  - **Conduct periodic targeted joint surveillance operations with the police for example at football stadiums, where the police can use their powers to confiscate Badges.**
- **Share the information with parking enforcement colleagues for use in parking enforcement and prosecution.**
  - **Prosecute abusers at the magistrates’ court.**
5.5 Some local authorities have stated that lack of resource is prohibiting the national roll out of dedicated specialist surveillance teams. This could potentially be overcome by channelling some of the fine revenue from successful prosecutions to local authorities for use in Blue Badge enforcement or by developing business cases to identify potential cost benefits that could be achieved through improved enforcement processes (for example through increased parking revenues).

6. **Key enforcement issues and their resolution by good practice or additional measures**

6.1 The table below summarises key issues associated with current enforcement processes and examines whether these can be addressed by good practice alone, and, if not, what additional measures should be considered.
<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Badge inspection</td>
<td>• There is currently no standard means of exchanging information between local authorities and with on-street enforcement teams on known lost, stolen and forged Badges which makes these difficult to identify when used. • The current format of the Badge also requires manual verification against Badge holder data which makes the inspection process more cumbersome and can negatively impact the efficiency of parking officials.</td>
<td>• Local authorities can work more closely with their on-street parking enforcement teams and each other in order to share Blue Badge information and introduce their own technology solutions to facilitate this process (as some have already done). • However, this does not address the need for a national means of sharing information (for example manual checks would still be required where Badges have been issued by a different authority).</td>
<td>• A more far-reaching technology solution is required to develop a secure national framework for sharing Blue Badge data and verifying Badges (for example through the introduction of machine-readable Badge technologies).</td>
<td>• Investigate options outlined in Annex J for delivering: • national framework for sharing Blue Badge data between issuing bodies and with on-street enforcement teams; and • machine-readable Badge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Area
- **Badge format**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key issues</th>
<th>Addressed by good practice?</th>
<th>Additional measures required?</th>
<th>Possible next steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The current Badge is vulnerable to abuse through tampering and forgery.</td>
<td>The current Badge is vulnerable to abuse through tampering and forgery.</td>
<td>Additional features could be added to the standard Badge to make it more secure (for example laser etched printing, national arrangements for procuring tamper proof lamination).</td>
<td>Work with DVLA and other relevant bodies to implement measures for increasing Badge security and test with key stakeholders. For example add security features to Badge and put in place national arrangements for procuring tamper proof lamination.</td>
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</table>

See Annex J for further information on how technology can be used to enhance integral Badge security.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
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<th>Addressed by good practice?</th>
<th>Additional measures required?</th>
<th>Possible next steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Enforcement measures and powers   | • Lack of clear and consistent understanding amongst local authorities and on-street enforcement teams about what measures are appropriate and what powers they have under existing legislation | • A number of local authorities have developed good enforcement practices using targeted surveillance operations and these can be used as case studies to help inform other local authorities so that they can utilise existing powers more effectively | • There is perhaps some scope for reviewing existing legislation to ensure that clear and appropriate powers are available for each type of abuse. However, a more pragmatic approach would be to use targeted surveillance operations to build up evidence of abuse under existing legislation | • Develop clearer guidance on existing powers and measures available for local authorities  
• Investigate feasibility of running enforcement roadshows/seminars with representatives from councils that have established good enforcement practices |
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<th>Area</th>
<th>Key issues</th>
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</tr>
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</table>
| Enforcement resource and costs | • Local police forces do not always have available resource to dedicate to Blue Badge enforcement (for example in order to seize Badges and investigate Badge thefts)  
• Current penalties/fines do not cover enforcement costs (for example on-street inspection, surveillance and prosecution costs) which can prevent authorities from proactively tackling abuse | • Local authorities can work more closely with local police forces to tackle Blue Badge abuse and exploit synergies for identifying other vehicle/driver-related offences | • There is perhaps scope for extending current powers for seizing Badges so that this can be done by other authorised people (for example traffic wardens and local authority parking attendants as well as the police)  
• Enforcement costs could potentially be funded by channelling some of the fine revenue from successful prosecutions to local authorities or through savings achieved as a result of better enforcement (for example through increased parking revenues) | • Investigate feasibility of extending powers for seizing Badges to other parking enforcement agents  
• Investigate feasibility of channelling some of the fine revenue from successful prosecutions to local authorities for use in Blue Badge enforcement  
• Work with a selected number of local authorities to develop business cases for Blue Badge enforcement based on potential cost benefits |

