

Factsheet 9 – 25 July 2011 (2 Pages)

Blue Badges - Parking for People with Disabilities

The Blue Badge Scheme provides a national range of parking concessions for disabled people with severe mobility problems who have difficulty using public transport. The scheme is designed to help severely disabled people to travel independently, as either a driver or passenger, by allowing them to park close to their destination. It is a Department for Transport scheme administered by local authorities. The badge belongs to the person and not a particular vehicle, and can be used in any vehicle in which the disabled person is travelling. You do not have to drive your own car. It can be very useful to people who are taken out occasionally, for example, by relatives or friends or for hospital visits.

Where can Blue Badge holders park?

Details of where you can and cannot park are covered in the explanatory booklet provided when you have made a successful application. This also tells you about reciprocal arrangements when travelling abroad.

The Blue Badge scheme only applies to on-street parking where Badge holders have free use of parking meters and pay-and-display bays. They may also be exempt from limits on parking times imposed on other users (check local signs for information) and can park for up to three hours on yellow lines (except where there is a ban on loading or unloading or other restrictions).

Most car parks provide dedicated disabled badge parking places, for example, near the car park exits. But **beware**, although some car parks offer free parking to badge holders this is not always the case, so check the details on the charges board. The scheme does not apply to off-street car parks, such as supermarket car parks, or privately owned roads, such as those you find at airports.

Who can get a Blue Badge?

A person qualifies automatically for a Blue Badge if they are over two years old and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- receive the higher rate of the mobility component of the Disabled Living Allowance.
- are registered blind.
- receive War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement
- has been awarded a lump sum benefit at tariffs 1-8 of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and certified as having a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking.

A person may also be eligible for a badge if they are more than two years old and either:

- have a permanent and substantial disability which means they cannot walk, or which makes walking very difficult, or
- drive a motor vehicle regularly, have a severe disability in both arms and are unable to operate all or some types of parking meter (or would find it very difficult to operate them).

Note: People with a psychological disorder will not normally qualify unless their impairment causes very considerable difficulty in walking all the time.

Organisations that transport disabled people who would meet one or more of the above criteria may also be eligible for a badge. However, this is entirely at the discretion of the issuing local authority and any organisation that qualifies must follow the conditions for using it.

Special rules for children under three

A parent of a child who is less than three years old may apply for a badge if their child has a specific medical condition which means that:

- they must always be accompanied by bulky medical equipment which cannot be carried around without great difficulty; and/or
- they need to be kept near a vehicle at all times, so that they can, if necessary, be treated in the vehicle, or quickly driven to a place where they can be treated, such as a hospital.

How to apply for a Blue Badge

You can apply for a badge over the telephone by calling Care Direct on 0845 155 1007. This is the quickest and simplest way to obtain a Blue Badge. If you are eligible for a badge, Care Direct will send you your completed application form, which you will need to sign and return to confirm the information is correct. You will also need to enclose two passport sized (35mm x 45mm) photographs with the form. You should receive a Blue Badge within five working days of returning the form.

Please note that Devon County Council does not charge a fee for issuing a Blue Badge.

Taking Care of Your Blue Badge

If your badge is lost or stolen you should report it to the Police and obtain a crime reference number, then please call Care Direct on 0845 155 1007.

You must make sure that the details on the front of your badge remain legible. If the badge details become unreadable through wear and tear or fading, please call Care Direct on 0845 1551 007.

Renewing your badge

Your badge will normally last for three years. We will automatically send you a renewal notice at least six weeks before the expiry date. If you change address, please tell us your new address by telephoning Care Direct on 0845 1551 007. If you move to a different county your badge will still be valid but you will have to reapply to the new local authority when it expires.

Parking places for Blue Badge holders - how to apply for a Disabled Parking Bay

Providing certain conditions are met Devon County Council, as Highway Authority, can provide and mark the carriageway, parking places for Blue Badge holders. There is a county-wide policy governing the provision of disabled parking bays. For a successful application, the following conditions must be met:

1. You must be a Blue Badge holder.
2. Your disability must be of a permanent nature.
3. You must be the driver or regular passenger of the vehicle for which the bay is required. The vehicle is based at the applicant's property and the driver is also resident.
4. There is no off-street parking available at or near your residence.
5. The Police must agree that there is a parking problem.

It should be noted that it is not possible to provide disabled parking bays on an individual basis and where provided the bays can be used by any blue badge holder.

For any further questions on parking places please contact the Customer Service Centre Highways Team 0845 1551 004. For detailed information see our webpage www.devon.gov.uk/blue-badges

A large print version of this factsheet is available on www.devon.gov.uk/largeprint-factsheets but if you would like it in a different format such as Braille or audio, or in a different language, please contact our Customer Service Centre on 0845 155 1015 or email customer@devon.gov.uk.