ANNEX K: BLUE BADGE ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT
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<th>Area</th>
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<th>Additional measures required?</th>
<th>Possible next steps</th>
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</table>
| Badge holder understanding of Scheme rules and public awareness | • There is a lack of understanding amongst Badge holders about the Scheme rules which is leading to accidental instances of abuse  
• There is also a lack of public awareness about the Scheme which is perhaps contributing to the instances of perceived abuse and preventing members of the public from taking an active role in enforcement (for example by identifying and reporting suspect cases) | • Local authorities can issue bespoke information leaflets outlining where (and where not) Blue Badge holders can park in the local area (this can be sensitively combined with on-street enforcement operations)  
• Local authorities can also run local media campaigns in order to increase public awareness and understanding of the Scheme and highlight what is being done to combat abuse. This will reassure people that something is being done, act as a deterrent to others and encourage the general public to help enforce the Scheme by reporting suspect cases | • The DfT has recently issued new leaflets for Badge holders explaining what constitutes legitimate versus illegitimate use of the Badge  
• In addition, there is scope for a national campaign to raise public awareness and understanding of the Scheme | • Develop a national public communication strategy for raising awareness and understanding of the Scheme |
7. **Local versus central administration**

7.1 An overarching policy issue affecting Blue Badge Scheme administration and enforcement is whether this should continue to be done on a local basis or whether there is a case for it (or discrete elements) to be undertaken by a central body.

7.2 The respective benefits of each approach for the different elements of administration and enforcement are outlined in table 7.1.

**Table 7.1: Assessment of central versus local administration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Central</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>**Applications/</td>
<td>• Local access to enable face-to-face contact for clients that need</td>
<td>• Opportunities for greater economies of scale and flexible resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>renewals</td>
<td>greater support during the application process</td>
<td>allocation depending on work flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Understanding of local issues/area and related local services to</td>
<td>• Greater consistency in application processes and opportunity for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>enable more tailored/personal front-end service</td>
<td>efficiencies (for example through greater automation of processes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Opportunity for local collection of Badges if required (for</td>
<td>• One point of contact for Badge applications and enquiries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>example to allow verification of recipient’s identity rather than</td>
<td>• Greater consistency of Badge format if issued by the same agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>relying on the post)</td>
<td>(facilitating identification of forged/tampered Badges)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment</strong></td>
<td>• Local access for mobility tests if required</td>
<td>• Greater consistency in assessment processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Awareness and understanding of specific local issues</td>
<td>• Local presence could be retained within a national framework through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>encouraging peer-to-peer audits and establishing regional ‘good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>practice’ champions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deaths</strong></td>
<td>• Opportunity to integrate with local death registration processes</td>
<td>• Greater consistency in processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and records</td>
<td>• One point of contact/central records for cross referencing against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>national death records</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appeals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Central</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of local issues and area, and potentially a more personal approach</td>
<td>Greater consistency in appeals processes which may lead to greater understanding and confidence in the appeals process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Enforcement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Central</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local on-street presence and understanding of local issues/hot spots essential for effective enforcement</td>
<td>Central point of contact for Badge holders, members of the public and enforcement bodies to report/check lost, stolen and forged Badges and to get information on Scheme rules</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.3 As the table above illustrates, there are pros and cons to each approach. Ultimately national consistency, for example, for assessing eligibility and appeals would be more easily achieved if a more central approach (either on a national or regional basis) was adopted. However, this would potentially be at the expense of local accessibility and a tailored service offering.

7.4 One potential option would be to adopt a hybrid administration approach combining elements of local and central control for example:

a) retaining local access points for making initial applications and conducting mobility assessments, but using a central body to process applications and issue Badges; and/or

b) establishing a central appeals procedure and framework for auditing assessment processes.

7.5 On-street enforcement will always need to be done at a local level, but would benefit from the creation of a national framework for sharing Blue Badge data to validate Badges in the field (see Annex J for more detail).
8. **Conclusion**

8.1 Blue Badge administration and enforcement practices can be substantially improved through the better communication and sharing of good practice.

8.2 However, as identified above, the adoption of good practice approaches can only achieve so much. Additional measures also need to be considered to ensure that the Scheme is operated as robustly and efficiently as possible so that it remains viable and can cope with future change (for example any potential extension in eligibility criteria).

9. **Possible next steps**

9.1 The table below suggests possible next steps by DfT for sharing good practice and exploring additional measures.
### Possible actions for improving administration and enforcement

- Revise model application forms to ensure they include sufficient data protection wording, core data items and questions for determining eligibility

- Work with Department of Health, medical professionals and local authorities to develop and pilot model decisions trees and investigate feasibility of developing a national training scheme

- Work with Department for Work and Pensions to assess feasibility of Blue Badge administrators assessing electronic records to verify receipt of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance

- Develop a central online tool kit for Blue Badge administrators (this might include online training programme, model application forms, assessment decisions trees, etc.)

- Investigate the feasibility of setting up peer-to-peer audits, create regional champions, roadshows and user groups to showcase good practice (particularly in terms of effective enforcement)

- Develop a national public communication strategy for raising awareness and understanding of the Scheme

- Work with local authorities to develop business cases to identify potential cost benefits that could be achieved through improved enforcement processes (for example through increased parking revenues)

- Investigate feasibility of channelling some of the fine revenue from successful prosecutions to local authorities for use in Blue Badge enforcement and extending powers for seizing Badges

- Investigate options identified in Annex J for creating a national framework for sharing Blue Badge data and a machine-readable Badge

- Proactively seek opportunities to enable full online application processes, for example use of electronic signatures, scanned photographs and electronic evidence of disability
Annex Ki

Care Services Efficiency Delivery Programme

Introduction

1. The Department of Health established the Care Services Efficiency Delivery Programme (CSED) in June 2004 to support the implementation of the recommendations of the Independent Review of Public Sector Efficiency, led by Sir Peter Gershon. CSED works in collaboration with councils to develop sustainable efficiencies and improve services in the delivery of care to vulnerable adults.

2. As part of this work, the Blue Badge Initiative looked at how the administration and processing of Blue Badges for individuals could be made more efficient by conducting desktop research and reviewing current processes in a number of local authorities.

Research findings and proposed solutions

3. Based on the findings of the Blue Badge Initiative, CSED has identified three generic changes that local authorities could introduce to increase the efficiency of their administration processes for individual applications:

   - removal of the Badge application fee at its current £2 level (which can cost more to collect than the fee itself);
   - replacement of GP input for assessed eligibility with algorithm-based decision-making by administrative staff supported by on-site occupational therapist advice; and
   - expansion of the contact centre (if applicable) to increase the level of support provided to clients at the front end of the process to enable better screening and assurance of complete applications first time.

Anticipated benefits of proposed solutions

4. CSED estimates potential cost savings of adopting this approach of approximately £184K – £225K per year (based on 3,036 applications per annum and depending on the combination of solutions adopted) through reductions in the local authority time and resource and GP costs. In addition, there would be a number of non-financial benefits including:

   - transparency in service delivery;
   - improved staff morale and job satisfaction;
• enhanced front end support for clients; and
• improved quality of life for clients as a result of greater accessibility, faster processing times and reduced exposure to bureaucracy.

Implementation approach

5. CSED recommends that local authorities use the diagnostic tools that it has developed to assess their own requirements and determine the most appropriate solution. Local authorities then need to develop a comprehensive implementation plan and engage fully with stakeholders to deliver sustainable change.
ANNEX Kii

Summary of powers for tackling abuse

A summary of the powers available to tackle different types of Blue Badge abuse is provided in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abuse</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Powers</th>
<th>Relevant legislation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition of Badge by false representation</td>
<td>Where an individual has provided false information in order to qualify for a Badge</td>
<td>Local authority can require that the Badge be returned to them if they are satisfied that it has been obtained by false representation</td>
<td>Regulation 9(2)(b) of the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) Regulations 2000 (SI 2000/682)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Misuse of Badge by Badge holders in certain circumstances | For example:  
  • where a Badge holder is using a Badge for which they no longer qualify due to a change in their circumstances;  
  • where a Badge holder is using a Badge which has expired; or  
  • where a Badge holder is using a Badge which is no longer legible | If found guilty the person could face a fine of up to £1,000 on conviction  
A Fixed Penalty Notice or a Penalty Charge Notice could be issued if a parking offence has occurred  
The police can also seize the Badge if required as evidence | Section 21 (4B) of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970  
Parking offences under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984  
Section 19 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (general power of seizure etc.) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abuse</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Powers</th>
<th>Relevant legislation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Systematic misuse of valid Badge by Badge holder** | Where a Badge holder or other person using such a Badge with the holder’s consent has misused the Badge leading to at least three relevant convictions | Local authority can withdraw a Badge and require that the Badge be returned to them (on account of its misuse leading to at least three relevant convictions)  
A Fixed Penalty Notice or a Penalty Charge Notice could be issued if a parking offence has occurred. | Regulation 9(2)(a) of the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) Regulations 2000 (SI 2007/682)  
Parking offences under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 |
| **Misuse of Badge by a non Badge holder**  | Where a non Badge holder is using a Badge (with or without the Badge holder’s permission) and the Badge holder is not present | If found guilty the person could face a fine of £1,000 on conviction  
A Fixed Penalty Notice or a Penalty Charge Notice could also be issued if a parking offence has occurred  
The police can also seize the Badge if required as evidence | Section 117 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984  
Parking offences under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984  
Section 19 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (general power of seizure etc.) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abuse</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Powers</th>
<th>Relevant legislation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refusal to produce a Badge for inspection when requested by an authorised person</td>
<td>Where the police or enforcement officer has requested the Badge be produced for inspection This can include instances where they believe the Badge has been stolen, fraudulently altered/created or is not being used by the Badge holder</td>
<td>The police and enforcement officers have the power to inspect Badges when a Badge is displayed on the vehicle and a person is in the vehicle or appears to have been in, or to be about to get into, the vehicle It is an offence for a person without reasonable excuse to fail to produce a Badge when requested to do so and a person can be fined up to £1,000 if convicted The police can also seize the Badge if required as evidence</td>
<td>Section 21(4BA) of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 Section 21(4BD) of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 Section 19 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (general power of seizure etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX Kiii
Charging approaches adopted by other schemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheme</th>
<th>Charging approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Concessionary Bus Pass          | • No charge for statutory minimum concessionary pass. If local authorities offer more generous schemes they may charge for passes to help pay for extra entitlement but they must still offer a free pass providing the statutory minimum concession  
  • Local authorities can also recoup the costs of replacing lost passes |
| Disabled Persons Rail Card      | • A one-year card costs £18 and a three-year card costs £48                                                                                       |
| Driving licence                 | • Provisional licences for a car, motorcycle or moped cost £45  
  • There is no charge for converting from a provisional to full licence  
  • It costs £22 to replace a lost or stolen licence  
  • It costs £10 to convert from a paper to photocard licence  
  • There is no charge for updating photographs, name and/or address details |
| London Congestion Charge Discount | • There is a one-off registration charge of £10 for Blue Badge holders to register for their 100 per cent discount on the congestion charge |
| Passport                        | • Applying for or renewing a passport costs £66 for adults and £45 for children  
  • Replacing a lost, stolen, missing or damaged passport also costs £66 for adults and £45 for children  
  • The Passport Office Fast Track service costs £91 for adults and £80 for children |
| Scotland Blue Badge             | • Scotland has increased the upper fee limit that local authorities can opt to charge to £20 for Blue Badge applications |